

Christ Like Character

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, folks. It's great to be here with you again. I was looking through my notes this week as I was praying. It's actually been a year since I was down in Carolina. It definitely doesn't feel like that, but it's great to be here with you again. It's a great privilege to be able to open up God's Word and to worship with you guys here this morning. I believe you've been working your way through Philippians over the summer, and I'll be continuing in Philippians this morning. We'll be looking at chapter 2, verses 19 to 30. If you have one of those red church Bibles that was down the back, it's on page 1179 if you'd like to follow along. What I'm going to do is I'm going to read the passage, going to pray briefly the Lord would help us as we open up His Word, and then we'll have a look at what God is saying to us through it. So let me read, beginning in Philippians chapter 2, verse 19 to 30. Paul writes, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him to you as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

But I think it's necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you, and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed, he was ill and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Therefore, I'm all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again, you may be glad, and I may have less anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord, with great joy, and honour men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

Let's pray as we come before God's word. Father, we thank you so much for how you've spoken to us through your word. We thank you that it's relevant for our lives today. We ask that you would help us to understand it, you'd apply it deep into our hearts. We ask that you would change us by it, that it wouldn't just be words on a page, but that you would mould our hearts, you would change us to be more like Jesus, through what we hear and what we see in your word this morning. We ask this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Amen. I want to ask you, who did you want to be like when you grew up? Maybe you always want to be like an older sibling, maybe like your dad, or a family friend. Maybe, like Connor, maybe it was that professional footballer, or a movie star. Who did you look up to? For me, it was Steve Irwin. I don't know if any of you guys would be familiar with Steve. Sadly, he's not around anymore. He was the crocodile hunter. And I want, when I was a kid, I wanted to go on exciting adventures like Steve. I wanted to find amazing animals just like he did. In a way, he was a role model. Now, as we grow up, our role models become a little more serious. Maybe we want to be like that popular person in school, or that high achiever in work. Maybe we want to model ourselves after, you know, that couple who really seem to have it together in their marriage. We follow so-and-so's Facebook or Twitter feed.

We follow a specific diet plan that someone has come up with, or better marriage guidelines. Each of us have role models, people we model ourselves after. We want to be like them, to live like they live, to act like they do. Because I feel in some way, we kind of think, they're doing life right. They're going in the right direction.

[4 : 2 5] Now, think then, as our lives as believers. We want to be getting it right. So let me ask you, what role models should we have as Christians? The section before us in Paul's letter to the Philippians, I believe it has two functions. Firstly, to kind of let them know what Paul's plans are, and

kind of what is going on with Paul. But also to continue the themes that he's been working through. He gives us two different individuals, Timothy and Epaphroditus. And he presents these guys as the kind of role models there to follow. So how does it fit in with the rest of what we've been looking at in Philippians? Well, Paul's been talking to them about how they're going to live as believers. In chapter 127, he was talking about, well, whatever happens, no matter what circumstances come their way, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.

You have been saved. So now be who you are. How will they continue to grow? Paul says to them in 2 verse 5, have the mindset or the attitude of Christ. We were reminded last week they were to keep working out our salvation. Because God is at work in us, we can do it. So keep working out. Keep doing what you're doing, he says to them. As a community together, what were they to do? We saw in chapter 2 verse 4, we saw that they were to look not only to their own interests, but to the interests of others. And now he gives us these two role models. Let's look at each of them in turn. So first of all, in the first section, if you want to split up into house, we have Timothy. Now, Timothy was a mentee of Paul. Paul was his mentor. He was a close friend. He worked alongside him, traveled with him.

He worked at establishing many of the early churches with Paul. He cared for Paul. He served with him in the work of the gospel. This is the kind of guy, this is the man, Paul says, this is who I want to send. We see in verse 19, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. One of the reasons he wants to send him is so he can hear about them. There wasn't any kind of 6-1 news. There was no Facebook feed. The only way that Paul was going to hear about what was going on is if someone went there and then kind of reported back to him.

So there's practical reasons why Paul would send him. But also, I feel Paul wants to send Timothy because then the church will have a really good working example of a role model who's like Jesus that they'll get to see and model themselves after. He's going to show them what it looks like to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. And he goes on in verse 20, I have no one else like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.

