

The Kingdom Of God In All Of Life Together

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, this morning I'm going to talk to you about the kingdom of God and all of life together. Kingdom of God and all of life together. This is the mission of our church.

The mission of our church is the kingdom of God and all of life together. So for those newbies who are here, you're wondering what our church is about. I came on the right Sunday. This is what our church is about.

Take it or leave it. Kingdom of God and all of life together. And as I talk about this, the goal part of this is to make sure that we're all on the same page.

Because if we're not on the same page as a church, Mark 3.25 says, If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

We have to be on the same page. We have to be in agreement. We have to be in unity. Philippians 1.27, it says, So that's really what I'm talking about here.

[1 : 1 0] Standing firm in one spirit, with one line, and then striving side by side. Oftentimes it's easy, you know, to be a part of church. It's just like, well, you've got the paid professionals.

You've got the leaders. They're doing their thing. Then we just kind of fall in line. We're just attenders. We're just observers. We're spectators. But those are the people who are really doing the ministry.

Those are the people who are really doing the stuff, so to speak. We have no desire to do that. We have no desire to be that in any way, shape, or form. We desire to be participants and partners together.

And this visual of striving side by side for the faith of the gospel is what we desire to do. Because that's what Christ desires for us to do.

Amos 3.3 in the New King James says, Can two walk together unless they are agreed? Okay? Can two walk together unless they are agreed? It's a rhetorical question. They can't.

[2 : 0 5] Right? They have to be agreed in order to walk together. We call the members of our church partners. And if you look at the dictionary definition of partner, one of the definitions is one who shares.

Okay? And so, as a church, we want to share in priorities. We want to share in vision. We want to share in responsibility. Okay? We want to share priorities, share vision, and share responsibility. And that's, I think, the sweet spot of where God wants his church. So, let's look at those three different things. The first one. Shared priorities. Okay?

The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the thing that brings us this shared priority. Jesus taught that we should seek first the kingdom of God and that our hearts follow what we treasure. Okay?

Matthew 6.33 says, seek first the kingdom of God. It doesn't say, seek second. Seek third. It doesn't say, seek your convenience first. Make sure that the kingdom is, you know, up there.

[3 : 0 4] It's near the top of your priority list. It says, seek first the kingdom of God. And then it says, where your treasure is in Matthew 6.21, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Okay? So, when we treasure and seek first the kingdom, our hearts end up in the same place when we share the same priorities. Okay? You can try to put your heart someplace where your priorities are not, and it'll never work.

Where your treasure is or where your priority is, where you, the things you value, the things you treasure, the things you prioritize, is where your heart goes.

One of the reasons we end up failing at things in life is because we are trying to put our energies into a place where our heart isn't. Well, why? Because we have a different priority than the thing that we're trying to do.

Where your treasure is or your priority is, your heart follows. And when we are trying to be a church that doesn't prioritize the same things, that doesn't treasure the same things, and then be one heart, it's never going to happen.

[4 : 06] You can't have a church that has, whose heart is together, if we don't have the same priority. You follow me there? Okay, so we have to share the same priority of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is what he says to seek first. It's basically treasuring Christ and his rule. What is the kingdom of God? I like to define it as what God wants and the way he wants it.

We're on earth as it is in heaven, right? But he asks us to pray. What God wants, the way he wants it. One author said it's God's rule over everything, everywhere, for all time and eternity.

Wilkins Simpson describes it as the realm of God's uncontested rule. Okay? That's what we're seeking. We're seeking the rule of God. We're seeking God to rule over everything, everywhere, for all time and eternity.

Not just a couple hours on a Sunday morning. Not just a couple hours on a small group, house, church, missional community, on a Wednesday night or this night or the other. We're looking for God to rule and reign over every aspect of our life, everywhere, for all time.

[5 : 10] And it starts in our households, extends into our churches, and then it goes everywhere else. We're not content with a little bit here and a little bit there. We want Jesus to be seen for who he is and to be submitted to him in who he is, that he is the ruler.

