

The Need for Leadership in God's Church - Part 1 : Elders

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[0:00] and go to 1 Timothy, or 1 Timothy, chapter 3. I thought I was gonna say chapter 1. Because I told you, 1 Timothy chapter 3, I told you weeks past, we're gonna go through 1 Timothy, and we still will do that.

But I thought it's probably a better idea to A, not start a book while I'm on vacation, that I'm just doing more work.

You're supposed to rest, right? But then also, there's some other things I wanted to address more specifically for us as a church, which I think we needed.

So, that's why we're gonna start in 1 Timothy, chapter 3. And we're gonna look at leadership over these next two weeks. We're gonna look at elders today.

We're gonna look at deacons next week. And then on the 25th, October 25th, I'm actually gonna do a message on Black Lives Matter, critical race theory, and intersectionality of biblical response.

[1:17] And if you don't know what those terms are, you can A, Google them, although you might not get an accurate definition of that from Google. But also, you can wait for October 25th, because I'm gonna be defining those terms and why we as Christians should not buy into those things at all.

Black Lives Matter, intersectionality, and critical race theory. I think it's something that's needed. I've been thinking about that, and I've been doing a little bit of reading on that, so I wanna address that.

And then, November 1st, I'm actually gonna do a message, because we're gonna do the Lord's Supper on November 1st, and I'm actually gonna do a message that's gonna help us to focus on the gospel because of what's coming November, what's that, 3rd, with the election?

So I think it's gonna be very important for us to really maintain our focus as a church. Our focus is the kingdom, not Biden land or Trump land.

Our focus is Christ and the gospel, and if America falls and goes to hell, then so be it. Then we will stand on the gospel, and we will continue to stand as a church.

[2:28] So that's what I think is critical for us as a church come November 1st, and then come November 8th, which is the second Sunday. Then we'll start 1st Timothy.

So that's kind of my plan. That's what I've been thinking about for the past. That's what I do on vacation. I just don't sleep, and I think. So that's fun. That's restful.

No, it's not. Whatever. Anyway, so 1st Timothy, we're gonna read. Oh, by the way, and those black Bibles in front of you, I think it's on page 163, those black Bibles, page 163.

1st Timothy chapter three, I'm gonna read the first seven verses, and this is more of a holistic type message, and you will see that as we continue on.

1st Timothy three, starting in verse one, it is a trustworthy statement. If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

[3:37] Not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. One who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.

But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God? Not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation and cured by the devil.

And he must have a good reputation with those outside, so he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. So this election that's coming up, speaking of election, and that's how some

people feel about this election, by the way.

This election coming up in November is probably one of the most crucial of all elections. It can turn the tide of our whole country. It's nerve-wracking.

It makes you want to respond like that. Crying. But almost to the point of fear. I believe, for us, as a body, as a church, we are at even more crucial time than ever in our history.

[4:55] This church was founded in 1959. I'm the pastor that's been here the longest. I'm pastor number 22. The average lifespan of a pastor here was 2.4 years.

I've been here now for, come October 21st, I'll be 14. So we are at a crucial time because we're going through so many changes as a church body.

People have left. We've had some key members pass away. People have left because they moved away. People have passed away, dear members. And now is the time for us to rise up as a body and see what God has in store for us.

I really think we're on the precipice of something. Which is the reason why I thought it's prudent for us. And I know, we're going to go through this when we go to 1 Timothy in verse 53, really one through, what's that, 14, 13.

I know we're going to do that. But that's going to be more an exegesis of that specific text. We're here today, this is the reason why we need leaders in God's church.

[6:14] church. We should not have a solo pastor. That's unhealthy. And you as members should realize that.

That's unhealthy for us as a church. church. We need men to step up and give leadership to God's church. And there's two offices in the church.

Elders, or pastors, and deacons. And again, we're going to go over the specific character of the man in chapter 3, in elders and deacons, chapter 3, verses 1 through 13 in 1 Timothy, which will be probably in, I don't know, like December or something like that.

But I wanted to look at eldership holistically as we see it in the New Testament and define that.

