

# Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 2:1-5)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Thank you, Scott. Well, good morning, 4th. That's pretty good, but let's just do it one more time. Good morning, 4th. Excellent. Excellent. If you guys have a copy of the scriptures, go ahead and turn open to Colossians.

We're going to begin chapter 2. We're doing a study through this book. It'll take us through most of the summer. And it is summer, if you didn't notice. I think it's going to be around 90 today. So, this is great. And it's good to gather to begin our week seeking the Lord, enjoying the fellowship, encouraging the body.

And I just want to encourage us to just, when we're gathered, slow down. Take time to ask questions of one another and listen.

And I know there's a number of folks here that are probably in a place of great scarcity today. Health issues and family struggling with things.

[ 1 : 05 ] And we have an opportunity as a people to minister profoundly to one another. And just as we're modeling prayer with our elders up here and inviting folks if you need prayer, let's just do that for one another as the Spirit prompts.

Amen? So, the Lord may want to use you this morning in the life of another. So, let me again pray and then we'll launch into our study. Lord, we are reminded of what the psalmist says, that blessed be the name of the Lord from today and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. And Lord, we have extended hours with the season we're in. And we want to use them to praise your name.

We want to use them for opportunity to minister and to be used of you. And so, Lord, we commit our time to you. Would you speak to us through your word? And I agree with Scott.

Whatever you're asking of us, we want to respond with yes, Lord. So, we commit our time in Jesus' name. And all God's people said, amen. Amen. Well, I want to begin this morning reminding us that Jesus loves His church.

[ 2 : 28 ] Jesus loves the church. Jesus loves the local church. Jesus loves the universal church. Jesus loves the church. And it's obvious, right?

Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders, said that Jesus, in Acts 20, obtained the church with His own blood. You know, false gods and the gods of mythology, they require blood of another to accomplish great feats.

But Jesus gave His very life to accomplish the greatest feat, to heal you and me. Jesus loves the church. And I think that's the apex of what it means to love.

In fact, Jesus said so in John 15, where He says, greater love has no one than this, that someone laid down His life for His friends. And that's what Jesus did for us. God gave His very life so that we could have life.

Amen? So, today is a good day. Because if you're in Christ, you're here, and your sins are forgiven. Your past has been dealt with. Your future is secure.

[ 3 : 39 ] Jesus loves the church. Well, as we're in this book of Colossians, we're reminded that Paul loves the church as well. In fact, he says something similar in terms of the own suffering that he endured to love and care for the church.

In Colossians 1.24, he says, Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake. And in my flesh, I'm filling up with lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of His body, that is, the church.

So Paul loves the church as well. And we should love what Jesus loves and what Paul loves. We need to love the church. And this morning, Paul is going to share his deep burden for the Colossian church, that the church would be healthy, that the church would be fit for ministry, in fact, fit for battle.

And so we're going to look at just five verses this morning. And I want us to listen to Paul's heart for this particular church. And he begins here, Colossians 2, beginning in verse 1.

He says, For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those that lay out to see, and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach the riches of full assurance of understanding, and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, and whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[ 5 : 04 ] I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Paul is a theological juggernaut. This is a man of the mind. Incredibly smart individual.

And yet, what we see here in this first portion of chapter 2, in this letter, we really see Paul's heart. Paul adores the church.

Paul labors for the church. Paul fights for the church. Paul roots for the church. And it's refreshing to observe this, is it not?

Because there's a lot of critics out there these days. There's critics outside the church. There's critics inside the church who would love to pick out the church, critique the church, complain about the church.

[ 6 : 10 ] And I think it dishonors the Lord when God's people do that. It's very easy to be a critic. And I love the example that Paul sets forth here because he's saying, man, I love the church in all its imperfection.

This is God's choice instrument to advance His kingdom in our day. So we need to love the church. Paul begins here, verse 1, he says, for I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face.