Timothy sticks out above all the others that Paul has around him. No one can touch Timothy when it comes to taking a genuine interest in the welfare or the interests of the others, of the church in Philippi. Timothy's concerned for them, their spiritual state. He wants to know what God is doing amongst them. He wants to share in their hardships. He says he wants to share in their joys. He wants to know, guys, what is God doing? What's he doing in Philippi? How are they growing in their love of one other? How are they serving? He prays for these guys. He longs for them. They're in his thoughts.

[8 : 16] They're a huge part of his life. His heart is like Paul's heart for them. And if you want to know what Paul's heart is like for these Philippians, well, you can look back to the, I won't go there, but if you look through the first chapter of Philippians, you get a sense of how genuine Paul really is.

This is the guy, Paul says, that I want to send to you. Verse 21, he says, everyone else, you can see it there if you look at it. He says, everyone else looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

This is the kind of role model. He says, Timothy, he puts you guys first. Timothy's different. He doesn't put himself above. He says, no, you guys first. He gets my vote. What else does he say about him? Verse 22, but you know that Timothy has proved himself because like a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel. He's the real deal. He's worked with Paul. He's learned the ropes from him. Like a father, sorry, like a son with his father, he has served with me.

This is very close relationship. Paul is like a spiritual father to him. In those days, in the days that Paul is writing, which is slightly different to today, whatever you were, whatever, sorry, whatever your parents were, whatever they worked at, generally that's what you became. If a son, if your dad was a baker, you learned the ropes. You became a baker. If he was a farmer, you became a farmer. There wasn't kind of what you have today where it's different. There was a much closer connection between what your father did and what you ended up doing. A son then was the primary apprentice of his father. The father would teach him. The son would gradually take on more responsibilities. And as he grew up, so did his competency. He proved himself.

When I was a teenager, and throughout my college summers, my dad would take me on DIY jobs. And that could have been anything from building walls to painting to, could have been anything,

really fit in the kitchen. You never knew what you were going to do. But as I grew up in those kind of skills, he taught me as we went along. Started out small and then grew up. Took on more responsibilities. For instance, he might leave me alone with the power tools, which was quite a big thing for him. It was a special thing to learn these kind of tricks of the trade. And now it wasn't necessarily what my dad did as a full-time job. But still, over time, I proved myself competent of doing DIY work. And here in our passage, we see something similar. Timothy has proved himself in the test of gospel ministry. That's not been an easy road by any means. He's been alongside Paul as Paul's dealt with oppression, with hardships, with persecution. He's learned what it's like to have very little. He's learned to let go of his own interests, to put the interests of others first. He's learned to take on that genuine interest.

[11 : 33] He's learned to live out what Paul had been talking to them about in chapter 2, verse 4. I want to remind us of that again. If you want to have a look at it, because it'll be quite key as we come then to apply this passage a little later. Paul writes, sorry, I'll go from verse 3. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Timothy has proved himself through the testing, through the hardship of serving alongside Paul. And Timothy's come through with flying colors. He's made it. I want to send him, says Paul, as soon as I kind of have a better idea of how things are going with me. He's no qualms about sending a man like this. In fact, he's actually quite eager to. Paul himself hopes to visit them. We see that in verse 24. When this is going to happen, he's not sure, but he trusts the Lord. He says, I'm confident in the Lord that this will happen. I will come and see you. And when he does, both parties, both Paul and the church, are really going to benefit from that time. Paul will get to celebrate as he sees what the Lord is doing amongst them, how they've been getting on. And they're going to benefit from seeing Paul as they get another really good role model of what it looks like to live for Jesus. Let's try and have a sum up of the kind of characteristics we see in Timothy, and then like kind of what they might look like today. I think two stick out quite clearly for us. First of all, we had that genuine interest for the welfare of others, genuine concern for the welfare of others. Let's have a look at that one first.