And not that you have not already been praying for that, but that this would be a message that would enhance your prayers for that. You know what I'm saying? So, the title I have is The Need for Leadership in God's Church, Part 1, Elders.

[7:31] The Need for Leadership in God's Church, Part 1, Elders. We have a need for leadership. You need leadership in God's church.

Now, elders, you see this term elders and you think, automatically probably think of the guys with the white shirts and the dark ties and they have the little name that says Elder Tom or Elder Jim. I'm talking about Mormons, right? They have that. Is that what they're talking about? No, it's not what we're talking about. No, no, no, no, no. I mean, really, the simple definition, elders, the simple definition, is one of old age.

You know, one of old age. You know, he's in a war. He's in his 90s. You know, that's somebody's... Something. They're close. I was close. About like a decade or so.

In the Old Testament, you see the word elders. They were leaders associated with Moses in governing the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, though, the word is used 20 times to refer to elders in local churches.

[8:46] So, you actually have... Here I have a phrase, male elders, pastor, or shepherd a local church as overseers. They shepherd or pastor.

And I'm going to use those words interchangeably, shepherd or pastor, because that's what shepherd means. You pastor. Pastor means you shepherd. That's what the word means. So, we're going to end up landing back in 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy 3.

But I'm actually going to have you go to different verses in your Bible, so make sure that's handy or your devices, which would probably be faster for you to get there. Because I want us to look at 1 Acts chapter 20, verse 17, and also verse 28.

If you would turn to Acts, go back in your Bibles to Acts chapter 20. In Acts chapter 20, and starting in verse 17, Acts chapter 20, starting in verse 17, Luke writes, he says, and from Miletus, he, that's Paul, from the context, sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

The elders of the church of Ephesus, okay? And he says, verse 18, and when they come to him, he said to them, you should have known, and he continues.

[10:13] Now, go up to verse 28, or down, however you have in your Bible. Verse 28, he's talking to the elders. He says, be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit

has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. There's a lot in that one verse. Again, from verse 17, he's talking to the elders and he says, the Holy Spirit has made you overseers where you get the word bishop or guardian. that's why he says, be on guard among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd or to pastor the church of God which is God's people, the flock. So, the same men are designated as elders, overseers, and pastors or shepherds. It's the same guy. You don't have elders and one and then pastors. No, it's one and the same. You don't have overseers and then elders. No, it's one and the same. It's the same guy. [11:40] For some reason, people don't understand this, especially Southern Baptists. They've been notorious for not understanding this. A pastor is an elder. An elder is an overseer. An overseer is a bishop. A bishop is a pastor. It's all used interchangeably. It's the same guy. And notice as well the end of verse 28 which he purchased with his own blood. The Lord Jesus died for his people, the church. He loves and cares for his people so much he sacrificed himself for them. This is, inherent in this verse is the gospel. God should condemn us and judge us and yet he sent Jesus, his eternal son, to die in the place of sinners. Respond, repent and believe. That's the gospel. If you're here, you're not a Christian, you should repent and believe. You should trust Christ. That's the only way you can be saved. [12:52] That's the only way you can be saved from the judgment of God is in the gospel. The death and resurrection of Jesus and you repent and trust Christ alone. So the Lord Jesus, he died for his people and notice this, as Jesus loved his church in the same way elders or pastors should love his body. They care for his body. They love his church. Here in Acts, there's another verse, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. Go forward in your Bibles. Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians. Galatians, Ephesians. Go to Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. Well, actually verse 7. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 7. But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Jesus gave specific gifts to his church. To each one. [14:06] And then he's gonna he's gonna delineate, he's gonna list out specific gifts. Verse 11. And he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. And notice, they're called, verse 12, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. That's what they're called to do, to equip. Pastors are teachers. teachers. But not all teachers are pastors. I believe women can have the gift of teaching. But it doesn't mean that they should teach men. I take the stance from 1 Timothy chapter 2 that women should not teach men. Even if they're under the authority, so to speak, of elders or pastors, she should not have authority over men in any way. But he gives gifts. And one of the gifts he gives to the church is pastors. Pastors and teachers. And pastors are teachers. They teach. And if you remember 1 Timothy chapter 3 that we read, they should be able to teach an elder who's a pastor who's an overseer. [15:22] Now here's another verse for you. Go to 1 Peter chapter 5. Another verse. 1 Timothy you were there. 2 Timothy. Titus. Philemon. Hebrews. James. 1 Peter. Or 1 Peter for all you UK people out there. 1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5. Look at verse 1. 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 1. Therefore, Peter talking, I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed. Notice what he says. Verse 2. Shepherd or pastor the flock of God among you. Again, he's talking to the elders. You pastor. Pastors or elders. Elder is pastor. That's what they do. They're coming to shepherd or pastor God's sheep. This is God's church. Not my church. People ask me, where's your church?

