

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 5:12-14

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, Forth. Good morning. I want to welcome you this morning.! We have encouraged the church to consider a technology fast of some sort, whether that be you're off social media, you know, for the next probably 30 or so days, or you're limiting access to that, to a particular time of day, or maybe you've given up all screens together.

You just got, you're like, I'm all in. And we encourage you to use the time, that space that has been created to then use it to draw near to the Lord and one another.

And to help you in that vein, we have actually a reading. It's a 30-day devotional to lead up to Resurrection Sunday, Everyday Gospel Easter Devotional by Paul David Tripp.

And we want to make these available to you. We have a number of them available out in the foyer after service. I think a \$5 donation would be great.

If you don't have it, just take one. But this is a great way for you to meditate on the goodness, the beauty of the gospel leading up to Resurrection Sunday.

[1 : 39] And so we want to, we don't want to just say, hey, take something away and then do something. I think sometimes as shepherds we wrestle. Do people, do they, do they have a plan? And for those of you that have a plan, continue with that.

For those of you that maybe don't, grab a book. And we've got cameras and we'll know that those that grab a book didn't have a plan. Not true. So those are available. I will grab one with you.

So go ahead and turn open to 1 Peter chapter 5. We are in verse 12 to 14, to the end.

Friends, this is our final message from 1 Peter. And so I'm looking forward to that. And I'm thrilled next week we will begin Zechariah.

So we'll be in the Old Testament and encourage you to, you know, if you're not watching TV, just you can read two chapters a day and you'll get through the whole book by next Sunday.

[2 : 38] So would you pray with me? Amen. We're reminded, Lord, of the psalmist when he wrote that the precepts of the Lord are right and they rejoice the heart.

And in fact, he said that your word, Lord, your words, they're more desired than gold, even fine gold. They're sweeter than the honey, the drippings of the honeycomb.

And by them your servant is warned and in keeping them there is great reward. And Lord, we believe that this morning. Not reward for salvation, that's a gift.

That's accomplished at the cross. But there's reward in joy and there's reward in wisdom. There's a reward in usefulness in ministry to one another.

And so Lord, would you teach us? Would you tell us things about yourself as we open your book together this morning? And whatever you accomplish in us, we will give you full thanks and credit and glory for.

[3 : 41] We pray all these things in Jesus' wonderful name and all God's people said. Amen. Well, I was thinking about the passage this morning. We'll see if this illustration works or not.

And if it doesn't, just you don't need to tell me. But I was thinking about the first house that we owned. It was like about a 1,300 square foot house we bought in Renton, Washington.

And I think it had probably been like a smoker's home for years and years and years. And we did a whole lot to make it even livable. But it became very, we loved that house. We painted it yellow and we called it Little Yellow.

We name all our houses. I don't know why, but we do. And there was this one sort of thing that wasn't so great about Little Yellow.

And it was this. There was no garage. I sort of felt like an outsider in our neighborhood, second class. I was the only house without a garage.

[4 : 41] Everyone else had one. I know, it's like a really desperate first world problem that we were dealing with. I felt so bad.

We built a shed in the back. And it didn't, I still felt bad. But I was so thrilled to get our next house. We moved to then the Snoqualmie Valley, Carnation, Washington.

And bought a little bit bigger house. We called it Big Beige. And what was thrilling about this house was it had a garage. I never had a garage.

It was pretty great. Scott loves his garage. He knows what I'm talking about. If you're a guy, you get it. You're like, yeah, a garage. And I had like dreams for this garage. I mean, I was like, it's going to be beautiful.

And all this stuff is going to be organized and ordered. And I was so thrilled to have this space. And I was going to keep it uncluttered. And this vision for my garage, it lasted one month.

[5 : 41] For whatever reason, I don't know, maybe because we had like a whole slew of children. But I intended to keep that garage immaculate, organized.

And I was going to protect it, you know, from the hoarders in my family. But what happened was it just morphed into this clutter box.

And I'm just using that as an illustration this morning because Peter, I know, we'll see if it works. He gives us a final word in this letter. And he's actually telling us, I want you to protect something.

I want you to keep it tidy and clean. Guard this thing. This one central truth. Don't allow it to morph into something ugly, unbecoming, cluttered, without power.

