

Joy Filled Partnership

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Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0 : 00] That we're not going to be looking at them, okay? Alright. So, today we're going to be looking at verses 3-8 in Philippians chapter 1.! Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I'm sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And I pray this, that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. Let's pray together. Father God, thank you for your word. Thank you for this message that we're going to be studying today of partnership, of gospel partnership. Lord, just bless this time as we study your word together, and we pray these things in the name of Jesus.

[1 : 44] Amen. You can be seated. So as we get into the text this morning, I'd like to ask you a question. This is a rhetorical question. Don't answer out loud. But what makes someone memorable?

What makes someone worthy of being remembered? We have certain people, places, TV, movie lines, you know, ingrained in our memory for whatever reason, random things.

And the question, what makes someone memorable? I was doing some research on this, and something that I kind of kept coming up to was the idea of distinctiveness, something that's distinct, stands out in some way, tends to be more memorable than not.

However, being memorable, being distinct, isn't always the best, because in 2014, a group of researchers did a study, and they found that unattractive people, unattractive faces are easier to remember than attractive faces.

So if somebody ever tells you that you're easy to forget, you might take that as a compliment. That's a good, it'd be a good thing. No. But in this text, we're studying what Paul wrote to this church in Philippi, his wonderful memories of this church.

[3 : 03] They were distinct to him. This church was distinct to Paul. They stood out. They were worthy of remembering. So I want to consider the same question, what makes someone worthy of being remembered?

Third, let's consider that from a Christian perspective. What makes someone or something memorable in a distinctly Christian way? It's important to think through, because frankly, as Christ followers, we want to be memorable people.

We want to serve people in a way that is remembered. We want to be a memorable church. We want to be a church that reaches people for the gospel of Jesus Christ, right? In Lewisburg, in Marshall County, in Tennessee, we want to be memorable.

So what is it that makes people memorable in a Christian way? You know, immediately, things like looks, like that one study I mentioned, things like looks and charisma kind of go out the window, because in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 16, Paul says, from now on then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective.

Even if we've known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we know him in this way no longer. So what is it, what is it from the Christian perspective that makes us memorable, worthy of being remembered?

[4 : 16] I'm going to offer the answer of partnership, true partnership, gospel partnership. The church in Philippi was distinct and memorable to the apostle Paul because of the way they faithfully and consistently partnered with him to support his gospel ministry.

Look again here, verses 3 through 5. It says, I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you. So every time Paul remembers this church, he immediately turns and praises God for them, for the memory of this church, for their fellowship, their partnership with him.

Always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Paul remembered this church because of their distinct partnership. So the way that they partnered with Paul, and by the way, that word partnership in the Greek, it's the same word we get fellowship from. It's koinonia in Greek. Fellowship, partnership. This is, it's not as simple as fellowship like they were together, but it's this, the way that he's using it here is like partnership as in they worked with him, supported him to further the gospel reach.

So they partnered with him, they fellowshipped with him in ministry in a way that increased Paul's joy. And that word joy, by the way, I'm gonna, joy is gonna be a theme as we go through the book of Philippians, okay?

[5 : 42] We're gonna talk about that a lot because 14 times in this short letter does Paul use the word joy or rejoice or rejoicing or rejoice. Paul talks about joy throughout this letter.

In fact, Philippians is often called the letter of joy because it's said so many times throughout the letter. It's a very common theme. It's one of the things that makes Philippians such a special letter. This is a very distinct letter. It stands out from Paul's other letters because it's very positive, very encouraging, very joy-filled, very, I don't wanna say kind because it sounds like when Paul is rebuking people, it's not kind, but it is.

But it's very, it's peace, it's peace-giving, it's joy-filling, right? This letter. It's because Paul is writing a thank you note to his friends in Philippi who have supported him consistently and faithfully throughout his entire gospel ministry.

