

Christ's Grace Gifts

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: 16 June 2024

Preacher: Jon Moffitt

[0 : 00] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org.

And now, today's sermon. As I mentioned earlier, we are currently working through 1 Peter. We are just finishing chapter 3.

Last week we covered Christ's descent into the underworld to proclaim victory and set those in paradise free to return to be with the Father.

I'm not going to defend or explain that this week. Thankfully, because of technology, you can go back and listen to that. I want to encourage you as well, something new, that an idea was given to me, and we went ahead and tested it last week.

I'm taking my notes and outlines and all of the extra verses that I have, and I'm making them available to you on Tuesday. So, you can go on the app and download those, or if you sign up for our text, we'll text that out.

[1 : 01] It's a great way to have a family devotion or a personal time with the Lord with just refreshing our minds what it is that we studied. We also encourage you to use your programs for that as well with the music and the words and prayers that are in there.

But sometimes you ask me questions about verses that I had mentioned, so that will all be available for you, and I always add extra into it. So, if you want to use that, we'll do it so you don't hurt my feelings.

When we're thinking about Jesus descending into the underworld, the spiritual realm, which is very awkward and weird, this is an unfamiliar subject for us. I wanted to look at a parallel passage from Paul to see how Paul uses Christ's descent in encouraging his readers.

Peter was writing to those who were suffering, both physical and spiritual, and Paul wants to then write to his readers, and he's writing using the metaphor of Christ's descent as a means to empower them and strengthen them for the work that they are to do in the city of Ephesus.

Most Christians are not really taught our history when it comes down to the different various books, things like Rome or Ephesus or the surrounding cities like in Peter. So, I'm trying to do my best as we go through that to strengthen our understanding of the context.

[2 : 31] Because we don't often understand what was happening in their cities, we miss the relevant pictures and illusions that the writers will make. One I've been using recently, if I were to talk about a tragedy that all of us experienced, all I would need to do is mention three numbers, and immediately you know what I'm talking about.

9-11. Well, a couple thousand years from now, those numbers may mean nothing to people because they didn't experience it, and enough time has passed.

The cultural aspects of it have passed. And so, what I want to do is walk through this history of the city, spiritually speaking and theologically, so we understand why Peter and Paul both found it necessary when writing to the providences of Rome, that they would speak about the descent of Christ.

And so, I'm going to go ahead and give you the punchline to the joke up front so that it's not missed because there's a lot I need to give you. But it's this. This is what I want you to know, is that both 1 Peter 3 and Ephesians 4 are the short re-story caps of Jesus battling the evil fallen gods and how he conquers them, and that conquering, that victory, is what they use to encourage and strengthen us.

It's a war of the gods, and we know that Christ wins. So that is what we're going to be looking at a little bit. We're going to be all over the scriptures this morning, but if you want to go ahead and turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2, we'll begin looking at the ways in which Paul and Peter at times speak of the, really the dominance of the world at that moment, Rome.

[4 : 19] Peter and Paul mention this event, but what's interesting about when you follow the story of the Bible, there's little pieces that are unveiled, and there's little parts of the gospel that we learn about, but not all of it is revealed at once.

1 Corinthians 2, and if you look at verse 8, Paul says something that's extremely profound. He says this, none of the rulers of this age, this is the way that phrase, of this age is talking about the spiritual realm, this rebellious realm, understood this, meaning the sacrifice, the mystery of Christ coming and rising from the grave, for if they had, they would have not crucified the Lord of glory.

So it was a mystery to them, revealed and further expanded by the apostles, especially at the day of his resurrection. But we do know that Satan enters into Judas and causes him to betray Jesus and defeat, and they think, oh great, we're going to defeat our judgment.

We know that the seed of Eve is coming, and he's going to judge us, and when he judges us, our doom is here, and so we're going to, they tried stopping it in Genesis 3, they tried stopping it in Genesis 6, the whole Old Testament is the war of the seeds, and so they said, finally we'll just go ahead and kill him.

And what Paul is saying, what they didn't know, was that was the plan from the beginning. And if they would have known that, they wouldn't have crucified him. And so they're celebrating for three days.