And so that's the context of really this final word that Peter has. And sometimes we kind of gloss over. You know, we get to the end, we're like, oh, it's just a goodbye. Well, this is significant what Peter has to say with this goodbye.

[6 : 46] So let's consider it together and see what he has to tell us in terms of this thing that we're to protect and guard. He says this. By Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God.

Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings. And so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ. Now, first, just as a way of reminder, Peter says, I have written briefly to you.

Well, who is the you that this letter was addressed to? Recall back at the beginning in chapter 1, verse 1, Peter tells us he's addressing this letter to believers that are scattered throughout Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.

He says in 1 Peter 1, 1, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

[7 : 57] There has been this reoccurring theme that we have observed in this letter. This theme of suffering that Peter has been addressing. That Christians have been struggling with persecution because of their faith.

They're aligning themselves with Jesus. And they are there in that time of Emperor Nero. He eventually then burns the city in 64 AD.

But here at the end of the letter, Peter now brings a greeting to these scattered believers in Asia Minor. And he says the greeting is from believers that are actually living in Babylon.

Now, is this actual Babylon? Most scholars believe that Peter is actually just simply referring to Rome here. And how do we know this?

Well, we know that Peter was in Rome at the end of his life when this letter is written. Church history records that Peter is ultimately martyred for his faith here just a few years after this letter is written.

[9 : 07] He's executed during the persecution of Christians under Nero, 64 to 67 AD, somewhere in there. And tradition tells us that he was crucified upside down.

We don't know if that is actually the case. That's, you know, church tradition. He wanted that. He didn't consider himself worthy to die in the same manner as Jesus. But the earliest testimony we have of his death is from a guy by the name of Clement of Rome.

He's a bishop there in Rome in 8096. And in his letter, 1 Clement, written from Rome to Corinth, he refers to Peter's martyrdom.

And this is what he writes. Because of jealousy and envy, the greatest and most righteous pillars, perhaps Paul is also being referred to here, pillars of the church, were persecuted and contended

unto death.

Peter, who threw unjust envy, endured not one or two but many labors, and thus having borne his testimony, went to the place of glory that was due him.

[10:19] And so that's the earliest external, biblical external record we have of Peter's death. Also, we have another clue that it's probably Rome.

As we go to, in verse 13, because Peter actually mentions Mark. I don't know if sound booth, I'm getting a lot of reverb up here just, and I can live with it.

But if there's something you can do, that would be great. Mark is mentioned by Peter. He writes, So Paul tells us that Mark is also in Rome at this time.

In this letter, Paul mentions that in Colossians, at the end of Colossians, Colossians 4, verse 10. And so there's good indication that actually Peter is writing from Rome.

Now, why would Peter then call Rome Babylon? Perhaps he's emphasizing now that Rome is the new oppressor of God's people.

[11:28] Recall that it was Babylon where Judah, the southern kingdom, was sent into exile in 586 B.C. It's also a place of moral corruption, much like Babylon was.

Additionally, it may have helped. But Peter uses the word Babylon to shield the knowledge that he's in Rome.

Potentially, if this letter falls into the wrong hands, Peter may be a safer, the Roman church as well. And so perhaps that is why he uses that metaphor for Rome.

We also learn at the end of the letter that Peter has an assistant who either helped him write the letter or simply was a means of delivery of this letter. He goes and names him Silvanus, Silas, as he's called in other passages.

He's the guy that accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. You can note that. Acts 15:40 talks about that. So that's just some of the introductory comments with this final greeting.

[12:30] And now let's get to the heart, the meat of the final word Peter has for these scattered, persecuted believers. This is his like doorpost word.

You know what a doorpost word is? Like at the end of an evening, you spend time with friends or family, and maybe there was something on your heart that you really wanted to share, but it just wasn't the right time.

And so you finally get to the doorpost. You're saying goodbye, and you're like, I've got to share that thing. Right? And then you finally get it out. Well, this is Peter's doorpost word for these believers living under duress.

And he says this, and it comes from the second part of verse 12. He says, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God.

Stand firm in it. What does it mean to stand firm? It means to plant yourself.

[13:35] It means that you're not going to give an inch. I think perhaps my favorite image of this in film is probably Lord of the Rings, right, where Gandalf is there in the mines of Moria, and he's on the bridge, and his friends get across the bridge, and then this demon, this bull rod, comes upon them, and Gandalf is there, and he just puts his staff down, and he just like plants himself.