And that's what he's thanking them for now. He says that this is what he thanks God for is their consistent and faithful partnership from the first day until now. Meaning, remember last week we look in Acts chapter 16 a little bit when Paul and Timothy and Silas and the crew, they all went over there to Philippi and they shared the gospel with Lydia and the ladies at the water and Lydia came to faith and then her family came to faith and then the jailer came to faith and the small church kind of began here in Philippi.

[7 : 04] What Paul's talking about is from then, right then, from the first day that you guys accepted Christ as Lord, you've partnered with me, you've fellowshipped with me in this gospel ministry.

And we see the proof in Acts chapter 16 because as soon as Lydia accepts Christ, like right after she accepts Jesus, she says, if I'm a believer and you believe that I'm a believer, come to my house right now.

Like, let's get together. And so, that's where Paul and Silas and the team stayed was at Lydia's house from the first day until now. But then, what happened in between?

So you have the first day and then you have now when Paul's writing this letter, but how did they partner with Paul in between? Well, there's a few things that we see in the New Testament that give us some input, some information on this.

In fact, the church at Philippi in Macedonia, that's where they are, they are mentioned in a kind of almost not boastful way like Paul's proud for himself for his work there, but like boasting about their generosity and their kindness and their support more than any other church that Paul went to.

[8 : 14] In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verses 1 through 5, Paul's writing to the church in Corinth about the need that they have to support the church in Jerusalem, the impoverished people, the Christians in Jerusalem.

And he's asking them to give financially to support them and he says, you know, this church in Macedonia, they were hit by a pretty hard time financially. They went through some struggles and through those struggles during that time that they were struggling, they were excited needed to give to support the other believers, the fellow Jewish believers there in Jerusalem.

And so Paul's kind of bragging about how generous the church in Philippi was. They supported Paul by supporting the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and that would have been a big thing, by the way, because the Christians in Philippi, the Christians in Corinth, these were Gentile Christians and so for them to support the Jewish Christians was them saying, look, look, we get it, we're all unified,

we're unified, we're together, right, because of who Jesus is so let us support you. And so this church in Philippi, they did that, they supported the church in Jerusalem. In Romans chapter 15, Paul again says how greatly the church in Philippi, Macedonia, gave to support the church in Jerusalem.

In fact, he also says that the church in Achaia, which is Corinth, also gave. And so, obviously the letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about the need to give was received well because they gave too to support this ministry.

[9 : 41] They were an example. By their partnership with Paul, they were an example to other churches. So they partnered with him financially, but they didn't only partner with him financially, they partnered with him personally and there are some characteristics of the way that they partnered with Paul that we can take note of and we can apply to our lives.

Okay? So if you look with me in Philippians chapter 4, first verse 10 and then verses 15 and 16. I know I said line by line, verse by verse, but we're jumping ahead a little bit to Philippians 4, okay? Philippians 4, verse 10 says, I rejoiced greatly, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. You were in fact concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it.

And then verses 15 and 16 says, And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone.

For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my needs several times. So, a little back story there, in Acts chapter 16 when Paul's in Philippi, he's like abused, just to put in jail wrongly because he was a Roman citizen.

[11 : 03] And then they were like, oh no, he's a Roman citizen, we gotta get them out of the city. So they go and release him and they say, okay, please leave, please get out of here, you know? And so, Silas and Paul, they go on to Thessalonica and while they were there, the church in Philippi came with a gift to Paul.

Like, right after he had given them the gospel, right after they had received the gospel, they were serving, they were supporting Paul, they were partnering with him in his gospel ministry. They saw how important this message was and so they supported it. They did it immediately and they did it personally. And so we can learn something from the Philippians and their partnership in the gospel.

And so, I think this slides up, but I wanna show you, this is my three C's to gospel partnership. Number one is care. Care. Caring for one another goes further than we know.

And we should care for people in practical ways, right? When people are in need, fill their need, okay? So, somebody's going through a hard time, clean their house, bring them groceries, buy them food, be kind, be gracious, be loving to people, care for people in need.