He's not content with a part of us. He doesn't just want a little bit of us. And he's certainly not content for us to sprinkle a little Jesus into our life and call that Christianity. He is the Lord and he is the King.

And for you to profess that he is your Savior and not believe that he is your King and Lord is actually hypocrisy. Because the only way he has the authority to save you is if he's King and Lord. So to profess saving faith without a faith that believes in his Lordship and his Kingdom rule is not a faith that can save you.

Okay? He has to be God. He has to be King. He has to be Lord in order to have the authority to save you. Otherwise, he's just a good guy with good intentions. And that's not what he is.

[6 : 13] He is the Lord. And he is King. And we cannot separate him into little separate pieces as if he can be dissected into different attributes that we can, like, I'll take that part of you, Jesus, but not so much that part of you.

When you believe he is who he is, you have to believe all of who he is. And that's what the Kingdom of God is all about. It's believing and submitting to the rule of God in everything. Like I said, it starts in your household.

Are we seeking first the Kingdom of God in our own households? Does Jesus rule over every aspect of our household? To do that, we have to ask the question, what does God want in my household?

Not what do I want, not what is most convenient to me. What does God want? And it's easy to sanctify our own selfish desires and call that what God wants.

And sometimes we just don't even want to ask the question. We don't want to ask the question sometimes what God wants. We don't want to ask the question what he wants in our household. What does God want in my marriage?

[7 : 11] What does God want in my single life? What does God want in my parenting? What does God want for my kids' bedtime? What if it's inconvenient for me? What does God want for your kids' bedtime?

What does God want in my home? What does God want me to spend my time on in my home?

What does God even want for the home that I live in? I'm asking the Lord for all these things.

How we do life together. How we relate as a family. I want the kingdom of God to come into my household. I want the kingdom of God to come in my church. We're not giving God a section of our life a little bit here and there.

We're setting up. We want to be the vessel that you created that the gates of hell shall not prevail against to bring the kingdom of God on the earth. There is no plan B. People want to build movements?

You can build movements all you want, but there's only one movement that Jesus said that he's committed to. He said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is the only thing he said he would build.

[8 : 09] Are you giving yourself to the thing that God said he would build? Are we giving ourselves to the movement that God said he would be behind? Otherwise, we have to sustain it ourselves. The great thing about the church is we don't have to sustain it ourselves.

We can trust that the thing we are giving ourselves to and sacrificing for is the very thing that Christ is building. We're seeking his kingdom. In our household, in the church, and in the world around us, in our job, in our neighborhood.

Seeking to bring the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel to people. Not just being comfortable with a few Christians. Not just being comfortable with our friends and the group of people we want our kids to grow up with and to grow old with.

We're constantly getting out of our comfort zone looking for opportunities to seek and save those who are lost, just like Jesus. And Jesus, he didn't even let himself get comfortable.

In fact, when everybody's starting to come to him and they're looking for healing and they're looking for all the things that Jesus had. And the disciples are thinking, okay, here it is. Finally get our ministry.

[9 : 11] We finally get our name. He's like, I'm going to the next town. Whoa, hold on. Jesus, we got a good thing going on here. Where are you going? Jesus is always pushing out of comfortability. Always pushing further in and further out.

Saying, I have to preach the gospel. And us saying that our mission is the kingdom of God means our mission is to preach the gospel. And to preach the gospel will always be an affront to our pride and our comfort and our selfishness.

It will offend us. It will jostle us. It will shake us. And if that's not happening, you've got to ask, am I really seeking first the kingdom?

If my pride is never offended. If my world is never shaken. If things that I've always held and thought that were good, if those things aren't allowed to be put before the furnace of who God is and his word.

Then I've got to ask, am I seeking first the kingdom? Or am I seeking some superficial hallelujah Christianity? You know? But what Mike not called happy smiles and half sympathies.

[10 : 12] Where we just kind of go through life experiencing some subpar existence of relationship. Where I'm free to live my selfish, comfortable life. Without saying, no Jesus. I'm not content to do that.