Right? Right? You guys, do I have to act it out? Is that what's going on here? You're getting very quiet. You're like, Jay, yes, please. I love that scene. You shall not pass.

Right? You're like, yes. Like, that's this scene. That's Peter here. This is, stand firm on this. Don't waver at all.

Don't give an inch. This is something to die for. Scott's given us a great sort of escalating list of how we should think about theological matters.

At the very bottom, you have, like, decide for issues, things that are very far from the gospel, and then you have maybe debate for issues, and then you might get up to the level of divide for issues, and the last and final, this very small circle of truth are those die for issues.

[14:59] Church, this is a die for issue. The style of worship that we play up here, that's not a die for issue. The color of our carpet or pews, it's not a die for issue.

The exact time when Jesus is going to return, I believe it's prior to the tribulation. Some of you may believe it's after. That's not a die for issue. We have a die for issue here.

We die. We never alter one central truth. What is that? It's the gospel. And so Peter says that, the true grace of God. Friends, this is Peter's final word to these believers scattered.

Stand firm on the gospel. And you have to wonder if maybe Martin Luther was thinking about Peter's words when he nailed those 95 discussion points back in 1517 on the door of the castle church there in eastern Germany, which then sparked the Protestant Reformation.

Friends, don't ever move past grace. The gospel. Don't allow it to morph into something that is unbecoming, joy-robbing, powerless to save as well as to transform.

[16:36] Stand firm, friends, on the gospel. Peter says, this is the most important word I can give to you. This is not a throwaway goodbye, friends. This is the most important thing.

It's what allows us to gather as brothers and sisters in Christ, as redeemed, as new creations. How does one cease to stand firm on grace?

Well, I think you can get pushed in one of two directions here. You can either morph grace towards legalism, or you can morph it towards lethargy.

Legalism. Thinking that you're adding something. That it's going to cost you something. That you can buy salvation.

It's your good works. What's lethargy? It's thinking that it costs God nothing in order to offer it to you.

[17:45] And we can err in both of these directions. And so I just want to talk about each of these, and then end with kind of giving us an image of grace this morning. There's your roadmap. So the first way that we can err on the gospel is we can move towards legalism.

What is legalism? It is an addition of works. Maybe you believe you're adding works to save yourself.

Or perhaps, perhaps for most of us who are in Christ, who have trusted in the gospel, we believe that Jesus' life, His death, His burial, His resurrection is enough.

But something happens mentally where for some reason we think that our works is what keeps us saved. Like the gospel was this good down payment.

But maybe in our heart of hearts, we now think that we're worthy because we're doing the right stuff. Oh, yes, I'm saved today because I spent time avoiding technology and reading that devotional that I picked up in the foyer.

[19:01] Oh, man, I'm going to make it into heaven because, man, I have been doing great. Not pouring filth into my imagination. I've avoided it. Oh, I'm saved.

Friends, this is wrong. We don't obey in order to get saved. We obey as an act of worship. Our obedience is a response to grace poured over our lives.

We obey as a central way, actually, that we're able to glorify God, which we desire now for the first time as His children.

We obey that we might experience an increase in joy and power to minister. But our salvation, it still rests solely on Christ, His atoning work on the cross.

You know, the church in the first 1,500 years of church history, it morphed. It morphed towards legalism.

[20:07] And that's really the whole reason for the Protestant Reformation. See, the church was losing the gospel and in some cases had lost the gospel, believing that salvation is something that can be earned.

This is part of the controversy centered on indulgences being sold under the authority of Pope Leo X, particularly through the preaching of this friar, this German-Dominican friar, John Tetzel.

And you're saying they were selling indulgences. Well, Jay, what's an indulgence? An indulgence is a credit that removes punishment. It's like you're getting like a coupon.

It's, you know, for some of you dads out there, you remember like, you know, when your kids were really young and they had no money, what did they give you for your birthday, your Father's Day? Like they made coupons, right? You're going to get a clean room, Dad.

I'm going to clean my room without you, you know, and just cash in. You're going to get a back rub, right? I mean, how many of those actually worked, right? It's like, I'm too tired, Dad.

[21:13] I've got homework. Like, you know, they were kind of useless, which is kind of like what these indulgences are. Promising, man, you're going to get like this grace credit that you can spend on someone else or yourself.