[6 : 00] There's a victory. We have won. But the writers of the New Testament tell us a different story. This is Colossians chapter 2. If you want to write this down, Colossians 2 verses 14 and 15.

I love how Paul writes this, because he's describing the war. Oh, it looks like we lost. Even the disciples ran and hid in a room. What happened? We lost.

Colossians 2 verse 14. But canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

So you can see there's this language of a battle, this cosmic war that's happening between the realm that is rebellious, the evil realm, and the kingdom of God. And the spiritual war between the gods is part of the story all the way back to Genesis chapter 3 when Satan begins to lie to Eve to tempt her to rebel and turn against her creator as he had done.

He wanted the power for himself and wanted to dethrone Adam and Eve in their place of dominion on the earth. From that moment on, we only see Satan's army continue to grow.

[7 : 20] More and more of the heavenly hosts fall prey to the lies, and the pantheon of God's grows in rebellion against the creator. And what did they do?

What is it they are constantly doing? They know who the one true God Yahweh is. They know who their creator is, but they cause men to worship themselves instead of God.

This is why in our law this morning, there's a reason why he says, you shall have no other gods before me, and you will not create the likeness of anything in heaven or on earth.

Whether you see a God or you try and create one of them out of the creation, you will not have anything above me. So this brings us to the city of Ephesus where Paul is writing.

And the city of Ephesus is famous for its worship of the gods. We talked about this a little bit when we were dealing with the introduction to 1 Peter. There's a long, turn with me to Acts chapter 19. There's a long story in the book of Acts I want us to use as a way to help us understand why Paul is talking about the defeat of the gods, the defeat of those who are in the prison.

[8 : 27] Why does he use that as a means of encouragement? So Acts 19 is this story that Luke recounts of Paul traveling to Ephesus.

And before he gets there, he sends two of his disciples ahead just to prepare the way. And this is what Luke recounts in Acts 19. Look at verse 23.

To save time, we're going to jump around at a couple of verses. It says, And about that time when Paul started to arrive, there arose no little disturbance concerning the way. Now some of you might be familiar with this Acts phrase, the way.

There's a theory that possibly the Mandalorian traveled to the first century church to explain to them the way. And this is where the phrase come from. Or maybe I just put that in my notes to make my kids laugh.

Apparently you think it's funny too. No, the way is used anywhere from about six to eight times in the book of Acts to describe the gospel, the way of Christ.

[9 : 29] It was most likely the phrase taken from John 14, 6 when Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So the back story Luke describes is the spread of the gospel is becoming famous.

Asia is being turned upside down by Paul and the disciples, the preaching of the gospel. And what they're doing is they're turning the citizens away from their gods, the local gods, and they're turning them towards Jesus.

The way. Look at verse 24. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

These he had gathered together with the workmen in similar trades and said, men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

Now listen, Demetrius is concerned, if we're going to be frank, about his business. It's very clear. You are, you're messing with my income. And Paul, these people who travel from all over the providence of Rome into Ephesus to see this amazing temple and we're putting our shrines outside, our little idols for them to buy and take home with them with the promise of you can pray to Artemis anywhere if you take the shrine.

[10 : 58] So they were selling them by the thousands because of the fame of this seventh, one of the seven wonders of the world. But he also uses the religious bent to help his argument.

Look at verse 27. And there is a danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing and that she may even be disposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.

So he also admits that this is part of the culture. This is part of Ephesus, not only Ephesus, but in his mind the whole world and that's how the Romans thought, by the way. There was nothing outside of Rome.

It's the whole world. In verse 28, if you jump down there, when they had heard this, they were enraged and were crying out, great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

And the story goes on. It's a big battle and a big war and a big fight. But what I wanted you to read is the perspective of the city and the perspective of what during the time of Paul, so Paul comes in, he preaches the gospel.

[12:10] When he leaves, not long after this, while in prison, he writes to the church that was started in Ephesus. So there is a stronghold in the Ephesians' lives built around serving and worshiping the gods.

The most famous one being, you might even heard it in its Latin form, the goddess Diana, the temple of Diana or Artemis. We read these kind of stories but we don't seem to relate to them because worship of the gods is mere fantasy.