I want your kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Not just in my little world. Not just in my little church, but all the world. I want to see the kingdom go where we don't see it right now.

I want to see people one to Christ. I want to get into uncomfortable relationships and situations where the gospel is not so that I can preach it. And I'm willing to sacrifice to do that.

Are we willing? What are we withholding? Does Jesus have everything? If we're talking about the kingdom, we're talking about Jesus having everything. That means we can't hold anything back.

Are we fully bought in the priority of the kingdom of God? Are we fully bought in? It's easy to say, yeah, that's a good idea. Yeah, I know what you're talking about. I've been to church before.

[11 : 08] But are you fully bought in that there is no greater priority than the kingdom of God? That all other things are subservient to this thing. To seek first the king's rule.

God's rule over everyone everywhere. Prayer. That that is the ultimate goal for which I exist. Is to see his rule extended. And actuated in the earth.

Am I fully bought into the priority of that? Or is that too radical? Is that too extreme? Is that too much? We must be fully bought in. And why do we do that?

It's like, yeah. Be bought in on something that costs me everything? No thanks. I like the everything I have. Why would I want to give it up? It would have to be for something really good.

Thankfully, the scriptures speak to that. We buy in because we're bought. 1 Corinthians 6, 19 to 20 says, You are not your own. For you were bought with a price.

[12 : 05] So glorify God with your body. You're not your own. So glorify God with your body. You were bought with a price. When we've been bought, then we buy in. You buy in to the degree you know that you're bought.

And the implications of what that means. Jesus describes this in Matthew 13, 44 through 46. He says, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.

Which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. This is what the kingdom of heaven is like. We're talking about the kingdom.

We're talking about you sacrificing the little you have for the everything he has. It's a pretty good deal when it comes down to it. It's an easy sell when you look at it. When you look at what you have and you're not looking at who God is and what our inheritance in him is, if we forget that part, it looks like a raw deal.

It looks like I've got to hold on to things. I can't give you everything because then I lose. We don't understand that the beauty of this parable is in his joy, it says.

[13 : 11] Let me ask you the question. When I talk about the kingdom of God, when I talk about sacrifice, when I talk about giving and not withholding, do you hear that with joy or do you hear that with burden?

Do you hear that and say, Oh gosh, one of these guys again? We're going to hear him just hammering on this and hammering on what God wants. Is it joy to you? Is it joy to lose all? Has it ever been joy to you? Was it joy at one time and it's become drudgery at some point in time? Is it joy to you now? When you look at what you have to give up, when you look at what you have to sell, and you look at Jesus and what you receive, eternal life with him, is that joy to give everything you have for that?

Is it a joy to do that? Unless your revelation of the treasure exceeds your revelation of what you have, you'll never give altogether. Unless your revelation of the treasure exceeds your revelation of what you have, you'll never give what you have to get it.

This is why he says, In his joy, he sells all that he has. Why? Because all that he has is worth less than what he's buying. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

[14 : 27] One finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it. Are you fully bought into the priority of the kingdom of God?

Are you fully bought into the priority of the kingdom of God? When you look at what you have, does it pain you? Or is it your joy? Is it your joy to give up? Is it your joy to sacrifice?

Knowing what your inheritance in the Lord is. Knowing who Jesus is and what you get in him. Is it a joy? If it's not, we need to repent and believe the good news.

The Bible says repent for the kingdom of God is near. If we're seeking first the kingdom, we have to repent. We have to repent. We have to say, I am going to change my mind.

I was going this way. I'm going to go the opposite way. I'm going to believe what you say about the supremacy of Christ and his kingdom. And I'm going to give all together. I'm going to believe that. I'm going to trust that.

[15 : 25] I'm going to repent for the kingdom of God is near. I'm going to repent from thinking that other things are more important. I'm going to repent for thinking that these things that I grip, that I held on to for identity and worth, that those things are account and loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing you.