Tetzel's slogan, as soon as the, because you buy these, right? You donate to the building fund that the Pope had going. And his slogan was, as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs.

You buy people, buy their salvation. Purgatory's not in the Bible. We're not saying, suggesting that it is a real doctrine. It's not biblical. And it's interesting, in 1521, Luther was then summoned before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and church officials, and he was asked to recant, to take back his writings, criticizing this practice.

Sounds like Peter here, right? He says, hey, unless I'm convinced by Scripture and plain reason, I cannot and will not recant anything. For to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen. And I think in his heart, it was like, and if it cost me my life, so be it.

[22 : 31] I will stand on this. I will die on this. And that's what Peter's telling us this morning. Stand firm. Apostle Paul knew the same thing.

Peter sounds like Paul. Paul who's like, I don't have enough lifetimes to compensate for the evil that I have committed as an unbeliever.

Which is why I think Paul then wrote in Galatians 6.14, he said it this way, But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what I'm standing on. And friends, this is what we stand on. This is the best news ever. And it's the best thing about us. That God's grace is directed to us, not based upon any work that we have contributed.

Friends, why do we move? Why do we inch towards legalism? What is it? If we have first trusted in salvation by grace, what is it?

[23 : 38] And I would just suggest that I think in our heart of hearts, sometimes we don't believe that anyone could be this good to us, this kind, this extravagant, this forgiving.

We just don't, and so we spend our lives unnecessarily working for something we already possess. Friends, if you ever see me at O'Reilly's, and you see Pastor Jay in there buying antifreeze, just tell him to stop.

You'd be like, Jay, stop buying antifreeze. You got six bottles at home in your cluttered garage. I don't need to buy more antifreeze in this life.

You don't need to buy God's favor. You have it. You don't need to win your dad's approval. You have it through the blood of his son.

Enjoy that, friends. That's freedom. That's freedom. We can err this way. Well, additionally, we can go the other direction, and we can err on the side of lethargy.

[24 : 53] It's a subtraction of works, but it's a subtraction of God's work on our behalf. It's a dismissing of God's kindness directed towards us.

And it's almost as if we think, like, when God says forgiven, it's like this flippant sort of like, oh, all good. It's a very weak, small-minded view of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is costly. It's costly. How costly? Listen to what John says in 1 John 4.10. He says it this way. He says, In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation, it's a big word, for our sins.

Jesus became a propitiation for our sins. He became a covering. Wrath was averted from us.

Holy God poured out his wrath on Jesus so that he could offer us love. Jesus said, I will take the wrath.

[26 : 06] I will be your propitiation. I will appease God's wrath. Like all the false gods, they have their arms outstretched, like give me a sacrifice, right?

The true God says, no, my arms are stretched out and I will die in your place. Payment's been made. This is a cost I think we will marvel about for all eternity because I think we get it to a degree now, but I think when we lock eyes with Jesus and then I don't know what the first thought is going to be.

I don't know. Maybe we're not even going to think we're just going to be down on our face because we're just overcome and I don't know. Maybe some of us will spend like the millennium just down. I'd be like, Scott, you still, yeah, yeah.

You know, but I just, I think it's going to like crystallize of like the incredible, the immense cost and the fact that he would love us and then knowing who we were and even the seasons of just maybe lethargy and being zealous for him and I think it's just going to be overwhelming.

I think we're going to marvel about it for all eternity. You know, the fact that Jesus would do that for us, it ought to affect us now and I would say primarily in the way that we handle one another that it's like we have been given new life.

[27 : 36] It's like our lives have been given back, right? And it should have this like effect, you know, when George Bailey, he saw his life and then he saw what it could have been and then he was like, and he was alive and he's like, I thought I was dead and all of a sudden it didn't matter, you know?

Woo-hoo! He's just running through town. It's like there's a lightness in his spirit and people are like, you're going to jail. He's like, I know! Woo! Right? Because that's what grace does. I'm really forgiven?

All of that. That ledger, it's been like shredded? For real? Yeah. Yeah. It should affect the way that we interact.

It was costly for God. I think about this parable of the wicked servant. I know Scott shared this with our men a couple weeks ago and been thinking about it ever since.

But this wicked servant, I think he's an example of gospel lethargy. Because he minimized the cost of the one who's doing the forgiving.

