

Pressure/Blessing

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians. Chapter 8. If you're visiting with us, you can pull out the black Bible, the chair in front of you, and find page, go to the back, find page 143.

2 Corinthians chapter 8. Page 143 in that black Bible. Starting in verse 16. 8, 16, and we'll read through chapter 9, verse 5.

That goes together, so that's why I'm putting that part together. Chapter 8, verse 16, to chapter 9, verse 5. Let me read, and then we'll do our study.

But thanks be to God, who puts the same eagerness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very eager, he's gone to you of his own accord.

And we've sent along with him the brother whose fame in the gospel is through all the churches.

And not only this, but he's also been elected by the churches to travel with us in this grace, which is being served by the Lord himself, and our eagerness.

[1:35] Avoiding this, verse 20, that no one should find fault with us in our serving of this abundance. We have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

And we sent with him our brother. We've often tested and found zealous in many things, but now even more zealous because of his great trust in you. As for Titus, my partner.

A fellow worker for you. As for our brethren, apostles of the churches, a glory of Christ. Therefore, in the presence of the churches, show them the proof of your love, and are boasting to them about you.

Chapter 9, verse 1. For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints, for I know your willingness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.

I have sent the brethren that are boasting about you, may not be made empty in this matter, that, as I was saying, may be prepared. Lest, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to speak of you, should be put to shame by this assurance.

[2:55] So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren, that they would go on ahead to you, and arrange beforehand your previously promised blessing.

And this blessing to be ready in this way, as a blessing, and not as a gift given grudgingly. Tuesday. Tuesday. Oh, you vote. Maybe some of you already voted, you casted your balance in already. I'm sure you've received the flyers, the phone calls, you're driving, you see the signs, right?

I think it was on Thursday, Phoebe got the mail, she's in the kitchen, and I went, yeah, yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah, put it in the trash.

Talk about being pressured, right? They use lies, gimmicks, slander, gossip, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, to get us to vote for them. It's one thing to talk about truth, and the issues that you stand for, it's another thing to use a tax.

[4:07] Well, that's not good for Arizona. Well, that's not good for Arizona. Blah, blah, blah, blah. Pressure. When we think of pressure, we don't necessarily think of something that's positive.

It's negative. Don't pressure me. Don't push me. Right? We think of it that way. That's our automatic knee-jerk reaction. Yet there is a place for good pressure, or as some have called it, good peer pressure.

Peer pressure in a good sense. Though we only think of it in a bad way. Pressure can be good to persuade people, which is exactly what Paul does here.

So it seems like these things would be a contrast. Boasting in your weakness, boasting in the Lord. Why would you boast in your weakness if you're boasting in the Lord? Because God uses our weakness to show strength. Right?

In the same way, today, you see an apparent contrast, paradox, where, we come to this part, pressure, blessing.

[5:18] Pressure to bless. Remember, when you think of pressure, you can think of something that's negative. No, no, no. Paul uses pressure to bring about blessing. Apparent contradiction.

Contradiction. Apparent paradox. But it's not. Pressure, bless, or blessing. I'll give you some statements to unpack this for you.

Pressure, bless, or blessing. Seeing God's work in the gospel and others pressures, and finally, persuades us to such a degree that we bless others.

Instead of being apathetic, we generously bless others because of all that God has done for us by His grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The basis of this pressure, the motivation to pressure us is the gospel. And when we observe gospel-zealous blessing done by others, it pressures us to gladly bless others in the same way and in the same manner instead of having a bad attitude, giving with a grudging spirit because you just have to under compulsion.

[6:51] When we see others take seriously gospel-zealous blessing with such high integrity, it graciously pressures us to also take our blessing seriously.

We bless out of real love, not apathy. So if there's anything you want to take away from this message, it's that Paul puts the pressure on the Corinthians by the gospel so they will bless others because they've been blessed so much by God.

as Paul boasted of the zeal and the eagerness of the Corinthians to grace the Jerusalem church, he was putting good pressure upon them to follow through with their words and bless in their giving.

that's why we give, that's why we minister, that's why we serve. We serve one another, we minister to one another, we grace one another because we've been so graced, because we've been so blessed, because God has given so much to us in Christ and the gospel.

I mean, think about it, doesn't God pressure us to believe in the gospel? God pressures us to trust Christ. I mean, in a negative sense, you will face condemnation in hell.

[8:19] In a positive sense, you can have your guilt taken away, your sins forgiven, washed away, cleansed, and be made right with God. I mean, who would not want that?