I'm letting go of those things. Secondly, shared vision. Okay? Shared vision. If we don't have shared priorities, then we won't have our heart together.

If you have one priority and I have another priority, your heart goes that way, my heart goes this way, there's no unity. Okay? But if we have the same priorities of the kingdom of God, we say, okay, we have the same priorities of the kingdom of God, but we don't have a shared vision of how those priorities flesh out, then we're also not going to have unity.

Right? It's easy to meet Christians and say, yes, we are, we're kingdom people. We believe in the priority of the kingdom of God. But the vision of how that gets fleshed out, if that's not the same, if we don't have a shared vision of that, then we'll have division, division, two visions.

Okay? And a house divided, like we read before, can't stand. We have to have the same vision of how the kingdom of God fleshes itself out. And I want to present to you that I believe that the way the Bible teaches that this vision of the kingdom of God gets fleshed out is in all of life.

[16 : 41] In all of life. If our vision, we each have a vision of all of life, then there'll be unity. If some of us say, well, it's part of my life, and others say, it's all of my life, there will always be division.

Okay? The Bible says to always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. And when we share a vision for kingdom priorities being fleshed out in all of life, rather than just parts of life, it multiplies our opportunities for ministry by removing the limitations of when and where we can do the Lord's work.

It takes the pressure off of meetings being our main source of life in church experience. Okay? And we love meetings. We think Sunday mornings are important. We think other gatherings are

important.

But we should never be constrained to meetings for our life in God. Our experience of our life in God together should be wherever the people are. Church is not just a group of meetings.

Church is a group of people. Okay? And when those people are together, those people constitute the church. It begs the question, what part of our life is ours?

[17 : 45] What part of our life is off limits to Jesus and the church? You can have this, you can have this, but you can't have that. You can have this part of my life, but man, I'm not giving you that.

It's not, it's that temptation to say, I don't want it to be an all-life thing. I'll give you this much, I'll give you this many nights a week, Lord, but these nights are mine.

I'll give you this much of my money, but this part of my money is mine. I'll give you this part, much of my marriage, but you know, then this is my me time. This is me, this is me. And we have this kind of limits sometimes that we can put.

I'll give you this much, but not all. And 1 Corinthians 15, 58 says, always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not vain.

How often? Always. Okay? How much? Fully. Okay? To what? To the work of the Lord. Always and fully to the work of the Lord.

[18 : 44] Always and fully. Well, what about this time? Always. What about this much? Fully to the work of the Lord. This is the measure which Paul put here in 1 Corinthians 15, 58.

Are you always giving yourselves fully to the work of the Lord? Knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. It's not in vain. It will reap a harvest if you don't give up. Mark 8, 35 says, whoever would save his life will lose it.

Whatever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it. Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it. We're looking for opportunities to say, God, I want to lose my life for your sake and for the Gospels.

I love it. In Mark there, he says, not just for your sake, but also for the Gospels. To be able to say, I want to give my life to Jesus. Some people say, I have, it's all given to you, Jesus. When it comes to evangelism, not so much.

Lord, you can have everything in my life, but evangelizing to strangers, no thanks. You can have all my life but talking to my neighbors about Jesus, no thanks. Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save him.

[19 : 55] We lost our life for the Gospel. I can't think of any way that preaching the Gospel doesn't cause us, doesn't pull on us to sacrifice. It is much more convenient not to preach the Gospel.

It is much more convenient to avoid preaching the Gospel, not talking to our neighbors, not risking them hating us, not risking them not liking us. It is much more convenient not to talk to strangers in grocery stores, in coffee shops, and in all other places.

It is much more convenient not to go out of your way to preach the Gospel to someone, to preach something that could be offensive to them. It is much more convenient. God causes us to lose our life not just for him but for the Gospel.

And when there is a church that says, we want to do that in all of life. We want all of life, not a part of our life. It looks like 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 8. Paul said of the Thessalonians, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves because you had become very dear to us.