[28 : 39] It says in Matthew 18, just a couple, a few verses on this, verses 26 to 28, the parable goes like this. So the servant fell on his knees imploring him, have patience with me and I will repay you everything.

And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. And what was the debt? Earlier we learned that the debt is actually 10,000 talents.

And in that day, that would have been equivalent to not a day's wage or a year's wage, that was equivalent to 200,000 years of wages.

It's a massive number. And it says here, the master released him and forgave the debt.

Verse 28, when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 denarii. How much is that? It's not even talent.

[29 : 45] It's like three months of wages. There's no comparison. And he found the guy that owed him this and he seized him and began to choke him saying, pay what you owe.

How in the world can you have a harshness in your spirit to others when you know the debt that has been canceled on your behalf? It's astronomical.

And we have this like incongruity here. It's just, it's disgusting, the comparison.

And instead of grace moving this individual towards a life of generosity and blessing and charity towards others, he lived as though kindness had never pierced his soul.

And maybe he thought, oh, when I was forgiven, it was like my master saying, all good. No, no, no. The cost, it's almost incalculable.

[30 : 52] We cannot behave as such. Our hearts ought to be the most generous, friends. Amen? The most charitable towards others because the Father has forgiven us of, is there anything on the whiteboard left?

Mm-mm, nothing. of everything. So what does Peter say to us? Hey, friends, stand firm. Stand firm. Never leave.

Don't diminish. The gospel, God's true grace for you. Friends, that's our story. That's why we gather here this morning.

Amen? Because we believe the gospel's true. That's our story. And it is what excites our joy. Joy is a derivative as we relish and we meditate on on the fact that we have been forgiven of much.

That's our forever story. Don't ever leave it. Don't forget it. Because then it alters how we behave towards everybody and in particular the way that we worship our God.

[31 : 59] Friends, this is how we began life. In debt. You know, we all began life as a prodigal. I think that's the best gospel story there is, the best grace story there is.

And I think the Lord gave it to us to remind us, that's your story. Whether your life was buried in pride or prostitutes, we each began life not caring what God thought.

Really desiring him to be dead. That's what the prodigal was saying when he required his inheritance early. Dad, I have no regard for you.

I have no need for you. Just your resources. You're dead to me. You have no authority over my life. Does that sound like the garden?

I will define morality. I will decide what's good. I will decide what's evil. And I will do all of that apart from you.

[33 : 03] Friends, this was us once too. God, you're not creator. You're not author. You're not the potter. I got this.

So we were just like the prodigal. We all began here. And the son, he takes the family's wealth and under Jewish inheritance laws, the younger son would have received a third of everything.

It was a lot. And he didn't take it and use it for noble purposes, friends. He used it to indulge his flesh. He went on to experience just reckless living beyond whatever that entails.

Sexual conquest, drugs, mind-altering, whatever. Didn't deny himself anything. It's like he took a pilgrimage down to Burning Man and the money, it runs out and then all of a sudden he's like, man, what am I going to do?

There's nobody here still. All those friends, they scattered. No one wants to be around this guy anymore. He's at the bottom. Reminds me of the Great Gatsby. Right?

[34 : 20] Through these parties he had all these friends and then he ends up alone. And there's nobody there to tell him how great he is anymore. There's nothing more pitiful than a man who lived for the applause of others when he is then without an audience.

And this is the prodigal. In his misery then he has an idea. And he throws himself on the mercy of the Father. It's a long shot but it's all he's got.

And as the story goes in Luke 15 beginning in verse 17 it says, but when he came to himself he said, how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread? But I perish here with hunger.

I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants. Friends, this is an astounding story. I think it's astounding mainly because it's true. It's a metaphor for all of us.

[35 : 24] that this was our heart posture before we trusted in Christ. We knew who our maker was. And I think the story is beautiful because it really gifts us with these three images of God.

Who is our Father? And I love the pictures of the Father in the story. And we have these and it says here, the first one is that the Father, it says that he waits.

Because later in the story, it says, but while he, the son, was still a long way off, the Father saw him, felt compassion. So you have this image of a father that waits for his son.

Dad knows what his son was up to and yet he's waiting for him. Kind of imagine the father going out on the porch in the morning and the evening just sort of like looking onto the horizon is today the day?