[12 : 18] When my sister passed away last year, February of 2023, Jack was one month old, one month and one day. And my sister passed away and so we were in Texas, my wife and I, and Jack, and we had to go up to, come up here to Tennessee for the celebration of life.

All right? So we came up for the celebration of life, be with family. We were up here for about a week and man, we had some friends at our church who ministered to us in just incredible ways. While we were out of town, just a little bit of context for, look, when you have a child, sometimes you don't sleep afterwards because, you know, they don't. And so we were a little bit tired at this point and Audrey was trying to get Jack loaded in the car, we're going to go to the airport and left her bag full of clothes in Texas.

We had a friend who went that day, that morning, grabbed her bag, paid a couple hundred dollars, I think, to overnight ship her bag from Texas to Tennessee so that she could have clothes here, we didn't have to go buy a bunch of clothes.

It was just unbelievable. And then when we got back to Texas, after the celebration of life, time with family, we went back home, we were there, we showed up at our house, opened the door, and these same friends had gone through our house and cleaned and put away laundry.

[13 : 35] That's something else that doesn't really happen after you have a kid, I found. But they cleaned, they put away laundry, they had stocked our pantry, they had stocked our fridge, they had put frozen meals in the, I almost said in the oven, but we did that.

They put them in the freezer and we were just blessed. I mean, like we're hurting, right? My sister passed away, it was shocking and it was sad, it was painful, but we were blessed.

People cared for us and that was, that's, look, that's something that I'll remember forever. I'll remember those people who served us during that time. It was, it's unbelievable. Then you have concern and, and here's something to think about, do you have a hard time being concerned for other people, like for their well-being?

Concerned for their, you know, for their, for their support, for them to be able to, to do what God has called them to do? Do you, do you have a hard time being concerned? Because I want to, you know, just encourage you that we, as Christ followers, should be the leader, the leaders in this world in terms of concern for one another.

We should be concerned to help people. We should have a heart of empathy when people are going through things or need help or, or anything. And we should be concerned and have a burden to help and support. So express your concern through messages of encouragement, through prayer, and even physical service.

[14:52] Like, Philippi literally took things to Paul. They physically came to support him in his need in the various places that he was. And then, this is constancy. They were constant in their support for Paul.

This church in Philippi, they did this repeatedly. As soon as he left, they brought him something to Thessalonica. When the church in Jerusalem had need and Paul expressed that need to them and he told them, hey look, you guys are going through a hard time, don't worry about it.

They fought back and they said, no, let us help those fellow Christians. And by doing so, they supported Paul's own ministry in the gospel. They were constant. Now, in this case, right now, Paul is in a prison in Rome and they sent Epaphroditus with a gift, like a gift basket to support Paul while he was in ministry.

They were constant in their support for Paul. I know many of us in this room can think of plenty of people who did things like what I just described some people from our church did in Texas who have done things like this for us, who have supported us and have cared for us and ultimately have partnered with us in the gospel.

people. And when you do these things, when you're the person who supports, who partners with someone in their time of need or even when there's not even a need but just in general, you partner with somebody, that is a trait that is worthy of being remembered.

[16:08] That's worthy of being remembered. Worthy of being celebrated, in fact. Paul was always thanking God with joy. And so if we want to be a people who are remembered, if we want to be a church who's remembered, then this is how we do it.

We partner with people in ministry. We have care for people. We have concern for people. And we're constant in this support, in this partnership. But we have to be careful not to fall into the trap of doing these things for praise for ourselves or to feel good about ourselves.

Ultimately, the reason that we partner with people is because of our relationship with Christ. So look at what Paul does next. Okay, verse 6. It says, I'm sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Seems like a weird pause because if you look at verse 7 and 8, it's like he goes back to thanking the church. But he says, I'm sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

The church had served Paul and he remembered them for it and was even filled with joy because of the way that they partnered with him. But his confidence was placed in Christ.