When was the last time you described your church and said, these people, I am affectionately desirous of them. They had become very dear to me. That's the only context with which you not only give, share the Gospel but your very lives.

[21 : 12] It's easy to just share platitudes or to share good things or encouragements. It's difficult to share your whole life. The only way you do that is if you're affectionately desirous.

It's when people become very dear to you and they become very dear to you when you realize how dear they are to Christ. They become very dear to you when we have lost our life for the sake of the Gospel and realize, when I think of how Jesus Christ welcomed me, how much more do I want to welcome others?

How much labor will I put, how much effort will I put into connecting with people for them to understand not just by word but indeed that they are affectionately loved?

That I love them to the point of pushing through their weirdness. That I love them to the point of pushing through the inconvenience of a relationship that feels like it keeps hitting up against the

wall.

That I love them to the point that I will keep pursuing them and pursuing relationship and connecting with them for the long haul even if it takes years. because some relationships do take years to win trust.

[22 : 16] Some relationships do take years to break through. We want that kind of church that could literally be in for the long haul that says, I'm willing to go years to connect with you because I see that you are dear to me and I want us to be mutually, affectionately desirous of one another so that we share not just the Gospel but our very lives.

We're not looking to just share the Gospel of another. We're not just looking to hear sermons together. We're looking to be a church that's a church in all of life that shares lives with one another. The nitty gritty, the hard things, the difficult things, the fun things, all of those things.

This is what Paul said. In Acts 20, chapter 20, verses 20 and 24, Paul in verse 20 was teaching in public and from house to house.

Okay? He wasn't just teaching in public, he was going from house to house. Some people say the house to house is only valuable. Some people say, no, the public, getting behind this thing is what's important, right?

Well, what did Paul do? He taught publicly and he taught house to house. We don't want to be a church that just teaches publicly and is a Sunday morning ministry. We don't want to be a church that's just house to house.

[23 : 24] We want to be a church that does public and does house to house. We want to be a church that does all of life together, just like Jesus did. In fact, if you look at the way Jesus made disciples, at the end of his life, did he have 12 disciples or did he have 144 disciples?

He had 144 disciples. Well, we know how he made the 12. He made the 12 in the context of really small groups, right? 12 people, focused even on three specifically, right?

In that context of discipleship, that was more intense. But it doesn't say at the end of his life that he had 12 disciples. It said that he had 144 disciples. How did he make those other 132?

Did I get the math right? How did he make the other 132 disciples that he wasn't doing that smaller setting with? He did it by preaching in larger settings. He did it by ministering in larger settings.

And that same thing was true in Paul's life. He not only spoke publicly, but he went house to house. He didn't just share the gospel with him, but he shared his very life. And we seek to do the same thing because that's what the Bible teaches.

[24 : 27] The Bible teaches a life-on-life Christianity that shares all of life. I don't know how you could read the New Testament and not see that. 1 Corinthians 9, 22, Paul says, I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some.

Well, that's pretty all-encompassing, right? How many things should we become to reach people? All things. How many kind of people should we reach? All people. And what means should we use? All means. All things to all people that by all means. This is what Paul did. There wasn't any part of his life that was off-limits where he's like, I'm not willing to go there. He was willing to go there. He was willing to lose his life for the sake of the gospel. Colossians 3, verse 4 says, Christ who is your life.

The greatest way to make church weird is to try to do church with people who don't believe that Christ is their life. You want to make church weird? Try to do church with people who think that church is a part of their life.

[25 : 29] It's going to get weird and divisive really quick. You're not going to have much in common if Christ is your life trying to relate to people in the context of church and mission if other people don't also believe that Christ is their life.

Jesus doesn't want to be treated like an accessory to your life because Jesus isn't an accessory. He's Lord or he's nothing. He's King or he's nothing.

You can't take another version of Jesus. The Bible calls that another Jesus and it doesn't speak highly of it. The Jesus of the Bible, the Jesus who is God is King and Lord.