In our culture today, ridiculous people who didn't know any better. I mean, if they only had Google, they would know what's right. My wife asks me all the time, where'd you learn that?

I was like, the internet. The internet. You see, our culture used to visually or we used to think that the fantasy of the gods was to be mocked because we had science and evolution but that is now changing here in the United States.

Pagan worship within our country is now more popular than it's ever been, believe it or not. If you go and search just the word pagan in YouTube, the top videos that have hundreds of thousands of views are literally how to worship the pagan gods by these beautiful teenage girls who they don't look like pagans.

[13:37] They look like they could sit here with us. They're sanitizing that which is evil and we are beginning to see the fruits of it in the practices of our nation but it's not through, we're not going to say well our nation is going the way that it's going because of the worship of the gods.

They're more crafty than this. This is why when Paul is writing to the Romans he has to say this. This is Romans chapter 1. Turn with me to Romans chapter 1. He says a phrase that to us at times I don't think we may fully understand the weight of why he has to tell the Romans this but he says in Romans 1.16 for I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

You see in pagan cultures in the Greek culture the gods that they served were the powerful gods the ones who overthrew other gods who found themselves on the top seat of the throne.

Zeus. Right? So when you're describing your God as one who was killed by mere men the Roman soldiers murdered him and then he died and they put him in a grave and then there's this conspiracy theory that somehow he came back to life but most everybody believes the disciples went and stole his body.

By the way sometimes we make fun of conspiracy theories but we believe one. But it's true. It's not a theory he did raise from the grave. What happens to a culture that turns away from a God?

[15:16] Well they're going to mock our gospel because it's weak. It's powerless. It has nothing to offer our flesh. That's why Paul says I'm not ashamed of it. But then look what God does to those who turn away from his gospel.

Look what happens to these people. Look at verse 26. For this reason God gave them up to the dishonorable passions for their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature and then men likewise gave up natural relationships with women and were consumed with passion for one another men committing shameless acts with men receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness evil covetousness malice they are full of envy murder strife deceit maliciousness they are gossips slanderers haters of God insolent haughty boastful inventors of evil disobedient to parents foolish faithless heartless ruthless though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die take note they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them we can already see most of this being publicly displayed and as Paul says approved in our culture we live in a culture that is more and more open to the rejection of God and embracing the cultures of old which is called paganism

I mean this month our nation is called to celebrate what God describes as dishonorable passions resulting from a debased mind this is healthy for us to remind ourselves as we're compassionate towards other sinners their mind has been confused by the evil one that this is not something that is wholesome and good but comes from dishonorable passions I think it's fascinating that Paul says in verse 30 that those who have turned their mind away from God it says inventors of evil inventors of evil that kind of just surround anything he doesn't name is like it goes in that there is a new kind of evil that we're experiencing in our culture we're encouraging children to undergo permanent changes to their identity but also their bodies that is an invention of evil but it's not only encouraged it's celebrated we are killing babies in the millions and we celebrate this as well for the sake of the health of women countless stories of women promoting their freedom to live their life as they desire without the consequences of the financial burden or the consequences of their actions that caused it our country has the same kind of power and control over it as Rome did but the gods are using a different strategy they stay hidden in the background instead of worshipping the gods we worship self gratification self fulfillment self identification which is at the heart of paganism if you serve them the gods will grant you your desires of the flesh so no in America we aren't necessarily worshipping the god like Artemis we worship the right to our freedom to do as we please and we will sacrifice everything including children for it many are offering today solutions to the decline of our country most put their hope in a new president others in enforcing the biblical laws morality preaching morality but we've never seen human leaders who could turn the hearts of men just read your old testament the kings who literally were talking to god could not change the hearts of israel they kept falling prey to their sin and we see them under the law the mosaic law as an example that the law cannot change the heart so what is our solution in this fight against this evil in our world that is why paul wrote ephesians to those at the epicenter of the battle he wrote them to give them hope so turn with me to ephesians chapter 4 i do have an outline we're going to cover this morning as we work through this passage we're going to first talk about the invisible war secondly we're going to talk about the king's spiritual gifts as the result of the war so the invisible war the king's spiritual gifts and then lastly the spirit empowered church we'll begin reading in verse 7 where paul starts to describe the victory of this invisible war the spiritual war he says this ephesians 4 7 but grace was given to each one of us according to the measures of christ's gifts therefore it says when he ascended on high he led a host of captives and gave gifts to men and saying he ascended what does it mean but that he also descended into the