I mean, think about it. I mean, you think about the benefits and the blessing of a relationship with God and Christ, your creator. Why wouldn't anybody want that? It almost doesn't make any sense why people don't want to be Christians.

You can have this. But they feel that pressure and people don't like it, right? So, question, how did Paul pressure them?

Seven ways. Seven ways Paul pressured them. Number one, the eagerness of others or their zeal or their earnestness.

There's different ways you can translate that word, earnestness, there in verse 16. Thanks be to God. He gave thanks to God. He gave Titus the same eagerness or earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

[9:23] The same zeal that Paul had, Titus had. They both wanted the benefit of the Corinthians. Titus' zeal was filled with knowledge wanting Corinth to benefit.

He wanted them to have joy. Once again, the fact that they participated in this grace was for their advantage.

It was for their benefit to gain joy in the giving. You want to get joy? Give!

You want to be joyful? Minister! You want to be, choose our vernacular, happy? Serve someone else.

Just a side note, and you don't have to even pay for this one. Just a side note, one of the things that they use for depression is you go and serve others. That's one of the remedies, a remedy for depression.

[10:26] You serve, you go and minister to others. You go do something for others. They even do that in AA. That was for free. Look at verse 17.

He says, For he not only accepted our appeal, but himself very earnest, he's gone ahead to you of his own accord. His zeal showed itself in action. He went to Corinth. God had done work, such a work in Titus that he acted out of his own accord, which was also encouraged by Paul.

So it wasn't necessarily Paul telling Titus to go. Why is he going to go to Corinth? His zeal drove him to go to them. Maybe Titus was carrying this letter to the Corinthians, and the two other

companions that he spoke about later on that we're going to be reading, they're there at Corinth as the letter was being read.

Here's the two guys, and here's Titus. But this should serve yet as another motivation for Corinth. If God's grace and Christ had still worked in the Macedonians and in Titus, then Corinth was invited and even called to cooperate with him freely, voluntarily, and with spontaneity.

Be ones who do this grace giving. Be part of that. Jump in on it. Not to mention, it's just another reminder of Paul's devotion to them and his love for them, and now Titus' love and devotion for them.

[11:59] You know, it's amazing how much this church was loved, even though they were such a big pain. They were the biggest pain in the world to Paul.

Look how much Paul loved them. Look how much Titus loved them. interesting. The eagerness of others is the first one. Second one, this is probably one of the biggest ones too.

Integrity. He uses integrity to pressure them. Integrity for the gospel and for God's glory. Notice how he says in verse 18, we sent along with him the brother whose fame in the gospel is through all the churches.

and not only this, he was elected or appointed or picked by the churches to travel with us in this grace. So Paul, given the fact that Paul was under such suspicion by Corinth, remember, they doubted Paul so much.

So he sent with Titus a brother whose praise in the gospel was throughout all the churches. So somehow, this brother was renowned in the gospel. So Paul, he wanted to ensure transparency and honesty in this collection for the Jerusalem church.

[13:24] So he had this guy go, which was really, he was chosen by the churches. I mean, fidelity to the gospel, presenting the gospel, this guy was on fire. This guy was on it.

We don't know who he was. Some think it was Luke, maybe Apollos, we don't know. So, regardless, notice how Paul celebrated others. It wasn't all about Paul.

And notice how these guys followed Paul through thick and thin. Unlike the Corinthian church. And this was significant because another aim for Paul that he had for Corinth was to bring them into an enduring connection and fellowship with other churches.

so that Corinth doesn't think they're just solo. Oh, we're just going to do our own thing. No, integrity was for the sake of the gospel.

What bound them together was the gospel. That's why they have the conference together for the gospel. Different and different things with churches, yes, that's true.

[14:30] But what should be most important is the gospel. Are we together and unified in the gospel in this way of thinking and ministering in the gospel? He wanted them to understand this, to see the bigger picture.

So, he was appointed, known for service in the gospel, chosen by these churches to travel with them in this act of grace. And notice he says, excuse me, towards the end of verse 19, which is being, New American Standard says, administered, it's really the word diakonos, which means served.

It's being served by Paul and his associates. And notice he says, for the glory of the Lord and our willingness. The grace also served the willingness of Paul and his associates.

It would serve their zeal and their willingness. It was already displayed. It was secure. The Corinthians, full participation of God's work of grace. But it wasn't just giving money.

It was giving for the glory of God to display his glory. Did you see that? Isn't that interesting? I mean, when you're giving, you're giving for the glory of God.