He is our life. And when we try to do church with people where some people believe is their life and some people don't, it gets weird really fast. It gets awkward really fast. It gets uncomfortable really fast because we're trying to take two visions and make them one and it'll never work.

That's the vision. It doesn't happen. That's why we seek to have an open vulnerable heart, an open hospitable home, and an open flexible schedule. How can we have life together if those things

aren't open?

[26 : 33] If I have an open vulnerable heart, I let people into my heart. If I have an open hospitable home, that is where so much of life happens around kitchen tables and living room rugs, right?

Like those are where life happens. Backyard barbecues. That's where life happens. If we don't have an open flexible schedule, you're not going to make it into someone's home and you're certainly not going to make it into anybody's heart.

This is an all of life thing. Do you have a shared vision of it being all of life and how are you laboring towards all of life? Are you laboring towards this? Are you exerting an effort towards our experience of church being all of life?

And thirdly, so if you've got shared priorities, seeking first the kingdom, you say yes, I agree with the vision of it being in all of life. The third thing is, do we have shared responsibility in the togetherness of how that happens?

The New Testament is littered with the language of togetherness. We take ownership and responsibility for the kingdom priorities being fleshed out in all of life, specifically in a way that insists on doing things together rather than on our own.

[27 : 42] It maximizes our impact, increases our joy, and lightens our load because we're carrying it together. All this stuff, when we say this stuff and we're not doing it together, it falls short of the New Testament norm.

It falls short of that which you would sell all in your joy to get. The togetherness is key. Just listen to, read through a handful of verses here and just listen to this togetherness vision of the scriptures. Acts 2, 44, and all who believed were together and had all things in common. 1 Corinthians 1, 2, called to be saints together.

1 Corinthians 12, 26, if one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all suffer together. I mean, all rejoice together. Okay?

All suffer together, all rejoice together. 2 Corinthians 7, 3, Paul appealing to some believers says, you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

[28 : 41] To die together and to live together. Ephesians 2, 22 says, in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The church should always be being, being, being built together. Okay? It's an active work of God that God is working us to be built together with people.

That takes, that takes a high level of intentionality. Some people, you know, get down on a high level of intentionality and church. Say, that's too much. Well, how can we be built together if we don't have a high level of intentionality?

That requires coordination. Have you ever built a house? Have you ever rehabbed a portion of your house and you have to build all those things together? The wood, the drywall, the screws, the mud, the tape, the plumbing, the electrical, all that stuff, the flooring.

How do we do that? How do we build that together without a high level of intentionality? There has to be. Jesus is building us together and he asks that we would be co-laborers with him. 1 Corinthians, or I'm sorry, Hebrews 10.25 says, not neglecting to meet together.

[29 : 50] 1 Corinthians 12.21 says that, I cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. It's a togetherness that says we need each and every part.

I don't just need the parts that I really enjoy and are really similar to my personality and gifting. I need the people that I don't enjoy as much and aren't similar to me and don't have the same giftings as me. I need those and I need to realize that those parts are indispensable.

Can't say I have no need of you. Proverbs 18.1 says, whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire, he breaks out against all sound judgment. When you look at these scriptures and you see the togetherness, that if we're seeking first his kingdom and we have a vision to do it all in life, there has to be a shared responsibility or we get burned out.

We can't have a version of church where a couple of paid professionals do all the work. That was never meant to be that way. In fact, the Ephesians 4 gifts, they don't say that they're supposed to do all the ministry, that the verse in Ephesians 4 and 11 and 12, what does it say?

They're supposed to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. They're not supposed to be the people who do all the ministry. They're supposed to be equipping the saints to do all the ministry, which gives us an understanding that the ministry of the church should be done together, which

again, that language is littered all throughout the New Testament.

[31 : 08] There has to be a shared responsibility. When there's a shared responsibility where it says, when I walk into a room and I see a brother or a sister and I know, this person has as much mind as I do, there's a deep sense of connection there.

