

Seeking fullness for those who are empty

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 September 2022

Preacher: Dave Bott

[0 : 00] Good morning. Please turn with me to Colossians. We're reading from chapter 4 and verses 2 to the end of the chapter, verse 18.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open to us the door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

Walk in wisdom towards outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Tychicus will tell you about all my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts.

And with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, they will tell you of everything that has taken place here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you.

[1 : 23] And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions, if he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who is called Justice. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas.

Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read among you, have it read in the church of the Laodiceans, and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

And say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord. I, Paul, write these greetings with my own hand.

[2 : 43] Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Well, we've been talking about fullness in Christ in the book of Colossians for nine weeks now.

We've come to the end of the letter. This picture we've been using for a couple of weeks now of the internal bucket being full and overflowing.

We don't need to find ourselves. We already are full in Christ and it's overflowing into every aspect of life. But I want to ask, after all this talk of fullness, is it just talk?

Like how full do you feel most of the time? This week in particular as a church family, with all the heartache, in such pain, does all this talk of fullness just evaporate?

Is it just talk? Or maybe we compare ourselves to those who try and live apart from knowing Jesus.

[3 : 50] They're pursuing a very different idea of fullness. And we envy them. Like Psalm 73 says, we look and they seem healthy.

They seem strong. They seem beautiful. Their houses are big. They occupy the important and influential places in society. They've got all the friends. They've got so much more time, not having to come to church, and so much more money to spend.

We can envy them. Like Psalm 73, the psalmist goes, behold, look, these are the wicked, always at ease. They increase in riches.

All in vain have I kept my heart clean. Now the psalmist doesn't stop there, but we can even get to a place of envying people who don't know Jesus.

Or maybe, if we compare ourselves to other streams of Christianity, other people who probably kind of think similar lines to what the Colossians were hearing, you can have an extra experience of

God.

[5 : 02] Okay, yes, trusting Jesus is good, but if you really want to encounter God, this kind of being swept up into a heavenly experience with the angels, this is how you do it.

You need something else other than Jesus to get there. Maybe we compare ourselves to that kind of Christian thinking. You can have victory over finances and relationships and health.

You can have all those things. And we can envy. We can be tempted to think that fullness is found somewhere else. So is all this talk of fullness just talk.

Because this is a battle for our belief over where fullness can be found. I think we could picture Paul writing this letter, dictating to his secretary, just lying back on a deck chair by the pool with a cool drink by his side, the sun setting, like eye of everything in Christ.

You could picture him like that. But he signs off the letter in the very last verse, remember my chains. Remember my chains.

[6 : 20] Grace be with you. Now, if someone from prison, now he's under house arrest, but if someone from prison wrote you a letter saying, here's how you should live, here's the best life, would you believe, would you go, yeah, I'm going to work it out myself, thank you very much.

You've ended up in the slammer, I'm not sure you can really speak to it. This guy is in prison, he knows, he knows harsh treatment. And he's urging them, don't listen to the false teachers who can say that there's something else other than Christ.

Follow me as I follow Christ. Now, I think him saying, remember my chains, it could just be saying, this is really hard, please pray for me.

But I think he's saying more than that, like he said earlier in the letter, that I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, for your sake. And in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

He's not ashamed of his situation. It's a reminder that his imprisonment is for their sake. He's in prison because he is speaking the gospel clearly, which means the Colossians have come to know Jesus.

[7 : 41] He is suffering for their sake. It's a reminder that he's willing to hurt, willing to go through great cost himself so that they might have life, they might have the grace of God.

So Paul's, even in prison, even in this harsh treatment, Paul's still got the inner resources to be, this letter is full of affection, it's full of concern for the Colossians.

Where do those resources come from? If he was just focused on his own story that he's in prison under harsh treatment, he might turn in on himself, start self-pitying, but he doesn't do that.

He might spiral down, but he doesn't do that. He has these resources somewhere that make him affectionate for others and still seeking the salvation of others and the growth of others.