So, from this first verse, we are reminded that Paul never actually visited Colossae. He didn't visit the tri-cities of the Lycus Valley, Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea.

We recall that this church wasn't started by Paul, but it was started by one of his students, Epaphras. He's probably the one that brought the Gospel to Colossae.

It says in Colossians 1-7, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf. And so what's remarkable in this first verse as we read this is really to see the concern that Paul has for a group of people he had never met.

[ 7 : 27 ] I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you. And in fact, in other places, in other letters, Paul writes about the struggle that he has for the churches that he's serving.

In 2 Corinthians 11, he says, toil and hardship and sleepless nights over the believers in the churches that he was ministering to. He loved the church.

He lost sleep over the church. When do we lose sleep? What is it that keeps us up? I mean, maybe a little too much caffeine late in the day as we age.

Some of us, we get a little shaky legs and going. There's like a no caffeine rule in my house after like 3 p.m. It's still by my wife for me.

But what keeps us awake? Usually when we're concerned about something, maybe there's an important issue, big decision. I think one of the things that often will keep us up is if maybe there's conflict in a relationship and we're thinking about like that and what maybe we can say to smooth things or to reconcile and wrestling with conversations and what did I say?

[ 8 : 50 ] Typically what keeps us awake is something of great significance. And he thinks about the church.

And maybe what Paul felt and understood is something that we often forget. And I think it's the reality of the spiritual battle that we are in.

It's very easy to forget that we are in an actual spiritual battle. We're reminded in 1 Peter 5.8, Peter says, be sober-minded, watchful.

your adversary, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. That's not me trying to fear-monger you into a chaste and behaved life.

That's just the truth. We have a real enemy. We're in a real war. Satan would love to sift our families and our church if given opportunity.

[ 9 : 48 ] That's what he does. That's his agenda. To steal, to kill, and to destroy. And it's a sobering thought for us this morning as we see Paul's concern for this church because his concern isn't for a church on the verge of extinction.

He's concerned, he's burdened for a church that's actually in pretty good shape. In fact, he says it at the end of this section in verse 5. We're going to go all out of order this morning, but he says this, he says, for though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

This is a healthy church. And Paul here uses some military terms to describe the health of the church. I see the firmness of your faith. I see that you're in good order.

The Colossian church is standing firm. It's in good order. I see it's staying in formation. Think of that military phalanx. Everybody's staying in their place fighting as one unit.

Even in the face of doctrinal challenge and a very difficult culture. And I just wonder if Paul chooses military imagery in this way to remind the church that the battle's real.

[11:14] It's real. It's real. And just as Colossae is a good, healthy church, Fourth is a good church. Fourth is a healthy church.

And Satan would love to unravel, harm, distract any church committed to taking ground that currently belongs to him. He doesn't want a team to go off to Romania. He doesn't want the gospel to go out to the outermost parts of the world.

He doesn't want the gospel to advance in Spokane. He'd rather see a church become complaining. Disunified.

He'd love it if Fourth would become kind of a backbiting, gossipy, slandering, apathetic church. That we would become token in our prayers. That we would suggest to our city that Jesus is a good way but not the only way.

And so this morning what I'd like to do is just highlight three necessary elements for a church to stay fit for battle that come out of this passage. How do we stay fit for battle?

[12:28] How do we maintain health? How do we advance the gospel? Well, let's go back to verse 1. Paul says, I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face.

My question is, how is Paul struggling fighting on behalf of this church while he's in prison?

How do you struggle when you're incarcerated? He's in prison. What can he do?

Well, I'll tell you what he can do. He can pray. Paul can pray. And in fact, he says that he's doing this because back in Colossians chapter 1 verse 9 he says, and so from the day that we heard we have not ceased to pray for you asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Paul is struggling in prayer for most of all. That's how he's struggling for this church. He's struggling in prayer.

[13:41] And Paul's not alone in this because if we read at the end of this letter in Colossians 4.12 it says, Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you always, catch this, same word, struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature, fully assured in all the will of God.