These are the kind of characteristics we want to be looking at in Christians today, the kind of people we want to model ourselves after. Now, obviously, I know no one here is perfect. We know that. You can look in the mirror in the morning, and you can see that. But because just with the imperfection, it shouldn't mean that we discount or that we overlook the good Christ-like characteristics that are in one another. The characteristics that model Christ, these are the kind of things that we want to look for and follow in others. Let's flesh it out. What might a genuine concern for the welfare of others look like? Maybe there's kind of certain people that will spring to your mind as we look at these. What about the person who always seems to be looking out for others? Not so they can feel good about themselves, but because they just really want to see someone grow. They really want to see someone else do well. Maybe the person who serves quietly in the background, who just kind of gets along with tidying up the chairs, filling in on the tea and coffee rota. The person who visits the sick or gives financial help or advice to someone who needs it. Maybe it's that friend who's willing to ask you the difficult questions.

How are you getting on in your walk with Jesus? How are you getting on with reading your Bible? How have you been finding times when you're angry? How have you been dealing with that? Or dealing with not looking at stuff you shouldn't on TV or the internet? How are you getting on with gossip? These kind of people, they're not asking so that you'll kind of feel bad or they're not asking to lord it over you.

[15 : 11] They're asking because they're genuinely concerned for your welfare. Do you have people in your life like that? Living as a Christian, as we all know, it's hard. Sin is serious.

We're in much too volatile a situation, much too dangerous a situation as believers to be left in the solitude of our own minds and our hearts. We need a genuine concern for each other, don't we? Do you know someone who intentionally, regularly prays for others? Someone who gives their time on a Sunday morning, when maybe they could be with their friends or just talking to them, to chat to a newcomer or to maybe someone who just kind of struggles to fit in a bit. Someone who doesn't brag about how much they do or equally complain about having to do more service. The person who's genuinely interested, who generally cares for the welfare of others, you notice that it doesn't actually seem to faze them.

Now, under the surface, it actually might, but yet, they've practiced putting that self-centeredness, practiced putting it down. They've practiced taking away, not clinging to that sense of entitlement, of self-interest.

[16:32] They've practiced investing in others. I know of one mum of three. Two of the kids have left home. One of her kids is a teenager.

And she was asked recently, you know, well, when are you going to be heading back to work, you know, to fulfill your career, now that your kind of mothering duties are kind of at an end or they're not all that necessary.

Now, I'm not saying it's a bad thing if she had chosen to go back. But instead, the desire that the Lord had placed on her heart was different. She wanted to make herself available to younger women in the church to help them with raising kids, to maybe give them a couple of hours off during the week, or to be with them when maybe their own mothers couldn't be there, to give advice, counsel.

She'd walked the road before. So she wanted to serve the church in this way. She actively put the interests of others above her own.

I feel she models what it looks like to practice that genuine interest. Or there's a close friend of mine who I've known for a good few years. He's a man who's more giving than many that I know.

[17:43] Giving of his time, his resources, food, his attention, his finances. At times maybe when finances haven't been great for me, college usually springs to mind.

But he has gone out of his way to give to me. Now, he's not necessarily well off himself, but whether he's had plenty or whether he's had very little, he's given generously.

I know that this guy, if he knew that I needed it, he would split his last fiver with me. That's the kind of man that I want. Now, that's the kind of Christ-likeness, that giving, that I want to model in my own life.

I could go on, but I'll leave it there. Maybe you can have a think on some people in your life who model these kind of characteristics. I'm sure there are some. But if you can't think of anyone, maybe you need to get some of those kind of people in your life.

These are the kind of role models that God's Word encourages us, that God's Word tells us. These are the kind of people, these are the kind of traits I want you to imitate. The second trait we see in Timothy.

[18:51] Someone who's proved himself in hardship. Now, I'll not just confine this to gospel work, because many of us here aren't in a position where we're working full-time for a church.

Many of us aren't missionaries. There's more people than just pastors that we can look up to. I feel what Paul has in mind here, actually, is those who've gone through difficult times in their Christian walk.

Who have been spiritually tested, but who have come through that. I don't know about you, but I often find it's those difficult times that grow us most as Christians, isn't it?

Those times where we have little choice but to cling to Christ. Those times which kind of force us to really hold on to our hope as Christians. Where trusting in Jesus becomes a very real reality.

Maybe it's in the face of long-term illness for you or for a family member. Maybe there's just some serious mess and you just feel out of your debt. The money's gone.

[19:56] The friends have kind of turned away. The family, the relationships are just falling apart. We seem to have no hope apart from Christ.