Where do those resources come from? I think asking that question helps us understand fullness. That fullness isn't just a feeling of happiness.

[8 : 54] That's not how we should measure fullness. Fullness is having the resources to live well, to live for Christ and actually be overflowing for concern for others.

So who do we think is more full? The person in our society who needs the house, who needs the job, who needs the relationships and all their work to be going well, to feel good about themselves and to feel satisfied.

If they lose it, they must get it back. If they have it, they fear losing it. They're always trying to manipulate situations to make themselves feel satisfied.

And if they look into their future, it's a bleak future. They've got to have it now. Time is running out. Is that person full? Do they have the resources to live well?

Or, like Paul, someone who has earthly things stripped away and yet they still have affection for people. They still have concern for other people's well-being.

[10 : 05] working hard that they might receive life. Fullness in Christ doesn't look like feeling happy all the time.

It's through all emotions. Fullness is having inner resources simply entrusting Jesus to live well, to be seeking the good of others in every moment, even filled with thanksgiving, no matter what's going on.

And where did Paul get these inner resources from? It's not his own making. It's not like he's somehow just stronger than us. His resources are our resources.

It's all in the gospel. It's all what Christ has done. Or to put it a different way, he knows that his life is part of a bigger story. His life is part of a grand narrative.

This Paul, who was once seeking to prove himself as a religious man, that's not who he is anymore. He came to see that he can't give the Lord who created everything, what can he do to the Lord who created everything?

[11:18] What can he give him to prove himself? Nothing. In fact, he was shown his debt of sin that needed to be paid. And now, in knowing Jesus, he has known that all that debt, that mountain of trying to live life without God has been nailed to the cross.

That full forgiveness, that full acceptance, not based on him proving himself, but based on what Christ has done. He now can call God not a judge only, but a father.

He is secure in the Father's love. He knows he is qualified for the eternal inheritance of the saints.

His future is full and bright, which gives him strength in every trial.

He is meaning and purpose now to represent the King of Kings, to be an agent, to be an instrument in the Redeemer's hands to bring other people into this new life.

It is in the Gospel that we have all the resources to live well. And we see that in this passage today, this passage seems to be all about seeking fullness for those who are empty.

[12:40] To live well, we are caught up into Christ's story. Christ's goal is to reconcile all people to himself. His passion is to see lost people come into the family, to see empty people filled.

It's Christ's passion that then fills us, gives us the resources to seek this as well. So I'm going to go through four things that I think this passage shows us we should be overflowing with Christ's passion in to see people reconciled to himself.

So I think we see that we've got to be depending on his sovereign grace in prayer. We need to be holding the ropes of prayer for those who are sent to speak the Gospel.

We're told to make the most of the time speaking graciously. And I think we see in all the final greetings that we are to stand shoulder to shoulder with all Christ's people to see the advance of the Gospel.

So, how will we overflow with Christ's passion to fill empty people? First we see in verse 2, depending on his sovereign grace overflowing with thanksgiving, continue steadfastly in prayer being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

[14:07] I think we're being called to make a lifestyle, a habit, a way of thinking. That's why the book *Rory the Dinosaur*, it's just being aware that sovereign grace is always at work.

Prayer is the natural response to that. If you think you can do it yourself, we won't pray. But if you think I need grace in this moment and I have grace in this moment because I am in Christ, prayer is just the air we breathe, depending on his sovereign grace.

But we shouldn't assume this comes easy. Throughout this letter, whenever Paul speaks of someone, often when Paul speaks of someone praying, like we see in verse 12 with Epaphras, he's struggling in prayer.

This is, it's a hard work thing. Or like in this verse, being watchful in it, being alert. Now it could be, I'm not sure, but the phrase being alert, being awake and praying, that might be an allusion to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane when he is being tempted to not go through the cross and he tells his few disciples, watch and pray.

But they can't do it. They fall asleep three times. They can't do it. He has to do it for us. Even our prayers, we need grace to do it.