[16:26] I say, well, the church I pastor is over. It's not my church. This is God's church. This is God's people. Right? Y'all should be saying amen.

That's better. Thank you. Pastors are elders who shepherd and care for God's people which begs the need for church membership, by the way.

How do shepherds shepherd if they don't know who is a sheep? How do they do that? Well, if you come three times, then you're a sheep.

But what if it's four or five or twelve or ten? We have to have some way by which you know someone is walking with Christ and follows Jesus so you can start shepherding them.

This is why one of the reasons we here at Cottonwood Bible Church believe in the truth, the teaching of church membership is because you have pastors who shepherd because you've got to know who's in and who's out.

[17:32] Who's a part of us and who's not? And notice, if you would back to the passage, Peter says, shepherd the flock of God among you exercising oversight not under compulsion but voluntarily according to God and not for sake to gain but with eagerness nor yet does lording it over those allotted to your charge but proving to be examples to the flock.

This is what elders do. This is how they shepherd. This is how they pastor because they're pastors. And now one more verse that we're actually going to go back.

Now go back to 1 Timothy. I told you this is where we're going to land. We're going to end so to speak. 1 Timothy chapter 3. Go back to 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy chapter 3. 1 Timothy 3.

Because Paul says, if anyone aspires in the office of overseer. That's where you get the term episcopal or bishop. Mark Dever says this in his book *By Whose Authority?*

quote, clearly the New Testament refers to elders, shepherds, or pastors, and bishops, or overseers, in the context of the local church interchangeably. End quote.

[18:56] Elders oversee God's people, the body of Christ. It's not a separate title of those who oversee churches. That's Roman Catholicism.

That's the Roman Catholic Church. In Roman Catholic Church you have bishops, right? And you have cardinals, right? And then bishops and cardinals? Or does it go opposite? Oh, there's archbishops in between that. Oh, there's archbishops and then cardinals.

That's just, they make that up. That's not in the Bible. Because a bishop is an elder, is a pastor who's a bishop who pastors because he's an elder.

It's all used interchangeably. It's the same guy. There's no hierarchy structure. And notice what I keep saying when I use the noun elders.

I keep saying elders. Zzz. With an S. Plural. Not elder. Or elders. Elders. Plural. Oh, first Timothy, sorry, I put it on, but first Timothy, okay.

[19:59] Elders, plural. Why should it be plural? Plural. Each local church is called to have a plurality of elders to balance out each other and hold each other accountable.

I have there Acts chapter 14, verse 23, and you don't need to turn there, but I will read this for you. Acts 14, 23. Paul and Barnabas, or I should say Barnabas and Paul, they went through the churches, they established churches in the first missionary journey.

Now they're on their way. Back to those churches. In Acts chapter 14, they preached the gospel. They returned to Lystra, verse 21, Niconium and Antioch.

Verse 22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue faith, saying through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And then verse 23, and when they, Barnabas and Paul, had appointed elders, plural, for them, in each church, singular, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Elders, plural, in each church, singular. Paul appointed elders. You read, remember that, Titus chapter 1, a few moments ago.

[21:26] You read out loud what Titus was called to do, to appoint elders, plural, in that church. Each elder must be committed to working together by the power of the Holy Spirit and humble, Christ-like love for each other.