[15:40] That's what he's saying. The serving of this grace, which is for the glory of God. And then verse 20.

In New American Standard it says, take your precaution. Literally, it says from Greek, avoiding this, that no one would find fault with us. In other words, Paul took precautions with these individuals traveling with him.

So no one would find fault in the serving of, notice he says, in the service, same word administration, see that? Of this generous gift, in the Greek it means abundance or fatness.

Fatness. We're going to talk about that in a moment. So we'll go back to that. Where am I at in my notes? Oh, I'm right here. Okay. I lost my place. Yeah, yeah.

Okay. In the serving of this abundance to the Jerusalem church. We'll come back to abundance. Hold on. So we wanted no opportunity for anyone to misjudge him.

[16:49] Integrity. Because remember, the Corinthians were suspicious of Paul. that he was trying to defraud them. Or trying to take advantage of them.

He didn't want to take the chance that fault will be found in his apostolic mission. I mean, there was a suspicion. Oh, this whole project, it was designed by Paul to bribe the Jerusalem church to support his ministry.

Oh, that's what he's trying to do. Oh, yes. Oh, he's quietly retaining a commission for himself. So, 90% for Paul, 10% for the Jerusalem church. That's what he's doing.

He's going to take most of it for himself. Whatever the Corinthians were like. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha. I don't know. They were suspicious of Paul. So he took, it was vital for him.

Integrity. I'm going to have all these different guys. This guy, picked by all the churches, and you're talking about another guy that he chose, part of his ministry. For, or of this generous gift, literally, this fatness, is important.

[17:59] In the Old Testament, this word fatness, it signified abundance from material blessing. Vineyards, fields, things like that. So Paul, he emphasized the size of the gift, the reason why he ensured its transparency.

So apparently, this was a big size gift, a fatness, which was an abundance of God's goodness and blessing to all of them. Get what he's trying to say. God, in his good blessing, provided this abundance.

And you can get in on that. You can be a part of this. And I'm making sure via integrity, as this is being given, it's not for me, it's not so I can get a commission, it's not so everyone is a part of my ministry, it's to help the Jerusalem church.

This fatness to serve them. That's what he's talking about. Think about it too. All our labor, all our existence, everything that we have comes to us as a gift from God.

Everything that we have comes to us as a gift from God. Really, right? I mean, doesn't it? Out of his abundant goodness and blessing, God communicates.

[19:21] In his abundant goodness of grace and mercy, God communicated his love to us and the Lord Jesus Christ and it's this very gift of grace from God that drives and causes us to give.

Because you're keeping in mind, keeping in mind that it's not about money, it's about you give for the glory of God, you're giving yourself. We talked about that last week, remember?

We give ourselves. Notice again, the integrity, verse 21. For we have, excuse me, for we have regard for what is honorable not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

We take thought not only of that which is good before the Lord but also before humans the decision to send. All these delegates was vitally important not just before the Lord.

I mean, he sees everything, right? But also for people who can't see everything and they won't see everything. Paul took this seriously. Obviously, he's defending himself from the suspicions of the Corinthians who did not trust him.

[20:31] This was wise of Paul. Notice the other representative, verse 22. And we have sent with him another brother, our brother, whom we've often tested and found him, the word diligent, another word for zealous or earnest, eager in many things but now even more eager for you because of his great confidence or his trust in you.

Here's another guy who loved Corinth. Corinth was loved and yet they were so like a little little chihuahuas, you know, like that, right?

Like, come on. If you have a chihuahua, sorry, I don't mean to offend you on that. Another representative of a church delegate with Titus and like Titus, this brother was zealous and had great confidence and trust in the Corinthians.

He was faithful. He had integrity. Paul gave two thumbs up for this guy too. Again, why are these delegates? Because Paul was more susceptible to being misrepresented by Corinth than most of the churches he planted.

I mean, think about it. All these different churches, Philippi, Ephesus, all the churches in Galatia and here's Corinth. They defaulted to doubting Paul instead of trusting him and Paul was setting this whole thing up.

[21:52] Integrity. I care about you, Corinthians, so much. I'm gonna make sure that this guy and this guy and this guy and this guy were all together on this so you don't think I'm trying to get a

kickback for me because it's for the gospel.

It's for the glory of God, not for me. Notice the pressure he's trying to put on them. Do you see the pressure Paul placed on Corinth?

This is coming. Don't blow this. Right? Don't screw this up. Don't let their confidence in you, these guys, Titus, this other brother and this other brother, they have confidence in you.