[15:44] We can only do it in Christ can we do this. I think sometimes we think of prayer as something we have to muster up, but it's only in Christ that we can do it.

And the reason we need to be alert is because the temptation to look away from Christ is constant. We are always being tempted to lust after the things of the world or to despair in the dark seasons of life, to follow some other idea of fullness.

We need his grace all the time and we have it all the time. if we are aware of how dependent we are on his constant stream of grace, then we'll make prayer just the air we breathe.

We'll make prayer the first port of call we go to, not the last resort. I'm not saying I do this by the way, I think we're called to this, to make prayer the first port of call.

And that's why Thanksgiving is so appropriate to us as Christians, because we have constant grace. We have constant grace and so it's appropriate that all our prayers just have the aroma of Thanksgiving as well.

[17:10] So we need constant grace to live well in life, to represent Christ well so that we might be a witness for him.

So I think the second way that this passage tells us to overflow with a passion to see people come to know Jesus is in verses 3 and 4. That's what I've called holding the ropes of prayer for those who speak the gospel.

So verses 3 and 4. At the same time pray also for us, and the us there is Paul and his team, so to speak, of gospel speakers, pray for us that God may open to us a door for his word, to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

So we've already seen what the mystery of Christ is in chapters 1 and 2. It's the gospel, that the Old Testament was preparing how God would save his people. And then that has been revealed, that mystery has been revealed, it's all in Jesus, Paul says.

That's the mystery. And although all believers are to confess Christ, that's just what we do, that's just what a Christian is, a Christian acknowledges Christ.

[18:31] So all believers in some sense are to speak Christ as Lord, but some are gifted, some are called, some are set apart to speak and teach and evangelise.

But it's not their responsibility alone to do that. The whole church, I think we're being called in these verses, pray for us, that God may open to us a door for his word and that I may make the gospel clear.

The church is to carry the responsibility of praying for those whose job it is to speak the gospel.

Now I was convicted by this time, Emma and I support this missionary that we know, this friend of ours, and he came home from the field and he wanted to meet up with us and he was telling me all about it and at the end of the conversation I said, to my shame, I said, so something to the effect of, do you need more money?

And he was like, no, that's not why I'm having this conversation. I want you to care about the people I'm encountering. I want you to be praying. So I was a bit convicted, I was very convicted by that.

The main way we are to be supporting gospel workers is by caring and praying or as William Carey. He's the guy from, he's kind of known as the missionary who kind of founded, not founded, sorry, I'm trying to find the word here.

[20:14] He's the father of modern missionary movement. Obviously missionary work has been going on since Christ. But the modern push to go into other cultures, he's one of the first to go and he went to India.

And he told his friend and fellow Christian brother, Andrew Fuller, I will go down into the pit if you will hold the ropes. Do you get the image?

He's saying this is a dangerous calling. People do not want to hear the gospel. They're going to be close to it. I'm going to have no effect whatsoever if God's grace does not open the door for effectiveness.

You better hold the ropes or I'm going to fall. That's the picture he's using. I think it's a call on us as the church. Hold the ropes. Pray for an open door for the word and the message to be clear.

I think the door for the word isn't just opportunity. It is opportunity but like in Acts 14 27, Paul and Barnabas report the missionary journey and they say they went around to all these Gentile regions and they declared all that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

[21:35] So this is praying that not just opportunity for the gospel but that the gospel would break through hearts and open a door of faith, a faith response. So it's praying for the gospel to be effective and it's praying for the message to be spoken clearly.

Now this might sound like a human responsibility to speak clearly, which it is. It's how I ought to speak. But they need sovereign grace to do it.

They can't do it on their own. To grasp the meaning of scripture, to understand people who you're talking to so that you can make the gospel as clear as possible to their culture and what they're thinking, that needs sovereign grace to do that.

For the gospel worker to have the motivations right, not to do it for their own reputation, but to do it for Christ's glory and people's salvation, that you need sovereign grace for for our gospel workers.