Do we want to be a church fit for battle? See the God advance the gospel, rescue people, change eternity in the hearts of men and women? We need to be a church that prays.

If we want to be fit for battle, we have to be a praying church. Amen? Amen? That's point number one. Sometimes my points aren't always clear and then you're like, I think there was a second or a third point in there and I know because I get reviewed and my wife tells me, like, be explicit.

So, point number one, fit for battle? We have to be a praying church. Okay? And this word, to struggle, agona, Paul uses the same word and at the end of chapter 1, verse 29, he's struggling for the church.

The English equivalent, agona, agonize. The word derived from the Greeks participating in athletics.

[15:07] They would wrestle, they would fight, they would race against one another and in the ancient Greek mind, everything was agona. That was the lens they saw life through that life was about competition.

Very similar, I think, to our culture. We love sports. We love athletics. And I love that Paul chose this word. Struggle in prayer.

And for the Greek mind, it's how they saw reality. Everything was competition. A great example from Greek history, one who struggled as an athlete, the long distance runner, Pheidippides.

Prior to the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. against the Persian king Darius, the Greek messenger Pheidippides is alleged to have run, catch this, 150 miles in two days in order to secure aid from Sparta for the Athenian army.

Now, that's unbelievable if history is accurate on this one. And in fact, we have named a race after this guy. The 26 mile marathon race is named in his honor related to a later run between Marathon and Athens.

[16:24] So, a little history there for you guys. I love the picture, though, of Pheidippides agonizing, struggling, 150 miles to do what?

Why is he running 150 miles? To bring help to the Athenian armies. Now, that's a metaphor for prayer, church. Because Paul says, I struggle in prayer.

I compete in prayer. And here we have this example of this Greek messenger who goes and struggles from afar to bring help. Are we struggling in prayer to call upon the God of heaven for help in the battle?

It's a wonderful metaphor for prayer. Consider what Paul says at the end of the key passage on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, 18.

He says, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints.

[17:31] Church, prayer, prayer is essential if we want to be fit for battle. My kids were watching one of the Star Wars movies, I think it was last week, and I just came at the end and there's a problem when you are a preacher, pastor, illustrations are everywhere and sometimes you just, you can't even enjoy movies anymore because you're like, oh, that's a metaphor for prayer.

And they were watching the Star Wars Phantom Menace and the droid army is on the planet and all you got to do to knock out the army is get to the mothership and take out the reactor and boom, and everybody's just decimated.

Prayer. Prayer is just that. Prayer. Prayer. Prayer.

Give me courage. I need a lot of courage so help me. Help me to listen well. Help me to be wise. Help me to honor you in the things that I say. Help me not to compromise and avoid talking about important things because maybe it's feeling a little awkward.

Like, we have to bathe all of that in prayer. It's our power source. Dwight L. Moody said, every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure. I agree with Paul.

[19:21] Prayer is labor. Prayer. Prayer is work. But if we don't pray, we don't have spiritual strength. We lack courage to fight in a spiritual battle.

I pray before I drive. I started this all the way back as an undergrad at the real college of Washington State. And I remember that I had a biology test and I answered one of the questions related to cosmology that God created the heavens and the earth.

And obviously, that was the wrong answer on, you know, a secular university campus. And I knew when I answered the question that I was going to be going in to talk with a professor because, of course, I got it marked wrong.

So I set up an appointment. I still remember the intimidation factor of going, great, I'm that Christian undergrad kid going, hey, I know how like things were created and this is what I believe.

And I can remember on my way to his office praying, asking God, give me courage. And that was when I began to pray a promise given to Ezekiel that I've turned into a prayer still to this day that I will often pray, which is Ezekiel 3, 8 to 9, behold, I've made your face as hard as their faces.

[20:45] I'm just, Lord, make my face as hard as the professor's face. And your forehead as hard as his forehead. Like Emery, harder than Flint, I have made your forehead.

Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks for their rebellious house. So I'm like, Lord, make my head like a grinding stone. Like, give me courage that I can go in there, represent you well.

I still pray that today. We need to pray for courage. We should be praying for one another all the time. We should be praying for wisdom.

We should be praying for courage. I think even more personally, fathers, or your single parent, driving home, Lord, prepare me to walk into the doors of my house.

Because I don't think I've ever arrived and there has not been an opportunity to be a servant. I don't think I've ever arrived home and like people greet me with like, you know, fans, you know, and a robe and grapes.

[ 21 : 52 ] I mean, I've never had that. That would be a little weird. There's always an opportunity to serve when you walk through the door and you're coming off a day where you're tired and maybe you're a little stressed and you're a little selfish, right?

We're just thinking like, oh, me time. I don't even know if that's a biblical concept. We'll have to talk. We'll do a whole session on me time. Parents, are you praying for your kids?

One of the things that I did a few years back was I turned my kids into days of the week because we have seven kids and it's like, oh, that's easy, right? You know, Cal, you're Sunday. You didn't know that, but you are. And yeah, Maggie's Thursday, Caleb Saturday.

And so it's like, sometimes I think of you as days of the week when I, because you're just in my head that way. but it's like, man, something you can do to go, okay, each day I'm going to pray for a kid, pray for somebody in my family.

And there's things that we can do, man. And it doesn't have to be a lot, it doesn't have to be long, but it's just a constant rhythm, a constant practice of doing that. Praying for our kids, praying for our family, and praying for our wives, interceding for our families.

[ 23 : 07 ] I love the example of James Dobson. his great-grandfather committed to praying for the next three generations between 11 a.m.

and noon every day, every day of his life. And the results of which are generations filled with people who love ministry, love Jesus, and are being used by the Lord. It's incredible.

I would just say, parents, don't assume your kids are going to follow Jesus because you do. I've seen way too many youth over the years that are apathetic to the Lord today. And I would say, man, let's not air parents on not investing in praying for them.

Amen? Whatever that looks like in your world, and if you're like, man, I need some help there. Talk with an elder. Talk with one of us. We would love to just brainstorm with you.

How can you grow in this area? How can you improve in this area? And I would say, we have a standing prayer gathering every Sunday, 8 a.m., and we need more folks because that's the engine.

[ 24 : 11 ] That's the engine. Do we believe that prayer makes a difference? James 5 says it does. Prayer of a righteous person.

Great power when it's working. Great power. I used to lead college teams to Russia.

I've had four or five trips I've taken over there. And when you fly in country, the planes are not remarkable and always trustworthy.

So, I've always told my wife, like, when you know I'm flying, just could you pray for us? As we get in that tubalab, I don't know what's going to happen, but we had an occasion where we took off from Moscow to go to St. Petersburg.

It was like the middle of the night here. And we get up in the air and all of a sudden our plane does a U-turn and lands.

[ 25 : 10 ] And, that's really strange. And they're like, yeah, one of the engines actually didn't fire and they were concerned. So, the captain had the wisdom to just turn the plane around.

We got in a different plane and we made it there all right. And then I called Julie the next day. I said, were you praying for us last night? She said, yes. I woke up in the middle of the night.

I said, what did you pray? I prayed if your plane wasn't going to make it that the captain would have wisdom to turn the plane around. I'm like, well, that's what he did.

Thank you. You get to have a husband. Yeah, I just think about that. They're like, yeah, the Lord used that prayer.

And, man, are we, are we a praying people? Do we labor like an athlete in prayer? Like a long distance runner praying by half of our families and our church?

[ 26 : 15 ] I'll end with this quote on this point. R.A. Torrey said it this way, when the devil sees a man or a woman who really believes in prayer, who knows how to pray, and who really does pray, and above all, when he sees a whole church on its face before God in prayer, he trembles as much as he ever did.

for he knows that his day in that church is at an end. We want to be fit for battle church? We've got to be a praying church.