Like is today the day my son's going to return? Scanning the fields, scanning the roads, hoping to see his kid day after day after day.

[36 : 34] I think we're given there this insight into the patience of God. It's beautiful. I don't understand God's patience with me.

We serve a God who waits. We also have a second image of a father who runs. It says here, his father saw him, felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

The father doesn't just wait, he also runs. And in this culture, fathers don't run. To run would have been to shame yourself, to gird up your loins.

The patriarch of the family doesn't do that. He runs. He runs. That's the father's heart. It's not like ours.

He runs to the son. And he doesn't run to the son with his fist, you know, raised in the air ready to strike him. He runs to him actually to do what?

[37 : 48] To keep the son from shaming himself. Because what should the son have done? He sees the father and he's like three, two, hundred yards from home and he sees dad.

He should have dropped to the ground and started groveling with his lip in the dirt crawling to dad. And the father sees him and prevents him from doing that.

And essentially, I think what the father is doing there is saying, hey, let me shame myself so that you don't have to. It's a beautiful image. And maybe you're like, well, Jay, I don't know how the father has run to me.

Jesus did this for us through his crucifixion. The cross is God running towards each and every one of us. It's a shame we'll never know.

Even though it's really ours, it was ours to bear. Holy God, insulted, spat upon, sucker punched, abused, beaten, flesh torn, crucified, suffocated to death for us.

[39 : 02] Yeah, the father ran. We serve a God that waits. We serve a God that runs. And the final image is a father that does what? He celebrates. When the son returns, he says, bring the fatty calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

And I love this image. The son, he gets there and he's like trying to confess dad, dad, dad, dad, dad, dad, dad, dad. You don't know what I did. Dad, dad. And the dad's like, shh.

Right? Go get the finest coat. Get the family ring. Put on the slippers. Shh. Hey, kill the fatty calf.

Like the son wants it and the father's like, the father's like, overcome like, no, you're my son.

You're home. The son gets like the celebration of a lifetime. Why? I mean, friends, who do we throw parties for?

Deserving people. Birthdays. Is that really deserving? I don't know. We'll get, that's a freebie.

Birthdays. Graduations. Okay.

[40 : 11] Promotions. Okay. Getting married. Like, a lot of occasions to celebrate and throw a party for someone. This guy, the least deserving person on planet Earth, gets the party of a lifetime thrown by the father.

Why? It's the image of grace, friends. This is what we stand firm on. It's a beautiful image. Our father, he waits, he's patient, he runs to protect us of the shame, giftiness, right?

Eternal life. This is like, celebrate. Let's celebrate. Friends, that's an image of forgiveness and it's a gift to every one of us.

I had a friend who wrote me, I've shared this before, I won't share the whole story, but I think when I was struggling with God's grace and mercy in my life, I appreciate my friend, I was just weighed down with sin and the guilt of that and it was just, it was before me, it was heavy on my soul and I couldn't shake it, I couldn't shake it and my friend reminded me of this story and he said this, Jay, sent this text to me, know this, God is busy about preparing a feast even while we wallow in the pigsty.

Friends, stand firm. Grace is our message. This is our anthem. It's everything. It's everything. And maybe that's all you needed to hear this morning.

[41 : 51] And the best part about it, it's actually true. Die for this. Let us bring to mind the words of Peter often to stand firm on the gospel because Peter had to do it too because he too was a man that denied his Savior three times even to his face.

good news, friends, to be forgiven of much. Amen? Father, we want to be those that stand firm on the gospel.

I think our greatest mistake in this life, our greatest mistakes in life will always come as a result of not understanding grace. So, Lord, I want to pray for joy to well up in us as we, even as we participate in communion now.

And if we've come to a place of crying out to you, Jesus, asking that you would forgive us of our sins and be our Savior, that you have made good on that and you have responded, and let us believe with confidence today.

And might we be able to say like Paul, who was forgiven of much, the chief of sinners, when he said, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

[43 : 28] And, Lord, that is our story, too. Whether we were forgiven with pride, or things that we have acted out, Lord, let us be reminded that we are clean because of the blood of Christ.

And might it have a transformative effect in the way then that we handle one another today. And actually, Lord, always.

Thank you, Jesus, that you are a no-words remarkable, exquisite, unbelievable Savior. To you all glory.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.