Don't blow this. Don't let their confidence in you fail. You see this? You see what he's doing? A much more incentive to listen to their apostle, their pastor.

Verse 23 sums it up. Titus, Paul's partner, my partner, my co-worker. And then he says, a fellow worker among you.

[23:02] In other words, receive him like you're receiving me. These brethren, he says in verse 23, apostles of the churches, I translate that for you. It says messengers in the American Standard, right?

It's actually apostles. Apostles simply means sent one. They were sent ones. The church, see, understand this. So the churches are saying, we're sending these guys.

These guys represent us. Ooh, the pressure's mounting now. He's putting a lot of pressure on corn. These were sent by the churches.

And notice what he says. Apostles of the church, notice the last word, verse 23, again, the glory of God, a glory. It says to Christ. It's actually glory of Christ. Christou.

These apostles were Christ's glory, bearing Christ and his glory in their lives as representatives, sent ones from the churches.

[24:03] So you want to see the glory of God? It's in the local church. And here these guys were representatives of the local church. They're the glory of Christ.

They were recipients and bearers of the gospel. In other words, don't take this lightly. He's putting pressure on them to bless, to give, to grace.

Take seriously these representatives. Why? Because they're for the glory of Christ. Integrity.

Number three, it would be the proof of your love.

This is where verse 24 comes in. A God works real love. Notice he says, therefore, so after all this, eagerness of others, integrity, therefore, it says here in the American Standard, openly before the churches.

Literally, it's in the presence of the churches. Show them or display the proof of your love. Provide the proof and demonstration of their love.

[25:12] And Paul's boasting in the presence of the churches. This was not some ultimatum that he's given to the churches. You better give her. No, he wasn't doing that. This would be a test of their genuine love, not just for the churches, but for Paul.

Not just for Paul, but for the other churches. This would show that they really, truly did love. Love in the sense that God has done a work in them.

Love in the sense that God has changed them. Love in the sense that God has transformed them.

How does God pressure us into giving? Like this.

Hasn't God done a work in you? Hasn't God changed your heart? Why aren't you more giving then? See? That pressures us.

Why don't we give of our time to each other when God has given his own time for us? Love, the love and grace of Christ that they came to know in the Lord Jesus Christ because their giving stems from his giving.

[26:32] This would be a fresh experience of the grace of God in Christ by giving. a display of their love, an opportunity to show God had worked in their heart a true love and a heart that genuinely and willingly wanted to give because of all that God has done for them in Christ.

I can't give enough. And then notice he says, excuse me, and of my boasting about you to vindicate Paul's boasting in them.

Okay, wait, I won't talk about that. Paul's boasting in Corinth. Wait a second. I thought they were ones, they were the nippy chihuahua, sorry if you have a chihuahua dog, I don't mean it.

The nippy, right? Remember, that's Corinth. Given the rocky relationship, when he makes the statement that he's boasting about Corinth, it tells us two things.

First, how much Paul loved them. But second, Paul trusted in God's work in the gospel because he certainly didn't trust the Corinthians.

[27:49] He trusted God had done a work in the Corinthians. You see the difference? It's one thing to trust the Corinthians. It's another thing to trust that God has done a work in the Corinthians.

That's who God trusted. That's what that tells us. Interesting, Paul saw the positive aspects of the Corinthians as proofs that God had done a heart transforming spirit work act in them.

That's what he trusted. See, that's why there's pressure to bless. You pressure people to bless, not because this is what Jesus was doing.

Wait a second, shouldn't this not be a proof of your love for Christ and his people? Shouldn't you take the opportunity to minister to others and serve one another because God has done so much for you and you can show and display how much you love others, how much you love Christ.

You see the difference? Proof of your love, integrity, the earnestness of others.

[28:55] These last few go pretty fast because they shoot us down into chapter nine, the first five verses. And so number four would be this, their zeal to give, their meaning the Corinthian zeal.

We talk about the eagerness of the zeal of others, now he's going to talk about their own zeal. Look at verse one and two. For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints for I know about your readiness, willingness, eagerness, your zeal, of which I boast about you to Macedonians.

To what extent? That even Achaia has been prepared since last year and your zeal has stirred up most of them. what's he saying?

First in verse one, he insists that they didn't need any instruction. I don't need to tell you about this stuff, practical or theological. Why? Because I've already told you about it.

You guys should know this. Ouch, talk about pressure. Recall and implement my previous instruction. I have no other word for you, so do what I told you before.

[30:08] That's what he's saying. Because he says in verse two, for I know about your zeal.