So how are we holding the ropes of prayer as a church? Is that a culture in our church to hold the ropes of prayer? It is, isn't it? Our gospel partners, they're a permanent feature in our bulletin.

[22:59] We pray weekly for that. But I wonder, as we send those newsletters around, when we get them and email them on, is there a part of you that just thinks, this is just a useless activity?

I'm not sure, am I the only one who is struggling with that temptation? Shouldn't we get on with things we can do? Do we see prayer as the power of God to break through hearts? When we get those newsletters sent around, let's take time to pray. Can I urge us, let's make a plan to pray.

I think if we don't make a plan, we don't really do it. If we can make a habit of it. I know some people use a prayer app, because there's so many people to pray for.

Sometimes there's a prayer app where you can say how often you want to pray for someone and it just comes up. If you want to pray every three days, it will come up every three days. There's plenty of resources out there.

[24 : 07] Recently, I've made Friday mornings, the mornings where I pray for those newsletters, because they just became overwhelming. I'm just like, Fridays will be it. I'm just giving concrete examples.

You don't have to do that, but let's make a plan to pray so that we actually hold the ropes for people. So we overflow with Christ's passion through dependent prayer for ourselves and holding the ropes for those who speak the gospel.

And then in verses five and six, we have a very broad command to make the most of the time.

Always seeking to live and speak a counterculture of grace.

Walk in wisdom towards outsiders, that is those outside Christ's family, making the best use of the time. And how do we do that? I think verse six tells us the primary way we do that.

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. When are you witnessing to the gospel?

[25 : 22] Is it only when the topic turns to God or Jesus religion? Is that when you're witnessing for the gospel? Because these verses, they put a high calling on us to be witnessing for the gospel in everything.

Walk is just a description of every choice you make in life. Walk in wisdom as you live in this world, making the best use of the time. Let all your speech, let your speech always be gracious, whatever the topic of conversation.

I think to understand what it means to be making the best use of the time is an orientation thing. Time is urgent. It's realising what time in history we're in.

That time is urgent. We're not to panic, but it's urgent. Christ could come any day. We are in the last days.

We are in the days of salvation between Christ's first and second coming. So things are urgent, make the most of every opportunity. There is no hobby or interest or possession that we can shut off from Christ and say this is ours.

[26 : 41] We're being called here to walk in wisdom in everything we do so that people might just get a sense that we are full of grace, that we are living differently or the changing power of the gospel.

In all we say, we're being called that grace is what people sense in us. I think Ephesians 4.29 helps us understand this. I don't think it's saying we have to have nice words all the time.

Grace can be pointed words sometimes. But Ephesians 4.29 I think helps us understand what our speech being filled with grace means. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

I found that verse really helpful. It's fitting to the occasion. You're conscious of what does this person need in this moment? How can I build them up?

It's an orientation thing. It's not the tone of your voice necessarily. It's not the specific words necessarily. It's what's your goal. Is it to build that person up who's listening?

[27 : 59] Now these are broad commands, so can I just narrow in on social media? We don't talk about technology and social media much. Is your words online filled with grace, wanting to build up those who are listening?

I stumbled on a video this week. It had Steve Wozniak in the video. He, with Steve Jobs, helped invent the first computer, the Macintosh.

I was really surprised because the guy was praising Steve going, wow, you changed the world. He made this comment, I kind of regret what I did. Imagine that.

He has changed the world as we know it. And this guy, I kind of regret because of how the tech companies are using it to manipulate people.

And I think what he meant by that was there's a guy called Tristan Harris. He used to work for Google and now he's really passionate about trying to change how the technology industry operates.

[29 : 10] And he uses this phrase that the technology is hacking human vulnerabilities. Hacking human vulnerabilities. So an example of this, like the list in chapter three, like all the things we're meant to be putting to death, all the anger and the greed, all that self-interest.

The technology is actually hacking that to bring, draw that out of us. So for instance, the social media algorithms. I found out recently that the things that spread more, the posts that spread more, they're not the balanced comments of like giving nuance, it's the outrage.