[17:26] He didn't see their partnership and say, man, I know that you guys are more hospitable than anyone else that I shared the gospel with and I'm so thankful for that. I thank God that you were more hospitable or are more hospitable and helpful.

Or he didn't say, I understand that the people in Philippi are much better Christians than the Christians anywhere else in the world because I've been all over the place but you guys are way better Christians. He didn't even, this is a good one because we're in the south.

He didn't say, man, I know your mom and daddy raised you right. He didn't say that, did he? Those things actually would have been kind of ridiculous if he had said that. He didn't praise them for their partnership.

He thanked them for it. He remembered them for it but he praised God that Christ was at work through them. He saw that they cared for him, that they were concerned for him and were

constantly supporting him and he immediately attributed that work of ministry, of partnership to God alone.

In other words, their partnership was the result of the work of Jesus Christ in their lives only. It was not because of any external factors or forces whatsoever.

[18 : 47] Can I ask you a tough question? How often do you give credit and glory to people instead of God?

Put another way, when you're encouraged by someone's partnership, does it make you more confident in people and human beings or in the work of Christ? We make this subtle mistake really often, I think, in the church.

We see someone do well and we immediately give them credit for the good work that they've done. We hear a sermon and we give credit to the preacher. We're blessed by somebody and we think highly of them instead of thinking highly of God who led them to be a blessing to us.

What about this one? How often do you take the glory and credit for your service instead of directing it to God? We serve and we want the glory.

We love it when people tell us how good our ministry is, how much of a blessing we are. we love that. We aren't fulfilled by serving and being obedient unless we hear from people that they notice.

[20 : 08] Pretty soon, partnership and service in the gospel becomes a performance intended to receive praise. We can't get to a point where we feel high and mighty and better than because of how much we serve.

if you're serving for any reason but to honor Christ then you're serving for the wrong reason. And I'm not asking these questions to step on toes.

I'm guilty of these same things. This is something that I think everybody is guilty of at different points in time. But I'm asking these questions because it's dangerous to put our confidence in people and ourselves instead of God.

It borders idolatry even. So Paul wouldn't do that. And last week when we talked through verses 1 and 2 and I pointed out when Paul calls himself a slave or a servant of Christ Jesus instead of using that normal term of apostle in Christ Jesus that was a subtle lesson in humility a lesson that would kind of be traced throughout the rest of this letter.

And this quick verse here verse 6 is another little subtle lesson of humility. humility. He was thankful that the church was obedient to partner with him but he was quick to attribute all of the glory to God and the work of Christ in their lives.

[21 : 33] So remember to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ for the partnership in the gospel but don't miss the fact that God is the one at work. And this verse verse 6 is really powerful and I'm telling you we could have like two weeks of sermons just on this one verse but I'm going to try to do it justice here okay.

This verse is really clear. God saves us God sanctifies us and God completes his work. So there's something that's really beautiful to think about because God is the one who's at work in us and through us and our ministry to others there's no pressure to perform.

all we have to do is be obedient. That's all we have to do. All you and I are responsible for is obedience. And this verse does kind of bring up the question of God's sovereignty and over salvation and human responsibility but there's a few things that we have to consider here.

First God is sovereign to open hearts to receive the gospel. That's a fact. God is the one who saves. Not a single person in this room you may be really awesome you may be great but you can't make yourself good enough to earn salvation.

You can't even make yourself good enough for God to look at you and say yeah I'm going to offer salvation to him or her. You can't do that. God alone saves. God alone saves by grace through faith.

[23 : 04] Acts chapter 16 when Lydia received the gospel it says that God opened her heart to receive the message and then she received the message she responded in faith. So that brings up the second part is this responsibility to respond in faith.

God is sovereign over salvation. He extends salvation to us. We respond in faith. There's human responsibility. And then after we're saved once we're saved God sanctifies us meaning he makes us look more like himself.

He does this through his word he does it through the conviction of the Holy Spirit he does this through fellowship with believers he does this in many different ways. God is sovereign to sanctify

us as well in our walk with him.