lower regions the earth he who descended is the one who also ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things what is it that Jesus is filling fulfilling all things Paul is using if you want to turn with me Psalm 68 to encourage the church reminding them of the prophecy of what it is that Christ accomplished where David prophesied so turn with me to Psalm 68 and we're just going to read a few verses but specifically the verses that he covers but listen to how the Psalm starts sometimes when we read the Psalms they're so far out there it's like I don't know about you but some of you probably read their imprecatory Psalms and you're like I need to read one more Psalm that's a nice Psalm because that one was dangerous and then you get two imprecatory Psalms in a row and you're like okay to the new testament we go but a lot of these are prophecies of the coming messiah Psalm 68 to the choir master a Psalm of David a song by the way imagine singing this God shall arise his enemies shall be scattered and those who hate him shall flee before him as smoke is driven away so shall you drive them away as wax melts before fire so the wicked shall perish before God now sometimes when we read this we think of David maybe his enemies but he is foretelling not of his physical armies or those who are attacking Israel but to what you realize is that Paul ends up translating this he's talking about the spiritual war God's enemies those to whom the gods are attacking his people look at verse 18 this is where Paul picks up in the Psalm and quoting it you so 68 18 you ascended on high leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men even among the rebellious the Lord that the Lord may dwell there blessed be the Lord who daily bears us up God is our salvation Selah so when we read that we're not quite sure what's going on thankfully the commentator Paul says he is speaking of the work of Christ he destroyed the enemy like wax before fire they are you understand they are being persecuted the cities are enraged they are punishing and persecuting those of us who say but Jesus is the true and one and only God so just as

[24:11] David and the prophets foretold Jesus would come pay for our sins we know this part of the gospel earn for us all the obedient required in order to be in the glory of God and then it says he travels to the realm of the rebellion the underworld and it says he set the captives free this is why Peter says he goes down to the spirit's prison and he proclaims Paul says while he's there he gathers those who are in Abraham's bosom those who are in paradise and he brings them before the Father that entire victory lap while he's there revelation tells us he grabs the keys to death and Hades and he puts his hand on John and says John you have nothing to fear for I have one I am victorious if you go back and if you look at real quick Colossians chapter 2 verses 13 through 15 I love how Paul describes it this way what he did and his defeat remember when it says fulfilling all things that he will destroy his enemies like wax before fire this is

Colossians 2:13 and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross and then listen to this he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame I think that's part of the story when he descends and he shows them the wounds in his hands and he says you tried to destroy my creation you tried to stop my salvation and look at you in shame as you rot in prison in chains see the war still rages it's not over this is why it's important that Paul look at and Peter just as a reminder from last week he says 1 Peter 3:19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison what the victory over death now turn back with me to Ephesians chapter 4 let's tie this all together from David to Paul to Peter we read of this invisible war

David foretells of the victory and Peter and Paul describe its conclusion but then they use it for something they use it this is fascinating so this is verse 8 therefore it says he who descended on high he led a host of captives and gave gifts to men and saying he ascended what does it mean that he had also descended into the lower regions of the earth he who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens that he may fill all things this crazy story of Jesus dying at the hands of sinful men when they thought we killed the messiah is a description that he is fulfilling all things that he not only died but he entered into Hades and he brings the captives out now there's an interesting phrase that he says here it says that he gave gifts he gave gifts now this transfer is an interesting this concept of giving of the gifts is an interesting part because