I know about your eagerness. You guys were eager. How eager were they? How willing were they to give to the Jerusalem church? The grace given by the Macedonians was driven by the Corinthians zeal to give.

He doesn't belittle them for delaying. No, no, no. He showed how their zeal had impacted not just Macedonia but Achaia too. They were also ready to be part of the collection because of you.

Not that he's trying to butter them up. he was utilizing a form of good peer pressure. They saw your zeal and responded.

Other churches were driven to give because of their zeal to give. Look, when churches see how a specific church is a heartwarming God works, joy-giving church, it motivates them to give too.

[31:25] I mean, if other churches saw us ministering, serving, caring, each other, loving each other, I mean, that would ricochet in this community. That church is just, they just want to serve each other.

They're weird. They're just weird. Why are they weird like that? They just love to serve each other.

They love to minister to each other from just these little things over here and those little details over there and those little things over there.

He boasted to the Macedonians of their zeal to give to the Jerusalem church, proving that Paul trusted in Christ and Christ's work in them, not in the Corinthians.

His boasting was really in Christ, not in them. And yet, his boasting signaled to the Corinthians that he truly cared for them.

and had confidence in them. All because of God's work. We must trust God to be faithful to work in the hearts of his people. Paul did even in that cantankerous pain in the rear end church, Corinth.

[32:42] It was their zeal. That's another way he showed is of pressuring them in a good way to bless. Number five, preparation to give.

Nine, chapter nine verse three, but I have sent the brethren that are boasting about you may not be made empty in this matter, and as I was saying, you may be prepared. Another purpose in sending the brothers was so that his boasting about their long prepared gift would not be in vain.

In other words, that they were already preparing. They were preparing to give. They were willing, ready, in other words, to give.

He had told the Macedonians that the Corinthians were ready and prepared and Paul wanted to find them ready when he came. Notice verse four, less, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not as big of you, should be put to shame by this assurance.

Assurance of what? That God had done a work in them. It was likely that some Macedonians would accompany Paul and his trip and if they did and they found them unprepared, oh yeah, we're supposed to give, yeah, here's a couple bucks, put that in that plate or something like that.

[33:59] Something like that. If they find that, Paul, as associates, along with the Corinthians, would be shamed. Ah, you say this to Corinth, this will be a big deal.

Corinth, Corinth, the Corinthians, they wanted to be a distinguishable group of people. We're Corinthians, they would say. If they were unprepared, they'd lose face.

Oh, they didn't want that. Paul knew how to persuade, didn't he? He really knew how to persuade. He took something that was a weakness of theirs and the Corinthians, and he turned it into a strength.

actually used it. You Corinthians don't want to be shamed, do you? Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Well, then be prepared to give.

You see what he's doing? He's pressuring them to bless. Interesting what Paul's doing here. Notice what he does here as well. Number six, fulfill your promise.

[35:08] This is in verse five. So it's not necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you. So before he would go, and arrange beforehand your previously promise, and the American standard says bountiful gift, it's actually the word eulogia, or eulogia, which is the word blessing.

You know, eulogy, for memorial service? So we get the word blessing. blessing. So, your previously promised blessing.

Now, we're going to talk about blessing in a moment, but first notice, your previously promised. Fulfill your promise. You made this promise.

He called the promise that they made, would they fulfill their word? Make good on your promise, let the doing match the wanting. He's not slandering them, he's not belittling them, he's not nailing them, he could have.

No, he used truth graciously to pressure them into following through what they promised a year ago. See what Paul's doing here? He's pressuring them to bless.

[36:32] He's pressuring them to give. Not in a way of, you guys should be doing this, he's not doing that. You guys promised this, you should be prepared to give.

There's integrity, prove your love, the eagerness of, your own zeal should show this. But then here he actually does use the negative.

And this is the seventh way that he persuades or pressures them. Number seven, don't have a bad attitude. Notice the last part, this is word to word blessing, we're talking about blessing.

Verse five, your previously promised blessing. Now we're talking about blessing first and then we'll unpack the rest of this. Blessing. This is kind of like a communication.

Why? Because when we're talking about blessing, blessing denotes spoken words, like may the Lord bless you. We speak that, may bless you. It's a spoken word communication.

[37:41] So he's talking about don't have a bad attitude. He's saying, first of all, this would be personal. It's not just material, it's a personal thing. Because God is a personal God, right? And the other thing he says, why he used this word blessing is this, he set them in the place of God.

Because, as it says in the next part, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, or in other words from the Greek, this blessing, to be ready in this way, as a blessing.