Continue on. Look at verse 2. Just the first section, first portion of that verse says, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love. We'll just pause there.

We'll pick up the second part a little bit. Knit together. This is not a sewing metaphor. I've got nothing against sewing metaphors. I've crocheted one scarf in my life. It's a one and done. It may sell it on eBay someday. It'll go for a lot of money. This is actually kind of a human body metaphor.

[ 27 : 26 ] Being knit together. He says something actually similar in verse 19 where he says the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows and with a growth that is from God.

So we have this image here of a connected people. Want to be fit for battle? We've got to be a praying church but we have got to be a unified church. A unified body.

Knit together. Jesus said clearly a house divided cannot stand let alone advance. Even the world knows this. It was shocking to me for you sports people to hear the story about the NFL draft where you had Shador Sanders who Deion Sanders big personality very talented son quarterback should have gone in the first round went in the fifth round.

Why? Because teams were like it doesn't matter how skilled this guy is we don't want ego problems because we don't want division. We'll go with ordinary and unified over extraordinary and divided any time.

And it was just like yeah even the world knows how important unity is. And biblical unity goes beyond kindness and cordiality we're intertwined ligaments joints muscles vested that's why when we talk about membership here we talk about partnership we're partnering together to advance the gospel and we're partnering so that we can be an encouragement I can encourage you you can encourage me we need to do that for one another because as we do that we walk further is it easy to to to vest and partner in one another's lives no not really we're very different I mean look at me and Scott we are let me count the ways this guy wears loafers sometimes when he's got shorts on [ 29 : 38 ] I'm like Scott Liddell white socks loafers shorts bad he's like I'm comfortable I can't help that we're so diverse we are we are we are we are we are we are not an affinity group we don't gather around a hobby that's easy oh we oh we're a movie club or a gaming club no it's very diverse group Paul says in Galatians 3 28 there's neither Jew Greek slave free male female you're all one in Christ Jesus was it difficult for Jewish Christians and Gentiles to fellowship yes the Jews didn't like the Gentiles not adhering to their dietary traditions slave and free at the same table equal footing male female co-heirs did that go over with some of the chauvinistic men no not at all

Christian unity church only occurs when we become a people actually yielded to God I'm going to say yielded to God yielded to text and spirit to be led of the flesh to be controlled by the flesh it will not lead to unity this has been the downfall of the church from the very beginning we did a study in 1st Corinthians well I'm of Paul I'm of Apollos I'm of Cephas I'm of Christ the church struggling for unity always has throughout church history this is one of the things we actually need to be prayerful about Lord help me to keep short accounts sin Lord if someone slights me let me just forgive them don't have to don't have to like stir things up Lord if I've got this spirit of bitterness forgive me so that I don't continue to defile more and more people because I'm letting this thing go deeper and deeper and deeper

Christian unity has been work throughout the entire history of the church one of the chapters of the church struggling on this front called the Donatus controversy the tail end of the third century in North Africa the Donatus Christians they got their name because they stood under a guy named Donatus who his deal was basically he wanted to separate the pure church from the false church in his mind and so when the Roman emperor in the third century Diocletian when he was persecuting the church he demanded the Christians hand over their books their Bibles and their books their Christian books hand them in some of them did that and for those that didn't compromise they saw those people that handed over their books as backsliders and then something happened because this thing happened in 313 AD the edict of

Milan the edict of toleration Constantine he signs into law right there's now peace there's no persecution for a season against Christians and so all these Christians that had turned in their books they were backsliders they want to be brought back into the church again but they were not allowed back into the church by the followers of Donatus the faithful believers called those folks tratadors it's Latin tratadors which is where we get our trader from and tratadors actually translates to hand over they were handing over their books what this example of unity or lap thereof surfaces I think for us is this question well then what is necessary for Christian unity what is necessary for biblical unity right is the church supposed to be a society of saints in that you got to kick out all the

backsliders the church is for those that are most sanctified everybody else you're gone or the other extreme let's not talk about true things let's not talk about