Have you been in a situation where your need of Christ has become very real very quickly? I'm sure we've experienced that. And in hindsight, when we look back at those times, it's often we can say, those are the times that made me trust in Jesus.

Those are the times that grew me in my relationship with Him. We learn to trust on God. To depend on Him. Now, I'm not necessarily saying that we can't learn from people who haven't gone through those tougher times.

That would probably cut most of the kind of younger folks here off the scale. But actually, if you think about it, Timothy himself is probably actually only in his early 20s when Paul's writing this. I think Paul would say it to protect us from following the kind of leaders who just make it all about them.

Those who kind of make it about their own abilities. Look at me. Where actually, they haven't experienced the hardship. They haven't gone through or needed to trust in the Lord. Instead, Paul

would say to us, imitate those who have themselves gone through difficult times.

[21 : 16] Who've had to cling on to Jesus. No matter what life is thrown at them. They haven't let go. You'll recognize these kind of people when you talk to them. Those who smile and tell you how amazing Jesus is.

When they're actually struggling with chronic pain day after day. I know one old lady like that.

There's just a smile on her face. Tears in her eyes. But tears of joy at who Jesus is.

Even though she goes through real pain. Or those who, in a worldly sense, have very little. But what you hear from them is not, Lord, why so little?

But Lord, wow. Why so much? Why so much? These are the kind of role models we can learn from.

Each of us will go through tough times. We live in a broken world.

Whether you've gone through much or little, we will go through them. So how will we act when those tough times come? How will you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel?

[22 : 23] Well, I feel these people give us the role models we can look to. Similar traits we can take on. The Lord has taught them much through hardships.

The experiences that they've had, he has used to mold them to be more like Jesus. Let's have a look at our second character, Epaphroditus.

He models some of these things too. I'll be a bit more brief here. Have a look at verse 25. But I think it necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus.

My brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who's also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. He said to them, I'm going to send Timothy soon, but I'm going to send Epaphroditus to you right now.

This is another man who Paul holds in high esteem. Another great role model for the church. He describes him in three ways, which you notice.

[23 : 22] First of all, he's a brother. There's a close relationship that Paul has, a loving relationship. Not brothers by blood, but brothers in Christ.

We know from the kind of leadership that Paul has that he's shown us, when he says brother, he means it. There's a love, a closeness, an intimacy there.

And it's that that characterizes how he now says to them, Epaphroditus, I commend him to you.

This is the kind of man he is. He's like a brother to Paul.

Secondly, he's a fellow worker. Someone who's worked alongside Paul in the gospel. Who's shared in the difficulties, in the toil. Someone who knows what it's like to work hard, to make Jesus known. He's a fellow soldier. Again, we see a step up. He's a man, not only a brother, not only a fellow worker, but someone who has contended with Paul. Who has fought with him in the gospel.

[24 : 23] He's proven himself in these areas. And he comes with Paul's recommendation. And he's one of their own. He's their messenger. They sent him to Paul. Chapter 4 of the letter to the Philippians shows us that he actually brought gifts to Paul.

He cared for Paul's needs. He would have worked with Paul while he was there. And now Paul sends him back. And actually, this is something Epaphroditus is quite keen on.

He wants to go back. Not that he wants to get away from the work. But have a look at verse 26. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.

The reason Paul gives for his longing is actually quite remarkable when we look at it. Because you heard he was ill. He was properly sick. But his primary concern, Epaphroditus is not necessarily concerned for himself.

He's concerned for them. They've heard he's unwell. And he's actually really concerned on their account. He's put out because they're hearing that he's sick.

[25 : 37] He, like Timothy, takes a genuine interest in their welfare. I don't know what you're like when you're sick. Whether it's a cold, a migraine, whether it's man flu.

I know for myself, I can tend to be a bit more inward looking. I can take on a bit of a woe is me, kind of please take care of me kind of attitude, can't we?

Life very quickly becomes about us. Maybe we take on a, well, no, I don't need your help. But the little voice inside is kind of saying, please acknowledge me.

Please acknowledge that I'm working really hard even though I'm sick. I'm sure we've all been there. But not Epaphroditus. He's different. He's genuinely worried lest they be worried about him.