We need a plurality of men here. We've not had that since 2013. We need that. We need to have a plurality of elders to balance out each other and hold each other accountable as they shepherd God's people.

Some other questions I'm going to ask that you might be asking yourself. First, why does it have to be plural? Another question. Is it elder rule or elder led? Some churches, they have elder rule.

Other churches have elder led. So should it be elder rule or should it be elder led? The answer is yes. I gotcha. What do I mean?

You're still in 1 Timothy 3. Go to about maybe a page or so over in your Bible to chapter 5. Chapter 5, look at verse 17.

[22:47] Let the elders who rule well. Do elders rule? Yes. Biblical elders, they don't appeal outside the congregation to another as a final stop like Presbyterianism.

Presbyterians, they have elders and they have elders and this and then they go to that. No. Elders are called to rule. In a few moments, you're going to, oh, there is one more verse I'm going to have you go to probably.

Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17. Not till later. But the congregation is called to obey their leaders and submit to them. Biblical elders, they lead, they direct, they govern, and they rule.

But, final authority is with the congregation, not a small group of men. That's why we as Baptists believe in congregationalism.

And I put up there Matthew chapter 18, verse 17. When you do the discipline process of disciplining a member from the church, first step, you go to them personally, right?

[23:56] There's no repentance. Two or three go to them to call them to repentance. There's no repentance. And who do you tell it to? Probably maybe in that process, you tell it to the elders, those leadership in the congregation, sure.

But then the final say of that is not to the elders. Jesus says what? If they refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church. The congregation is the final say.

Not a small group of men. That's important to maintain that biblical mandate. So that's why we believe the elders rule.

Yes, sure. Are they leading? Of course they are. But the final authority is with the congregation, not the small group of men. Now, in a moment, we're going to talk about the relationship between the congregation and the elders.

I'm going to bring that up because that's another question that comes to mind. So after looking at these verses, how can we put together what are biblical elders or what they do?

[25:03] That's the next question I know you're thinking of. What are biblical elders? I'll give you four aspects. First, biblical elders, they are shepherds of God's flock.

They protect, they guide, they lead, they nourish, they comfort, and educate by preaching and teaching God's word and by prayer.

It would greatly benefit a congregation. Hear me now. It would greatly benefit, benefit you as a congregation if you would let your pastors do this.

Keep things from hindering them from being able to shepherd you in word and in prayer because that's what they're called to do. Amen.

They are shepherds of God's flock. Second aspect, what are biblical elders? Number two, they are overseers over the congregation.

[26:14] They direct, govern, manage, or oversee. They're servant leaders. They're not dictators.

Nor should they rule as dictators even though they may be accused of that. And you know, there's a line between leadership and dictatorship.

There's a line. They are overseers over the congregation. They shepherd God's flock. They're overseers over God's congregation.

Third, they're guardians over God's people. They guard. They take care of spiritual needs. They visit. They counsel. They pray. They love.

And they're holding fast to the word, to the truth. Remember you read that in Titus chapter one? Was it verse nine? Holding fast to the faithful word.

[27:18] They protect from false teaching. That's what they're called to do. So they shepherd God's flock. They're overseers over God's people.

They're guardians over God's people. And number four, they're also men of character. They're still there in 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy 3, you see how they're men of gracious character.

Not perfect, but they set the example. They must be those who engage in daily prayer and scripture reading on their own.

Because the flock will follow their leaders like priests, like people. They're men who love and proclaim the gospel. To be specific, I mean you read this, I read this, and I'm like, oh my goodness.

Can anybody even match these things that Paul gives here in 1 Timothy 3? Above reproach, a one woman man, temperate, excuse me, self-controlled, in other words, prudent, they have good judgment.

[28:28] Respectable, they're orderly, hospitable, they share their life and home, they're able to teach, they have the knowledge of the word. Not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, they're not fighters, they're gentle, they're willing to yield.