It says in verse 6 he who started a good work that salvation will carry it on to completion meaning he will fully sanctify us. God is sovereign to sanctify us but again we're responsible to live according to his word and grow in sanctification.

You look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 this is called a sanctification and Paul says that they have to be obedient. Right? This is God's will your sanctification that you abstain from sexual immorality and you so on and so forth.

[24 : 16] Alright? So God is sovereign to sanctify us but we have to still be obedient to his word to grow in sanctification. Alright? God's sovereignty human responsibility.

Now through these things through salvation and sanctification we will be made complete the idea here is perfect in the day of Christ that is the second coming of Christ Jesus.

Okay? And I saw somebody as I was kind of studying for this I saw somebody who said that not enough Christians live with the mindset of the second coming of Jesus. We need to live with the mindset of the second coming of Jesus that we would live for him preparing for the day that he returns so that when we see him it's not like a surprise.

Right? We see him and we glory in him. We are excited in him. But we'll be prepared. We'll be complete. And God alone is the one who is at work making us complete.

And I have a handful of verses here. I didn't put them on the screen but if you want to write them down I'll say them really quickly. Philippians 1 9-11 what we'll study next week. Colossians 1 22-23 1 Thessalonians 3-13 and 5 23-24 1 Corinthians 1 8-9 and Ephesians 5-27 all of those passages point to this one truth that Jesus is at work in us preparing us for the day that we'll see him face to face.

[25 : 36] God is at work in us and because of that he deserves all the honor and glory and credit whenever we do any good work. Ephesians 2 8-9 says that we're saved by grace through faith this is not of ourselves it's not a work so that no man may boast.

And then verse 10 says that we're God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do the good works that he prepared for us. So any good work that we do was prepared for us by God.

God deserves all the honor and glory. He is the one who's at work at each stage of our Christian walk. He saves he sanctifies and he completes.

And by the way thank God for that. Because if I was responsible to hold my own salvation I'd be in a ditch somewhere. If I was responsible to grow myself to look more like God I'd be in huge trouble. Because I look more and more like Joseph it seems like instead. So thank God that he's the one who's in control. That he's the one who sanctifies me.

[26 : 41] That he's the one who will complete me. And by the way God doesn't have any unfinished projects. I'm pretty bad about unfinished projects like at home. If I like I'm like man I want to build this thing.

And then I'll start and I'm like that's actually I don't have the tools or I'm not smart enough to figure it out. And so I just leave it. Unfinished. God doesn't do that. God is fully capable to finish the work that he starts in us.

And look this verse right here is a promise that he will. So we have to stop confusing our responsibility as Christians with the actual life change that occurs by the hand of Jesus.

When we have a true gospel partnership it's because of Christ Jesus not because of ourselves. And this is a great thing. He didn't just turn here to this quick little statement about the work of Christ to humble them.

But he did. That's true. But he turned to it because he wanted to turn the attention to Jesus because their partnership in the gospel proves that they have faith in Jesus. Their partnership with Paul the way that they served Paul was the fruit of their relationship with Christ.

[27 : 52] This was how Paul saw with his own eyes I can see that Christ is at work in you. And we'll be known by our fruit by the work that we do in the name of Jesus. And this is what Paul is talking about here.

He was so confident that they were in Christ. And that's why his confidence was in the gospel. It was in Jesus. It wasn't in them. You see what I'm saying? He saw their work and he said look how good God is that he would do that through you guys because I knew y'all before you were in Jesus. Instead of wow look how good you guys have become. It's look how good God is. So because of that that this is the fruit of how he saw their faith in Christ he has a deep love for this church.

And look at what he says next. Verses 7 and 8. He says indeed it is right for me to think this way about all of you because I have you in my heart. And you are all partners with me in grace both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

For God is my witness how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. This church meant a lot to Paul. They had served him well and consistently.