There's a deep sense of affection there. When I walk in, you know this is the truth of anything. When you've had a job or even in your own family, when you know that one other person that is tasked to do something with you that they're not bought in as much as you, if you know that, that they're not bought in as much as you, what does your heart immediately do?

Texan knows that. Man, I am not motivated to do this with you. To do something with a person who's bought in less than me, I know what's going to end up happening. I'm going to do all the work.

Remember this when you do science projects together in school? Right? Like, okay, I know who's going to be, I got put with that guy? Yeah, I know who's doing all the work in this group. Then when you get picked with that person who's passionate about it like you are, who has the same vision as you do and says, oh, we're going to do this together, your heart leaps.

You feel lighter. You feel like, I'm excited to do this. That's the way church is supposed to be. We're supposed to look across the room as brothers and sisters, see hard situations, see the ravages of sin and the destruction of sin, and see how people's lives have been destroyed, and us being in the business, so to speak, of restoration.

[32 : 31] And looking across the aisle to our brother and sister and saying, that person's bought in as much as I am. That person has the same priorities. That person has the same vision, and they have a shared level of responsibility.

I have every reason to believe for the restoration with which we see. I have every bit of a reason to believe that their gift and my gift and their gift and their gift all together, that God is going to manifest His grace in such a way that He's going to see this person restored.

He's going to see this person delivered. He's going to see this person set free. He's going to see this person saved. And I don't feel like there's this huge burden on me because I'm carrying it together with my brothers and sisters.

And I don't say things like, I don't want to be a burden to you because the Bible says we're supposed to bear one another's burdens. Okay? We should be able to say, thank you for letting me be a burden to you, and I know darn well you've been a burden to me, so let's do it together.

That's what we are. We are burdens to one another. We're burdens to people. If you have the audacity and the arrogance to think that you've never been a burden to people, number one, you've never done real church before.

[33 : 37] Number two, you're very conceited in how you view yourself. You don't really realize that to somebody, somewhere, you are a burden. And you don't have to apologize for that. That's what the church does.

We carry one another's burdens together. We realize that at any given point in time, we could be a burden. And that's what everyone knows and understands is what our job is to do, is to carry one another's burdens. And that we're to bear with one another in love.

If I'm bearing with one another, I'm going to carry that. How are we working or laboring towards together? What are we doing together? How are we working to make say, I don't want to get tempted into my selfish, individualistic life.

I want to make sure I'm laboring towards doing things together. What if it takes longer? I'm still laboring towards doing things together. Well, what if it's harder? I'm still laboring towards doing things together. There's no such thing as a version of church that doesn't labor towards doing things together.

That's not church in the sense that the Bible describes if we're not actively laboring towards working together. 1 Corinthians 15, 10 says, I worked harder than any of them, but it was not I but the grace of God that was within me.

[34 : 45] Paul was saying, I worked hard for this. I was constantly working hard and laboring towards these things. He said in Colossians 1, 28 to 29, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. So he was toiling this, struggling with all the energy of Christ that worked in him.

To do what? To warn everyone and teach everyone so that you could see people mature in Christ. That's our goal is to see people mature in Christ. How do we get there? Struggle, toil, in God's power, with God's energy.

Do we realize that? If this doesn't drive us to the cross and it doesn't drive us to our need for Christ, then again, we're trying something that's too easy and that's not what God has called us to.

God has never called us to something we could do. God has never called us to something we could do apart from Him. God has never called us to do something we could do apart from His power. If we're not attempting to do something that in the flesh seems impossible and grates against us, we are not attempting to do the right thing.

[35 : 58] The thing we should be attempting to do and to accomplish in Christ should be that which only Christ can do. by His power, by His strength, by His energy. But it takes us striving together.

Romans 15, 30 says, I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf. Are we striving together in our prayers?

Even sometimes in prayers when we get individualistic. We can sit in prayer meeting and we can only think about what I want to pray. We can think about my burdens. We can think about the things that are bothering me.

We can think about the things that I want from the Lord. We can ignore what's going on in the room and what other people are praying. We can ignore other needs in the room. We can ignore what God is saying and speaking.