God's call for holiness let's just be a club hug everyone let's just love everyone and not worry about truth and there are churches that go this direction because what they want is numbers I'm not going to talk about difficult things I'm not going to talk about the gospel the exclusivity of Jesus that he's it he's the door not all paths lead to God or I'm not going to talk about hell I'm not going to talk about holiness and if we're a church like that have we experienced biblical unity because we're getting along we're just not talking about true things that's not biblical unity church Paul actually defines the basis of unity in verse two let's look at the second part of that verse says in their hearts may be encouraged being knit together in love now catch this he says to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of

[ 35 : 38 ] God's mystery which is Christ and you really have a definition of unity here a body of believers possessing both what sacrificial love they're knit together in love so love is present but you also have sound doctrine understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery namely Christ namely the gospel so you have two sides of the unity coin here how do we have how do we have biblical unity we have to have love for one another but we also have to have truth and Paul even said to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4:15 man truth and love speak this to one another so that you can grow in him so we're not here just with an ethic of love if that's the case we don't have fellowship because none of us are actually walking with the Lord if we don't have sound doctrine to know Christianity is aspirational if we're not walking in obedience to

Christ how do we actually have koinonia you can't in fact John said it this way in 1 John 1:7 he says but if we walk in the light as he's in the light my life is conforming to the ways of Christ I'm seeking to obey what he says in his word and if we walk in the light as he's in the light then we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin but we have to walk in the light we have to walk in a posture of surrender to the Lord then we can have unity Christian unity if we walk in sin we dismiss doctrine God's word we really don't have a fellowship church Paul is now not giving us license here to be unkind to one another like there's no ministry called jerks for Jesus it's it doesn't it's not a thing if it is it shouldn't be he's actually calling us to care deeply for one another for the souls of one another yeah but we're we're actually trying to exhort one another every day so we're gonna we're gonna bring truth to bear in one another's lives but we're doing it because we love deeply

Paul says to the Galatians in Galatians 6 brothers if anyone's caught in a transgression you who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness keeping watch on yourself lest you too be tempted bear one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ and I love the key there when he says when we're we're seeking to exhort one another bringing truth to bear in one another's lives he's saying hey the people that should be doing that are those that are spiritual you who are spiritual restore so those that are walking close to Jesus those who are walking yielded to God's spirit then you can speak into one another's lives like if you are an abrasive person you're probably not the person to speak in someone else's life Paul says those of you who are spiritual and I love that Jesus actually models two sides of the unity coin really so well for us truth and love because what he did by going to the cross he modeled both because when he went to the cross what he was declaring is what you're a sinner right that's the truth but he went to the cross so he's up there not to condemn he was actually there to forgive to rescue to love Jesus embodies this and that's what we're called to embody to one another to be a church fit for battle we've got to be praying and we've also got to be striving for unity well let's finish up here look at the last few verses verses three to five I'm going to sneak in the last part of verse two where it says God's mystery which is Christ I need that section here for our final point God's mystery which is Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments plausible persuasive speech hey there's a better way Jesus isn't really God he's a good guy says nice things he didn't die in your place persuasive speech plausible arguments verse five for though I am absent in body yet I'm with you in spirit rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ we want to be fit for battle we got to be we got to be a praying church and we've got to be a church actually committed to doing the hard work of walking in biblical unity where there's love but there's also truth and there's wisdom in that but finally to be fit for battle we have to keep the main thing the main thing it has to be about Christ it has to be about Jesus God's mystery which is Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge that's why we could just got done Scott preaching