[29 : 08] And so he loved them. And there's an idea here that we're going to talk about more as we work through this book and others. But he says that it's right for me to think this way because you've partnered with me.

And he says that I have you in my heart. Which sounds a little bit like an 80s love song or something. I have you in my heart.

I don't know. But that's not what Paul's writing a love song here. He's not writing a love note trying to woo anybody. He means that I think sincerely.

I have you in my heart. And the reason I think he means that sincerely is because there's this idea that Paul talks about a lot about being in Christ. In Christ.

He says that a lot. In Christ. I'm an apostle in Christ. Servant in Christ. All those types of things. And he says to the Christians that he writes to that they are in Christ. So there's this reality for believers that if you are a believer of Jesus Christ you are in Christ.

[30 : 08] Okay? Meaning you are united in union with Christ Jesus. He takes your sin. He gives you his righteousness. And because of that transaction you are in Christ.

So if you believe in Jesus you are in Christ. Individual truth. One everybody who believes in Jesus. But because that individual truth exists that individual reality exists all of us who are in Christ are in union with one another.

Because of who Christ is we're all in union with him. So because we're united to Christ we're united to one another. So because of those things there is a true affection, a deep love, a connection in fellowship and in partnership that believers have that is unknown to the rest of the world.

That people who don't know Christ can't experience. There's this closeness, this familial closeness with even complete strangers that we can experience in Christ because we are united to one another in Christ that other people don't get to experience.

So he means that sincerely. I have you in my heart. He loves this church deeply because he's seen how Christ has worked in them. So because of this affection that he had for them, he longed to see them again.

[31 : 29] And if there isn't a more human experience than missing someone, I mean, like, you know what I mean? We've all missed people before, deeply. I mean, we've missed people that we've done ministry with.

I'm sure you've missed someone, you remember their ministry and think highly of them and fondly of them and you miss them because of, you know, the way that y'all were able to work together to serve. But even on the more practical human level, there was a pandemic.

I don't know if you guys ever heard about this. There was a pandemic a few years ago. And when that happened, like, all of a sudden, missing people became commonplace, right? Weren't able to see people.

As churches, weren't able to gather together. Missing fellowship? That's real. That was hard. I remember when Audrey and I were dating and, you know, you get those texts.

Well, some of y'all weren't dating when there was texting, but the ones who were, you know what I'm saying. You get those texts where, like, I haven't even left the parking lot yet from the date and I'm getting a text, I miss you already.

[32 : 29] Like, man, that feels good. You know? Like, that feels good to be missed sometimes. Anyways, that was kind of random, but it feels good, but we miss people, right?

We do. We are humans and we're not with people that we're close with, that we feel strongly towards, we miss people. And that can be really, really hard. And by the way, I just want to point out, one thing that I've just seen here already that is just something we all need to be aware of is that there are people who have been connected with this church for a really, really long time who aren't able to fellowship because of health issues or distance or, you know, you name it, and they feel this.

They long to be here to fellowship with the saints here at the church. I've been to people's houses throughout the past couple weeks, and if I have heard one thing more than anything else, it's, well,

it's the question, are you getting settled in yet?

And kind of. And then it's, man, I wish I could be there. I miss being there with the church. I miss being with everybody. That's a special place. I love my church family.

I miss being there. That's a hard thing. So these people that are connected with this church have this affection toward us, and I know many of you know people that I'm referring to, and you have a strong affection towards them, so express that.

[33 : 44] Express that concern. Partner with them where they are. Visit with them. Call them. Talk with them. Pray with them. Encourage them. Write them letters, like Miss Amy said. Write letters, like Paul did.

When we have affection for people, it makes sense that we would miss them. And this passage that we just, we're working through here, verses 3-8, has a really neat outline.

I like this, the way that it works out. He's thankful for their gospel partnership. He's thankful for the church, the way that they partnered with him in the gospel, because it makes him confident that they're in Christ.

And because they're in Christ, he has a deep affection for them, and he misses them, and he wants to see them again. And this affection, he says, is so deep.