You see, Paul here, he said, I want to be striving together with you in your prayers. We want to strive together. He's appealing that people strive together with Him in prayers. Do we have a togetherness in prayer?

[36 : 58] Do we have a labor side by side like Philippians 4, 3 says? I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers.

Okay? Who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together. That's the kind of labor that we're looking for. In closing, I'm asking that we consider exerting maximum effort to seek first the kingdom of God and all life together.

maximum effort exerted to seek first the kingdom of God and all together. And if we ever think, oh, we're asking too much, we just have to think, am I forgetting the gospel?

Am I forgetting the gospel? What does it mean to be in Christ? Where did He take me from? Was my sin bad enough that the only legitimate, fair, and just punishment for my sin was hell?

Or is that too extreme? Do I sometimes wonder, is hell too extreme a punishment for sin? Is that a little over the top? Or do I believe that my sin is so wicked, so bad, that the only just and right punishment would be a place where the fire never goes out eternally?

[38 : 09] Is that the only just punishment for my sin? Until I believe that that is the only just punishment for my sin, I might feel a little bit like God's asking too much. I might feel a little bit like I'm getting ripped off.

I might feel a little bit like church is too much for me. But when I believe that my sin, that I was justly and rightly under the wrath of God, that my sin, even my sins of self-righteousness, not just unrighteousness, but my thinking that I'm not as bad as other people and maybe I'm good enough to earn heaven, that those sins of self-righteousness and unrighteousness justly put me under the wrath of God.

And my only hope for salvation was to believe in and trust on a righteousness that was not mine, a work that I didn't accomplish, would be given to me and credit to me in Christ because He lived, He died, He was buried, and He rose again so that the life He lived and the righteousness He earned could be credited to my account so that my sins could be washed clean and that I could be declared righteous.

And when the enemy accuses me, the one who stands day and night before me, making intercession for us would say, not guilty. When the Father looks on us, He sees the spotless Lamb and He declares us to be righteous.

And He declares us to be in Him, cleansed and free from the dominion of sin with the promise of eternal life to come. When we know that, we believe that.

[39 : 37] We don't look at the commands of God. We don't look at the requirements of God and say, too much, God, too much. We look at it and say, God, where do I start? We look at it and we

say, in my joy, God, how soon can I, how quickly can I, how extravagantly can I sell everything I have to get the prize, to get the treasure?

What you've given me is infinitely greater than everything I could give to you and it is my joy, it is my pleasure, it is my privilege to give all, every day, here on for the end of the earth and to do it together with my brothers and sisters.

I don't want to just seek you as an accessory to my life, you alone are king and I will seek you first. I will do it in all of my life and I want to do it together with the saints.

As hard as it is, as much perseverance as it takes, as much work as it takes, I want to do that and I want to be a group of people who is like a well-oiled army and platoon that goes out and seeks to save, seek and save those who are lost, that they might hear the same gospel that I heard, that they might hear the same good news that I heard.

So I'm not living for my own life and the next trinket and the next show that I'm going to watch. I'm living to see people in darkness go to the light. I'm living to see people who are on their way to hell be saved and snatched from the flames, even hating the clothing corrupted by simple desires, as it says in Jude.

[41 : 01] That's the kind of church I want to be a part of. That's the kind of church we want to be. That's the kind of thing that Jesus describes in the scriptures, the kind of church that he's building that the gates of hell shall not prevail against.

It's those who are seeking first the kingdom and all of life together. That's not even a Christ church thing. That's just a Bible thing. It's just a Bible thing. My question to us this morning is, are we exerting in joy, in joy, a maximum effort towards that?

And if we're not, there's only one response. Joyful repentance. Joyful repentance. Thank God for his grace. I repent. I turn from these areas where I'm holding back, where I'm not believing you're the priority, where I'm trying to keep my life, where I'm not doing it together with the saints.

I repent from those things. I turn. I trust you. And I move into obedience. Amen? Amen. Let's stand. Amen.