Uncontentious, they're peaceable. Free from the love of money, good managers, their children are faithful, not rebellious. Not a new convert, good rep with the unsaved, not self-willed, they're team players, not quick-tempered, a hothead lover of what is good, they help others, they're sensible, they think rightly, they're just, they conform to God's ways with others, they're devout, they're pious, they're pious towards God, they're self-controlled, they're holding fast the faithful word, they study, they know, they live the word of God, I mean, this is daunting.

At least, I feel that. So these, are the aspects of, what are biblical elders? These men, they shepherd, they oversee, and they're guardians, men of character.

And, by the way, and this is for free, if you see verse 1 of chapter 3 of 1 Timothy, it's a fine word, he desires.

You've got to want it. There's some guys, they got the character, they got the knowledge, they're competent, but they're like, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, no thanks.

[30:06] They don't want to do that. You can't force these guys, come on, please. No, no, no. It's got to be something he desires. He's going to want it.

I'm going to talk about that in just a moment. Calling, yeah, yeah, yeah. What? The next question you're thinking of, probably. I know, I can read your minds today.

Isn't that wonderful? That's how great of a pastor I am. I'm like, read your mind, what's the relationship between elders and the congregation then?

So you have this dynamic, wait a minute, wait a second. Elders, they lead, okay, it says they rule, but you just said the final authority is with the congregation. How does that work?

How does that work? Because you have, and I told you it wasn't going to be another verse, but there is. Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17, which you probably should turn there, a few pages forward in your Bible.

[31:12] Hebrews 13, 17. The writer of Hebrews is speaking to Hebrew Christians, and he says, obey your leaders and submit to them or obey your leaders and submit for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

Let them do this with joy, not with grief for this would be unprofitable for you. Don't be a pain, in other words. Let them lead you. The congregation is called to obey their leaders.

Hebrews 13, 17. Yet, this does not mean that leaders are infallible. The leadership will have to give an account to God. They're not in some elevated status.

Pastors are sheep too. I need you to minister to me. You know, I have feelings too.

So if I say things to you and it hurts your feelings, it goes both ways. I'm human too. Sometimes you might say things that hurts my feelings. You ever thought about that? Oh, you're the pastor.

[32:36] I need you to minister to me. You hear what I just said? I need you to minister to me. And a good way for you to remind yourself of this is when we have the Lord's Supper.

You want to know why? Because in the Roman Catholic Church, where's the Lord's Supper?

Where's the Eucharist, they call it? It's over here. You want to know why? Because it's here because the priest is the one who stands as a priest to the people.

That's why it's behind them. For us as evangelicals, Protestants, we put it down here, specifically Baptists.

Why? Because we're all the same level. And there's only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, right? And he's our high priest.

He is, I'm going to say this in a few moments, he is the senior pastor. He is the senior pastor. I minister to you, but you need to minister to me too.

[33:48] Realize this. The congregation is called to obey the leaders. It doesn't mean the leaders are infallible. All the responsibilities and the obligations that elders or pastors or bishops, with the same guy, all that they possess, has been given to them by their congregation.

You give me those responsibilities. You have given me those obligations. So it seems that a man is called to be an elder.

It's put in his heart. 1 Timothy 3, verse 1. He has equalities. And that call is confirmed by the congregation.

The congregation says, yes, we can see that in him. And then what happens is this. Once the people confirm the calling of an elder or pastor, they should then appoint, trust, and obey their leaders with God-fearing trust, especially in significant and unclear matters. or to put it bluntly, in other words, let them lead you. You're giving them this. You as a congregation, the final authority rests with you.

[35 : 14] So you give them those responsibilities. You give them those obligations. And so now you're called to obey your leaders and submit to them. Let them lead you.

And by the way, you have this whole aspect about being appointed or ordained like once an elder, always an elder. That's not necessarily the case.

The modern ecclesiastical ordination concept or a special anointing ordination, no, you just appoint them. Because every member of Cottonwood Bible Church is a priest of God, all sharing the responsibilities and obligations in that way.

You're just appointing them. There's no type of special anointing of ordination. And then the last question I know you're thinking about is this.

How does the pastor fit into all this? This guy, how does he fit into all this? Since elders are called pastors, it will be biblical for all the elders in a local church to be regarded as pastors.