It says, first off, for God is my witness. He's like, I'm serious. about this. I miss you guys. And I miss you deeply because of the affection that I have for you, which is the affection of Christ Jesus.

[34 : 48] The affection of Christ Jesus is pretty great. Jesus has enough affection for us to leave heaven, to live on this earth with the sin and death and pain and hurts that run rampant around us.

He has such a great affection for us that he was willing to be wrongly accused, hung on a cross, and die for our sins. He has a great enough affection for us that he rose again three days later, and he has a great enough affection for us that if we put faith in him, if we believe in that message that he is the son of God who came and lived a perfect life and died on the cross and takes your sins by faith in him just because of how much he loves us, his affection is so great that he'll save us, that he'll give us life, life in him for eternity, and his affection is even greater because he'll sanctify us, he'll make us look more like himself, and he'll prepare us for the day that he comes back, so whenever he does come back, or whenever we go see him, we'll look more like him than we ever expected because of his work in us.

That's the affection of Christ, and that's what Paul ties his affection to this church to. It's because they're both in Christ. They both know the affection of Christ. When you share that experience, you're able to share that experience with one another as well.

When it is something that you both know, you're able to both experience it with each other. So I'm going to give you some practical tips here, practical steps, to apply this passage, okay?

Some very practical steps. So if you're a note taker, you can take some notes here, all right?

Number one, cultivate constant gospel partnership among the saints.

[36 : 41] And what I mean by that is support. Support the work of the ministry. Whether that means that you physically support, that's fantastic. Or if it means that you prayerfully support ministry of the church, or of ministries that you are aware of, that you believe in, that's fantastic.

Prayerfully support. If it's financially, then financially support. All those things. But cultivate a constant gospel partnership. Number two is, and this one's a little bit different, but place your confidence in the work of Christ and nothing else.

When you see someone do a good work, let's work on changing the vernacular a little bit. Instead of saying, you did great, say, isn't it awesome that God used you to do this?

Isn't that great? Well, isn't that awesome that God would use you to serve in this way? How great is our God that he would use you to serve mightily for him? That's awesome. So, place your confidence in the work of Christ.

Don't give credit or glory to anyone or anything else, or yourself, for that matter. If you're serving so that people recognize you, then work in your own heart. First, pray. Figure out why that is, but root that out, and instead, serve for the sake of giving Christ glory.

[37 : 54] And then, the third thing is, show your affection to other people. Show your affection to those you feel affection towards, people you love in the Lord, people that have partnered with you and supported you in the gospel.

Express thanks. Celebrate that. I think that what we'll see as we do these things is the joy is going to increase in the lives of everyone involved, the people who are being thanked for their

partnership, the people who are partnering, the opportunity to serve people who serve, the joy is going to just explode.

We'll be so filled with joy. And I want to be clear here, Paul remembered this church, but they didn't serve Paul so that they would be remembered. They served him because they had affection for him.

So serve genuinely, partner genuinely. They believed in Paul's mission to further the kingdom of God, and so they supported however they could.

So we don't need to commit to partnering in Lewisburg so the city of Lewisburg will walk around and talk about all the good things that First Baptist Church is doing, or anywhere else, right?

[39 : 11] We should partner in ministry and serve together to reach people because there is a community around us, our neighbors, who are dying and going to hell because they don't know Jesus Christ as Lord.

If we're not partnering together to get out and share the gospel and tell people the good news and show people the love of Christ and support people who are, if you're not able to go out and do those things, support people who are able to go out and do those things.

If we're not partnering together in this for the sake of seeing the lost come to Christ, then we're doing it for the wrong reason. We're not doing this so that we'll be remembered. We're not partnering together.

We're not serving so that people will think highly of us. We're serving so that the name of Jesus abounds greatly in this city, in Marshall County, in the state of Tennessee, in the country, in the world. We want to see, I want to see, you want to see the name of Jesus be high and lifted up. And that's our goal.