It's like if someone in politics says something putting down the other side, that is the thing that will spread. The algorithms play on our desire to be full of malice and anger.

Or for instance, the addiction of social acceptance. You can post something and potentially have dozens or hundred people validate you instantly.

That is addictive and the tech people know it. So that's what he's meaning, that kind of thing, by hacking our vulnerabilities. Like do you go back and check your online posts to see how many people liked it?

[30 : 44] Like why would you go back and check? I think it boils down to this. Do we let social media control our sense of self, trying to fill up our self by our online presence?

Or are we so full of Christ that we control our social media? That we are using it to benefit and build up anyone who reads it?

That's the question. Are we using it? Are we being used by it to fill our bucket, to use that analogy?

Or are we so full of Christ we use it as a good tool to give grace to those who hear us?

In all we do, not just social media, but all our choices, in all we say, we want people to just get a taste of grace as they encounter us.

The fourth and final thing I think we see in this passage is in verses 7 to 17.

[31 : 57] Now, all these final greetings and greet this person and all these things, that's a long list. I look through the other letters and that's quite unusual for Paul to have such an extended list of this person greets you and this person greets you.

The only other one is the book of Romans. I'm wondering why. Like, we could be tempted to just chop this off. It's pretty useless for today. Let's not chop it off.

Let's trust that God has it here for our benefit. Why might the Colossians have benefited from all these greetings? And therefore, why might we?

Let me just quickly survey what's in here. It seems to be four sections. Verses 7 to 9 is about the person delivering the letter. Tychicus, I don't know if that's how you pronounce his name or not. He's going to expand on that letter. Anything that Paul meant, he will be able to teach further. And then you've got one Simmius. He's a runaway slave, but he's to be treated as who he is, a beloved brother.

[33 : 10] So you've got verses 7 to 9. You've got the letter carriers. Then verses 10 to 11, you've got three Jewish gospel workers with Paul. Then 12 to 14, you've got three Gentile gospel workers with Paul.

Especially Epaphras, who is struggling in prayer for them, filled with concern for them. And then, verses 15 to 17, the Colossians are told to greet the church at Nympha's house.

They exchange letters with Laodicea. In other words, sit under the authority of Paul's teaching and for Archippus to fulfill his ministry. Okay, so that's just a quick survey.

I think two things stand out in this section. The first is just the affection that the gospel creates.

When Paul earlier said that Jew and Gentile, there is no Jew and Gentile. Christ is all and in all. He means it. They are striving shoulder to shoulder for the gospel.

[34 : 15] There is such affection. My beloved brother, faithful minister, fellow servant. This is full of affection and unity.

It breaks down social and racial divides. There is affection. And the second thing is it's affection with a common purpose, the advance of the word of Christ, both in believers and in people coming to be saved.

I think the Colossians are being reminded that they are part of a much broader household of faith than just themselves and just their local church.

Such a, which is filled with mutual concern and affection and all striving to see God's word bearing fruit. This could encourage them because as they stand apart from the false teachers, they might feel quite alone.

They are not alone. They are part of a wide family of faith. The fruit of the cross puts us in a story that's much bigger than your individual story.

[35 : 36] It's even bigger than grace evangelical. We have a broader story. We have a wider family of faith. And it crosses all human divides.

We can have deep affection and partnership in real time and space. I think we can express this reality. We already did it, didn't we?

The Hunter Gospel Ministries conferences. Isn't there something deeply encouraging about meeting other people who believe the same gospel, different faces, different names, same gospel? Somehow you just, even if you can't speak the same language, sometimes you can just, you have the same, I don't know what to call it, spirit, let's call it spirit, Holy Spirit.

There's just this affection that you can have that crosses cultures. When we pray for people, we can express this. I think when we visit places on holidays and we go to a different church, we can express this same gospel, just different places, different faces.

[36 : 52] As we're called into the mission of Christ, his passion to save people, we have to have broader horizons than just grace evangelical church.