Jesus earlier a few weeks back first born of creation in him all things all together and it was so important for us church I'm probably not supposed to say this but we actually had to ask somebody to leave that said I don't believe that Jesus existed in all eternity I think God made him I said this is not a church you can worship at because you don't actually believe that Jesus is God this is what we believe here and and Paul says very clearly in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge so we got to keep the main thing the main thing it's about Jesus it's about grace we've got to be a church committed to talking to people about Jesus and and his offer of grace or to be redundant of free grace because that's what grace is it's free it's a gift I drove a gentleman about a week ago who got in my car and he was a little high on something and I told him probably not a wise choice I was like okay and then we began to talk about the gospel and I got to share about Jesus and I don't know if the drugs were helping his response because he was all in he's like man that's amazing like God would die for us yes I said when you sober up come to church the next morning I don't know if you're here if you come see me afterwards if you're here it's free grace it's free grace friends don't forget the gospel don't start living by a different gospel and I think there's a subtlety here but I think sometimes we can begin to live by a different gospel because we're like yeah I got saved by grace it's all Jesus but then this weird thing happens and Christians start thinking in their mind I was saved by grace but I got to now work hard to keep my salvation [ 43 : 46 ] I think some of that grew out of this lordship salvation chapter that this church even went through and I think it's very dangerous to start thinking like you are somehow working hard to keep your salvation that's not biblical Jerry are you just saying we should just like it doesn't matter how we live no because Paul said may never be should we just sin so grace abounds no because our obedience is worship unto the Lord but it should be joyful we're not doing it so that we can somehow keep our salvation don't change the gospel and I think people begin to struggle with this primarily when they are stuck with some besetting sin and they're just like I don't know if I'm still saved I gotta I gotta I gotta I gotta get this thing I gotta I gotta like deal with this so that I can I can be saved again no you're saved and in fact in now what Jude says in

Jude 24 now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and present you with great joy it's him who keeps you you don't keep yourself I gotta work hard to keep my salvation that's not in the Bible in the Bible it says that he keeps you and I love how Paul and Romans 8 because he says this he says I sure hope this is the case no he doesn't say that I kind of think that I'm betting on I'm hopeful what does he say verse 38 I am sure I am sure that neither death nor life angels rulers things present things to come powers or height or death or anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord I am sure I am sure church I want you to be sure if you have trusted in Christ as your personal Savior you're forgiven walk in joy well Jay I'm struggling with sin well then come and talk with a pastor or a brother or a sister or an elder so that we can actually partner with you in prayer get you connected with fellowship so that you have like some resources to battle whatever it is you're dealing with that's the joy of being a church amen but you're saved you don't have to work hard to keep it but Jesus does tomorrow we're going to celebrate Marie Owen her memorial her funeral that 11 if you want to join us for that it's that heritage funeral home you have to look that up I don't know where it is I'll be there Scott will be there and we're celebrate this beautiful thing 91 passed away a couple weeks ago and when we're there we're not going to be celebrating the fact that man Marie worked hard to keep her salvation we're going to celebrate the fact that Jesus saved her rescued her and was faithful to keep her amen that's the gospel that's the glory of the gospel that's the goodness of the gospel and if that's the message we're proclaiming we're fit for battle church amen father we thank you for the promise that salvation really is a gift the power of the gospel is to rescue sinners and then to keep them Jesus thank you think you're able to keep it's not us working hard so we can somehow hang on to our salvation Lord I want to pray for your people this morning that they could say like Paul I am sure I am sure nothing could separate me from you Christ because I have cried out to you Lord Jesus that you would be my Savior I believe that you're God I've trusted in your death burial resurrection it's enough to forgive me of my sins thank you Jesus that you died not as a sinner but you died as my substitute Lord I pray that we would be a people this summer that would walk in the joy of our salvation the freedom of that and Lord certainly we don't want to use our freedom extended hours of the day to leverage opportunities for the flesh we want to want to through love serve one another Lord I pray that you would give us ministry this summer the lives of people Lord

we'd have our eyes open we'd have our hearts open to one another Lord as you prompt us in our spirit help us to be quick to pray to lift people up and Lord let us strive for unity that you might continue to use for Memorial Church in Jesus name amen