This is pretty serious, what's going on. It's not just some cold. Paul doesn't kind of let him get away with playing it down. He says in verse 27, Indeed he was ill.

[26 : 39] And actually he almost died. But God had mercy on him. And not only on him, but also on me to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. He actually almost died.

That's how serious it is. That's how he was risking, he was putting his life on the line for their sake, for the sake of the gospel. So Paul says in verse 28, I'm all the more eager to send him.

So when you see him, you can be glad and I won't be so anxious. He's not just playing on the kind of, on the feelings here. He's not just kind of exaggerating things. He actually takes that level of concern for them, of genuine concern.

Both Paul and Epaphroditus do. He's an example, a living example of what we saw back in verse 4. Looking not to his own interests, but to the interests of others.

He's the kind of man, I'd imagine if he were in our churches today, who would be just all about the other people in his life. He would be the kind of person lying in a hospital bed, asking how you were, not feeling put out that you hadn't asked him how he was.

[27 : 47] He'd be the kind of father, I'd imagine, who even after a really long and trying day, where everything is just getting on his nerves, comes home and asks his wife how her day would be. Or who instead of kind of longing for that embrace of the couch and a good book and the TV maybe, instead of looking to embrace that, would want to embrace whatever fantasy world his children were playing in.

The person who'd used their me time to serve in a Bible study, to drive the students home, to cook for a couple with a new baby, to be there for people, to invest in them, to look not to his own interests, but to the interests of others.

He says, Paul says to them at the end of this section, verse 29, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honour men like him because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

They're to welcome him and welcome him well. Be excited, he says, that you have a good role model like this coming to you. Honour people like him. Not that it goes to his head.

I think in Ireland that's probably one of the reasons why we don't like to give or take compliments all that much. We wouldn't want to give them just in case someone kind of got a bit too big for their boots, a bit too kind of big-headed.

[29 : 16] We kind of tend to play it down. But what Paul is about here, he's saying these are the kind of people, these are the kind of role models that we should look up to. Not that we kind of get them up at the front of church and kind of parade them in some kind of weird talent show.

No, not like that. But that we recognise that these guys are displaying the kind of characteristics that we should be after, that we should be looking to model. Now we don't downplay them because of someone's imperfection.

If there's a Christ-likeness about somebody, then let that be a role model to us. Let that help us and motivate us as we seek to live for Jesus. From the verse we've looked at this morning, we've kind of answered the question we began with.

What kind of role models should we have? Seeing the kind of traits we should look for. Those who practice a genuine interest. A genuine concern for the welfare. Those who've proved themselves under hardship.

But I feel if we were to just leave it there, if we weren't to connect the dots, we'd just be left with something to do, wouldn't we? Without seeing that there's so much more on offer. As I was preparing this message, I found myself realizing something.

[30 : 34] And perhaps for many of you, as you're hearing me preach this, you can share in this experience. If these are the kind of role models that we're to look for, well then we kind of need to ask, what kind of role model do I need to be?

If we're to have good role models in our churches, well then it makes sense that we need to start stepping up and being these kind of people. These kind of men, these kind of women.

I found myself challenged because in so many ways when I read this, I realize, and probably you realize as well, we just don't measure up, do we? What kind of role model am I?

What kind of role model are you? How can we be these kind of role models for our church here in Cargilline, for our spouses at home, for our kids, our family, our friends?

We'll need to go a little bit outside the immediate verses we've read. We need to understand something, something that Paul understood, something that Timothy and Epaphroditus understood. The two guys that we've been looking at, they were kind of modeling themselves in ways on what

they learned, what they saw in Paul.

[31 : 53] But they're not just following man's way of living, they're not just following man's wisdom, not just modeling themselves on a mere person, like Paul. He's written, Paul's written to the Philippians, what he's written applies to us this morning.

He had written in chapter 2, Let it sink in. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considers others better than yourselves.

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. How are they to do this? How will they be this kind of role model?

Well, verse 5, your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. The same mindset, no less. Need to understand how Christ fulfills this.

Christ showed that genuine interest in your welfare, in my welfare. we weren't deserving of him. He didn't need to leave the glory of heaven and lay aside what was rightfully his.