Jesus fulfilled the requirements for our past present and future for us it's taken care of but yet when we come to Christ we don't immediately just die and leave right we're left because what is it described there is work to be done there is ministry to be fulfilled and he says that after he's describing that Jesus set the captives free and now they're free and they're loved and they're empowered by him he says he gives them gifts this is the second point of our outline so the invisible war which leads to the king's spiritual gifts but notice how he titles them but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gifts now when we think about gifts at times we often think about spiritual gifts like maybe speaking in tongues or prophecies and healing or non-miraculous gifts like mercy or hospitality or prayer but Paul throws a curve ball at us and doesn't give a list of what we might expect yeah we're going to need some kind of supernatural weapon in order to fight against this army that's attacking us just so you understand this is not normal for us but for the

Ephesians this is normal when they would embrace a God in their culture they would then get gifts from the God this is why they embraced him this is why they embraced lots of God because the different gods would provide different blessings to the city or to the nation but there is a difference between because Paul is specifically pointing out this change there's a difference between the gods of the pagans and the God of the universe or that of Jesus Christ the gifts that were given to them were always based upon their advancement either for their pleasure or their power power this is one commentator he wrote it this way the Jews and early Christians taught the same thing they taught that the watchers we talked about this in Genesis chapter 6 when they came down they descended and they began to worship these gods they taught them the arts rooted in mining and metal ergy the use of drugs for healing and crossing over into the spirit realm you'll learn about this in 1

[30 : 13] Enoch chapter 8 but these gifts were designed to give them power and strength within their culture to dominate other cities but what was required was at times a lot sometimes the gods would just require an animal sacrifice other times they would require a child a newborn child we hear a lot of this in the Old Testament but then Paul says oh but you're God you're new God you're one and only God he gives grace to you instead of transactions it says but grace was given to you that's the gift and what is grace grace is unmerited favor unmerited favor from God this is what the message of the way is this is what was causing the disruption God laid his life down God completed the transaction

God paid everything in Jesus Christ and then he comes to you to empower you with the gift that the gods normally do but what is required of you to receive this gift and he says oh it's a grace gift it's not a transaction this is why Paul mentions the invisible war Jesus rising as the conquering king bringing his captives with him he defeated the entire invisible realm the entire pantheon of gods it says he not only defeated him but he put him to shame in comparison to his power and at that moment he says oh I want to give you grace so in contrast when we are receiving these gifts we have to remember that as we receive them God is not expecting something in return not before and not after now what are the gifts we just said they aren't the normal ones that we would think of but the gifts that we are going to use he's giving it to us for the fight see the fight's not over we think the fight's over but the fight to save ourselves is over

Christ won that but what is not over is he's still rescuing those who belong to him and the evil forces still want to destroy that mission and so what gifts does he give look at verse 11 it's fascinating and he gave these are the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up of the body of Christ he gave the church people he gave the church people that's the gift we put it this way you you're the gift you're the grace gift he gave me for you and you for me he describes first with the teachers those who's going to empower with the capacity to preach and to teach that's the first gift but it's not just the preachers and the teachers and before they are not needed anymore the prophets but it goes on to say that he gives everyone is a part of this gift the most powerful weapon

God chose to fight back against this evil realm the evil within their city this rebellion he says it's you you you are the power you are the strength this is hard for us to embrace this is why Paul goes don't worry he knows you're weak and frail and most of you not very smart if not all of us right when it comes to worldly wisdom but think of it this way for a moment we were once slaves to this rebellious world this is why it says he transferred us out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son and then he goes and now I'm going to stick you all together and you're going to be a gift to each other to walk back into the kingdom to set others free it's kind of overwhelming you actually get to walk back into your slave owner and he's looking at you in anger and he can't touch you he can't do anything to you why because of the strength that was given to you by

Christ so every person rescued by Christ is filled with the power of the spirit that's what he says the spirit now dwells within us and he puts us into a body of Christ now I want us to keep reading because you'll see how it all unfolds and how we all become this wonderful grace to each other look at verse 13 so it starts with the preachers and the teachers preparing for the work of ministry until we all attain the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measures of the statutes and the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human what is he doing he's freeing us from falling back into our old lives to the lies of the rebellion or even human cunningness but what power is he using you know