[36 : 28] I think it was, I could be wrong at this, like Canyon Bible Church in Prescott or might be the one in Prescott Valley but all the elders are called pastors. Pastors, pastors, and some guys are paid, some guys aren't paid but they're all pastors.

Because Jesus is the senior pastor. Right? Who's the senior pastor of this church? Jesus. Jesus. It would be wise though as a church, it's wise to have one as the main pastor or elder who functions as a leader among leaders.

They call it the first among equals. Like how Peter, he was the spokesman for the disciples. He was kind of a leader among leaders. But they all have different gifts, they all have different abilities. realizing that they function together. One writer said this about leadership.

Quote, a church without godly leaders is an endangered church. A church that does not train leaders is an unfaithful church.

[37 : 46] Without godly, faithful, replicating leadership, churches suffer deeply. unquote. I won't have you turn there, but it did remind me what Paul says in 2 Timothy chapter 2 when he says this to Timothy.

He says, the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

You got four groups there or four person or persons. You got Paul, the things I have taught to you, Timothy, you teach that to faithful men who are going to teach others also.

One, two, three, four. That's the process. You're training leaders. So leadership is vital.

Please pray for God to raise up leaders for us. Next week, I'm actually going to do that. I'm actually going to need to look and be praying.

[39 : 07] I've been considering about nominating someone elder or someone for deacon. I've been praying through that. You should be praying for that too. I need you to do that.

And yet, keep in mind that Jesus is our senior pastor. Jesus is the one who's shepherding his church. He's got this. He's got it all under control. He's been good.

He's been faithful. He's got it all. He's got it all. He's got it all. And that's why we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper because he's been so faithful to us to die on our behalf and to wash us of our sin and justify us in God's sight.

We'll remember that in a few moments. God knows what he's doing. Pray, I encourage you. Pray for God to raise up leaders in his church.

We need it. Let's take a moment and do that right now and ask and really display our dependence upon God. Father, we do pray.

[40 : 06] We take him and pray that you raise up men. We need more pastors. One or two. We need deacons which we'll look at next week.

One or two. You would raise them up. And we know you'll do it in your time. We're in a different place.

We're changing so drastically as a church. We've changed this whole year. Lord, we're excited to see what you're going to do.

As we just sang a few moments ago, use us now. Lord, we exalt your name. So I pray you raise up leaders. In Jesus' name we ask.

Amen. So we're going to partake of the elements. And this is a tangible reminder to remind of the gospel, to taste it and feel it.

[41:13] And if the grape juice is bad, to even smell it. That's a joke. But what I want to do is remind you, if you're here and you're not a Christian, this is not for you.

This is for you to watch and to learn. And if you're, hey, I'm not a member of this church. Look, if you come from a church of like faith and practice, and we would probably prefer that you've been baptized by immersion, partake it with us.

We're not closed communion. And we want to encourage you too, if you're a Christian and you've had a run-in with someone who's a Christian, or even not a Christian, you've not gone to try and make things right with them, we think it'd probably be wise for you to first make things right with them before you partake of the elements.

To be better for you, more profitable for you. And the next time, November 1st, we'll partake of the elements again. Then you can partake of it then. So I want to encourage you, just a few moments, we'll take a few moments of silence, which we do, to let your mind just fill, fill your mind with truth.

As we were learning in the first hour with the Galatians, speak the gospel to yourself, examine your heart, see how evil that you are, and yet how much God has loved you and his son, and has saved you, and Christ lives in you, yet not I, but Christ in me.

[42:41] So fill your mind with that truth. After a few moments of silence, we'll give us some instructions about how to do this again. But do just a few moments between you and the Lord, okay? Given, we're so grateful that we're justified.

God's grace to us, and it behooves us, as you have shown such amazing grace to us, Father, in your son, that you, Spirit, would work in our hearts that we would show that same grace to each other as your people, and that we would proclaim this grace of truth, this gracious truth to the world, that they might respond, that they might repent and trust in Christ alone.

So that's what we pray to that end. Raise up leaders to lead us in that direction, we pray. In your name, Jesus, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.