So as they shared in God's goodness, they have goodness to give to others. As God had so worked in them by his grace, they give what they received from him.

This is what it should be called. Remember he called it grace in the first 15 verses of chapter 8?

Now he's saying this whole thing, it's a blessing. You're going to bless the Jerusalem church.

Let it be known as, or to be displayed as ready, as prepared as this, in this way, as a blessing, and notice the next part, numeric standard, and not affected by covetousness.

[39:05] I think if you have an NIV, that translates to really good, which is something like not as a gift given grudgingly. Not as a gift grudgingly given.

That is greed on the part of the Corinthians so that it looked like they were hoarding and being stingy with earthly goods given to them by God and his goodness.

So if the Macedonians showed up and they had a bad attitude and really looked bad, it's like, well, okay, here, are you happy now? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

That's the attitude. No, but instead of something that you're giving grudgingly, well, I just, I have to do this because no one else is going to do this.

the gift of bless. Because of God's great grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving should be by his grace a willing response of blessing to others, not something we do begrudgingly, reluctantly, unwillingly, or even resentfully.

[40:30] And when we're talking about giving, we're not just talking about just our resources, we're talking about giving time, we give ourselves. Interesting, ministry opportunities are coming up.

Here's how you can give yourself. Is the gospel going to drive you? Is the gospel going to, motivate and undergird?

Or is this going to be done begrudgingly? Here's the seven ways that Paul was pressuring the Corinthians to bless.

Seeing God's work in the gospel and others pressures and finally persuades us to such degree that we bless others. Instead of being apathetic, we generously bless others because of all that God has done for us by His grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To gladly bless others in the same way and manner. Not having a bad attitude. I'll close with this. I've been reading this book by Tim Chester called Enjoying God.

[41:44] Listen to what he says about how God has given to us. When you think of Jesus, your first thought should be to think of Him before the Father on your behalf.

He Himself is the living sign and pledge of our salvation. His right to come before God is your right to come before God. His location is your location.

As long as Jesus is in heaven, our place there is guaranteed. As long as Jesus has the Father's approval, we have the Father's approval. As long as Jesus lives, our life is guaranteed and Jesus lives forever.

He continues, in every failure we can enjoy the grace that comes to us through Jesus. Pause for a moment to think what this means for you. Every failure, every sin, every dark thought might seem to throw our future into doubt.

Am I really accepted by God? Can I really be forgiven? Can I still call heaven my home? Lift the eyes of faith to see Jesus in the presence of God on your behalf. Listen to how much Christ has done for you.

[43:02] How much he's given to you. Because you failed to live in obedience to God, we deserve eternal punishment. Feel the weight of that.

Look into the infinite darkness of judgment and then lift your eyes to see Christ, your Christ, your sacrifice, light, love, and joy flood into view.

This is how we enjoy Christ. We bring our failure to him and receive his grace. And he says this, every day Jesus says to us in the gospel, I'll take your failures, sin, guilt, bitterness, curse, wrath, and death, and in return, I'll give you joy, love, life, righteousness, and peace.

And he's quoting John Owen, so he says this about John Owen, that John Owen called this blessed bartering with God. Our job is gladly to accept the deal, hand over our sin, and receive Christ's love. And then he's quoting Owen again, what? Quote, shall we daily come to him with our filth, our guilt, our sins? Is this really what Jesus wants to have our mess given to him day after day?

[44:30] Here's Owen's answer. And I end with this. Quote, there's not anything that Jesus Christ is more delighted with than that his saints should always have communion with him in this business of giving and receiving.

We give him our sin. We receive from him grace. And so let that be as we come to this time of the Lord's Supper to be your focus.

And so then that focus of the gospel will be the very thing that will undergird you giving to each other, you ministering to each other, you serving each other, displaying the very gospel that you say, you proclaim, you believe.

And this is, if you're not even a member here, you can partake of this with us. If you've been baptized by immersion, you come from a church of like faith and practice, come with us and experience this with us, the tangible aspects of the gospel.

If you're not a Christian, we don't think you should partake of this. And if you have not made things right with another person, you have tension, conflict, and have not tried to resolve it at all, we think you should try first to resolve it and then come next time to partake of the Lord's Supper.

[45 : 58] Because this is how God has given to us. We give Him our sin, He gives us His grace. So take this time as you would, a few moments to think, ponder what we've seen in God's word, and to think about how much God has given to us in His Son, Christ, and after a few moments, have the men come and pass out the bread to us, okay?

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