[35 : 58] I think some of us said by the way at the end of the service on your way out you're all going to receive a special breastplate you wear underneath your shirt and none of the evil one can touch you he says you need each other to do that the gift I give you is the church the grace that's empowering the church notice what does he say here are the people that I give and what is the result that we grow in faith and knowledge and maturity and we're not tossed about by all kinds of bad teaching and this leads us to the last point which is the spirit empowered church look at verse 15 rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly man that's the key right there when each part of a spirit indwelt gift graced person when everyone in the church understands their role of belonging in the church ministering in the church doing their part in the church it says makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love what a absolute amazing promise you understand that he everything that you would ever want out of the

Christian life to know more about Jesus to have a stronger faith to say no to your sins to not be fooled by the world everything that you could ever want out of the Christian life he goes it's yours it's yours if you put your gift to use when each part of the body works as a family and I love how he says as a body right because we're all different members when each part of it is working properly we grow and I love how he says this we grow in love we become a powerhouse of love Jesus says it this way the world will know that you follow me that you're different than how the others follow the pagan world the world will know you're my disciple you've been taught of me because you can quote all 10 commandments right because you're you will know by the love you have for one another as we gather together and we use ourselves as the gift that

God has given us there is not one insignificant person that I've ever saved every person that I've ever rescued I put my gift of grace upon them and they are significant to the world because I have made them so do you understand that if God saved you he says you're a gift from me to the church and you're significant those aren't my words those are his words and he says when you do your part to give your life for Christ to the church the people around you will experience something that is supernatural let me say it to you this way the promises that Paul gives us here there is no guarantee that you can get that outside of his gift that's important if you want to say yeah but there's other ways I can get this then show me in scripture because

Paul is very clear to teach us the significance and the value of the church as I was thinking through this trying to simplify down how this works if our church if all churches around the world if we begin to function as we should and we are being built up in love and love is what God uses to draw the world to himself think of it this way to the world around us that is trapped in their sins they don't know Christ they don't know the gospel they celebrate that which crucified Christ what hope can we bring into a world like that and Paul says this is the hope the church because when the church functions as it should we become people of love and what does love do love draws sinners that's what that's what Paul says that's what Jesus says what was

Jesus the friend of the righteous no the sinners Jesus was the friend of sinners so this is the way I put it down if you want to write this down the conclusion of our love is this our love draws them our words save them listen our love will not save them but as they are what does what does Peter say when we respond with grace and passion and compassion to their persecution he says be ready to give an answer of the hope that lies within you your words your love draws them our words save them and our church disciples them that becomes the way how we liberate them according to Paul we are the solution to what's happening in the United States and around the world but we cannot do it alone do we understand that so why is it significant that both Peter and Paul talk about this war of the gods because we might feel the pressure and the weight we might see the evil among us we might see it in ways that is worse today than it ever has been before but our solution does not change we continue to love and care and build one another up and proclaim the gospel and believe that

[42 : 07] God is using us to be a gift to the church of grace so that they too might be encouraged so that the world around us might be free so when we gather and every time that we gather according to Paul supernatural power of grace into our congregation I'm not going to reexerge the entire passage but there's a reason why Ephesians 6 comes after Ephesians 4 what is the one thing that can destroy our church is if we do not put on Christ the armor of Christ and what is Christ for us Christ is a title it's not his name his first name isn't Jesus and his last name is Christ that's not how it works it means Christ our Messiah the chosen one Jesus is the one who fulfilled all work and as we put him on this becomes our armor and he says church listen church in your city in

Rome in Ephesus you're not wrestling against people I know the rulers hate you and I know people mock you and I know that some of you are killed but that's not your enemy those aren't the ones who you're fighting he says you wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the people the powers behind it the prince of the power of the air the rulers and he goes if you want to find yourself safe the solution is not war we don't pick up the sword who do we pick up pick up Christ so my encouragement to all of us is that we need to protect our congregation we need to understand the significance of our role in this congregation that we're not here to take only yes we're here to receive but we're also here to give and that significance is to love and care and build up one another but the world around us church the only way we're going to have the strength to fight against that kind of evil is it has to be a power that's given to us by Christ and so we use Christ's gospel to encourage us we use it to sustain us and we use it to take down evil all

God's people said amen thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill Tennessee where everyone is in equal need of grace to plan a visit or to learn