We are part of his global family of faith. So let's be spurred on by that. Whenever we're feeling alone as the only ones trying to be faithful or when we get too narrow-minded, we need to remember we're part of a much bigger family of faith.

You want to see the gospel spread. So we can be joined to Christ's mission to fill empty people as we struggle to rely on his grace, as we hold the ropes of prayer for those who speak, as we make the most of the time, as we strive shoulder to shoulder with other gospel churches in Newcastle and others, we have the privilege of meeting.

We can strive and show a counterculture. So let me just briefly finish by asking our usual question. What will keep us from seeking fullness for those who are empty?

What will get in the road of passion for Christ's mission to reconcile empty people to himself? We could talk about a lot of things, but I just want to pick one.

[38 : 28] And the reason I've picked this is because it's just a constant theme in this letter. It just keeps coming up again and again and again.

And that is thankfulness. I think our passion for the grace of Christ reaching more and more people will depend on how thankful we are for the grace that is ours.

If our lips say that Christ is our life, he is so good, and yet our hearts aren't full of thankfulness, why would we expect others to believe us?

There's an inconsistency there. That's a negative way of putting it. But the positive way of putting it is God is calling us to fight the fight of joy, of thankfulness for all the grace that is ours.

For people to encounter in us something just different, thankfulness in any situation is, especially in the hard situations, is strange in this world.

[39 : 40] It's so easy to complain and seek your own interests, but thankfulness for grace all the time will both motivate mission because we'll realise the grace we have and it will stand apart from this world.

It will show that we have a fullness that isn't dependent on our circumstances. So I just want to finish up by reminding us of all we've got to be thankful for, for the grace that is ours in this letter. So I'm just going to jump to four verses. The first is chapter 1, verse 13. Verse 12, sorry. 12 and 13. We're to be giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

[40 : 52] I don't know what's going on in your life, but you can always be thankful for that. You are qualified for the inheritance, that eternal new creation.

It started in your heart and it's going to finish up the whole world, your body as well. We can always be thankful for that. We can be jumping to chapter 3, verse 17.

Our calling. We have the highest meaning and purpose in Christ now. Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We're always representing him. Giving thanks to God the Father through him. We are an ambassador of grace now.

We have, I don't know what menial, difficult thing you're going through. That is an opportunity to be an ambassador of grace. Giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

[41 : 59] We have the highest meaning and purpose. And we're not alone in trying to do that like we've seen in chapter 4, verse 2 today. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

We have constant, present grace. Power. To live well. We are in Christ who is seated at God's right hand.

We have sovereign grace all the time. Whatever we're going through. Isn't that reason to be thankful? And to finish, as Paul started this letter in chapter 1, verse 3, we can be thankful.

Paul says, he starts by praising God. I always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus. And their love and their hope.

So, as we see others growing in their faith, as we see people coming to faith, that should just produce thankfulness in us.

[43 : 15] Thankfulness to the Father that his grace is at work. So, I think, will we be a culture of thankfulness in this church? Remembering God's grace will empower us to want grace to go to others.

And having that thankful spirit will just show how full we are in a world that desperately needs it. Will you pray with me?

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we praise you as the one who created all things, whether things in heaven or things on earth.

You created us. All things are created by you and for you. We praise you that despite all our attempts to be sovereign ourselves and to live apart from you, that you opened the door of faith in our own hearts.

That you persevered and pursued us. And that you have reconciled us to yourself through your blood, making peace. Lord, thank you for qualifying us for the inheritance that is surely coming, that we've got the first fruits of already.

[44 : 45] Lord, please continually refresh our hearts in this grace. Help keep us from being self-pitying. Keep us from being complaining.

Please help us to be people who are full of thanks, even and especially in the hard times. Lord, we pray this so that we might give you the response of gratitude that you deserve.

But we also pray this so that we might be just an aroma of life to those who are trying to find life in all the wrong places.

So please be using us as a church for your glory and the salvation of many. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We pray this so that you are in your heart. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. É. Amen. Amen.

[45 : 45] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.