[33 : 09] But he didn't cling to his own interests. His concern was for us. He put us first, our needs before his and became a human being.

He willingly came down, obeyed his father. He humbled himself. But not just in taking on the form of a servant as if that wasn't humbling himself enough, but in dying.

And not even in some spectacular way. But on the ugly, shameful cross. That's how Christ serves us.

All the authority is his as God. Yet he puts it aside. He comes down for our sake. All the glory was his. He deserved it all, to be honoured, to be worshipped.

But instead he chose to be mocked, chose to be beaten and crucified for you and for me. He was tested, tempted to put his needs first, to say no to the cross, to not give his all.

[34 : 24] But yet he does. God does he prove himself obedient to his father. He perfectly models what we so imperfectly try to imitate.

If you're here this morning and you think that living in this way, that attaining perfection will make me right with God, well that's not how it works. Good works on their own aren't going to earn us a place in heaven, aren't going to make us right with God.

We're called to perfection, have the mindset of Christ, but yet we fall so short every single day, don't we? And that is why we need Jesus.

That is why we need the Christ so badly. We need someone who has served perfectly, who has given his everything for us like we saw, that those who would call on him, believe in him as Lord and Saviour, not trusting in their works to save them, then they could be his children.

They could have his Holy Spirit. And it's that Spirit, God working in us, God himself within us, that moulds us, that works in us, slowly but surely, to make us more like Jesus.

[35 : 44] As Michael Grant reminded us last week, we're to keep working out our salvation, to keep going, to keep looking to grow, to serve one another.

And we've learnt this morning, to take a genuine interest in the welfare of others. We need good role models as Christians. And God, by his love, by his grace, has given us fine examples, both in his word and in one another.

So imitate those who imitate Jesus. Pick up your Bible and see the kind of people, see the kind of Christians that God calls you to be, but not only that, enables you to be.

Model yourselves on those who model Jesus, those who have Jesus as their model. This coming week, this month, this year, how will you put into practice what you've learnt this morning?

And I'll finish with this. Firstly, get some good and godly role models in your life. Maybe write down one or two of the traits that you see in someone that you want to imitate, godly traits.

[36 : 57] Pray about those things. Thank the Lord for the qualities that he has grown in that person and ask that he might grow them in you too. Maybe if you're feeling brave, go and talk to that person.

Tell them what you've noticed. Tell them how you've seen that Christ-likeness in them. Ask them how they do what they do, how God helps them, how the Lord helps them to do it.

Whether it goes to their head is between them and God. Don't let that put you off. But let's try and keep him the focus. I'll paraphrase a quote I came across as I was preparing.

Who of us could be arrogant or make much of ourselves or think too highly of ourselves when we consider how we look next to the cross? Secondly, try and practice taking that genuine interest in the welfare of others this week.

It's not going to happen overnight. I guarantee you that. Ask God for those opportunities. Look for them. Perhaps it will look like maybe taking the time to ring a friend, to ask how things are going. [38 : 08] Maybe giving up some of that me time to play with the kids, to take the initiative in leading your family in reading God's word. word. Maybe to talk to someone you've never talked to after church.

To ask about them. To take a genuine interest. Can you imagine what our churches would look like, what Cargilline would look like, if we took that genuine interest in one another? And even if the genuine feeling isn't there straight away, do it anyway. And pray that the Lord would change your heart. heart. So, brothers and sisters, practice the attitude of Jesus Christ this week, this month, this year, and imitate those who imitate Jesus.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for your word. We thank you how you teach us. We thank you for the examples that we see in your word of what it looks like to live for Christ. And we thank you so much for the models that we see in one another of Christ's likeness.

[39 : 23] Imperfect though we are, that you are growing us to be more like Jesus. We thank you most of all for the perfect example that we have in him. Lord, who are we that we would deserve this?

We don't. But Lord, you humbled yourself. You put your interests aside for our sake. Let that be our motivation as we see what Jesus has done and how you enable us by your spirit to be those kind of role models.

That we might as a church grow, mature, and live for you day by day. That you would grow us into the kind of people you have saved us to be. And pray these things in your most precious name, the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. We're going to close by singing the song Once Again. It reminds us once again I look upon the cross where you dies.

I'm humbled by your mercy.