

Job, Family, and the Kingdom

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Preacher: Jon Moffitt

- [0 : 0 0] 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. I want to take a quick pulse check on the spiritual health of our church this morning.
- And because no one's going to hear your answer, you can be honest with yourself. Where is your heart and your mind at, at this moment?
- Now, I'm not asking you this question to judge you or to make you feel guilty. My heart and my motivation are purely to see all of us enjoy the pleasures of the king and the wonders of his life.
- And as I was thinking through my own struggles and the many of you that I've had opportunities to engage throughout the weeks and months and years that I've known you, here's where often you might identify yourself and where you are if you were just to stand before God and be fully exposed before him.
- [1 : 1 6] Some of us are wrestling with acceptance. This is what drives us. Acceptance of friends or of a boss, of family, potentially even others on social media.
- The affirmation of others is intoxicatingly addictive and it has caused many to destroy their lives, attempting to form themselves into something for the approval of another.
- Some of us are wrestling with security. We worry about our children, our income, our health, our country. Nothing comes before protecting what we find our security in.
- We will sacrifice anything for the sake of what we must keep safe. And anything that becomes a threat, we will quickly avoid and remove. And some of us are wrestling with apathy.
- Nothing seems to motivate us. Depression is a real and constant battle. Therefore, we look to distract ourselves with entertainment, alcohol, and sexuality.
- [2 : 2 9] And the cycle of wanting something different but falling back into the same habits leads to dark and destructive thoughts. Some of us are in the middle of coming out of trials or maybe in the middle of a trial that have sucked the air out of our lungs.
- We struggle to trust others. We struggle to trust God if we're being honest. We question the meaning of life. We want so badly to live a different life.
- Then, there's another group. Maybe none of these fit. Life seems okay. Not perfect. But you can't complain.
- I don't see this world as that bad. John, you talk about it being bad. It's not that bad. All these warnings about dangers seem a little overkill.
- Work hard. Be wise. And you can enjoy life. You might find yourself in a combination of these. Or you can add your own list.
- [3 : 4 1] But there's something wrong and off as you stand before your God and have nothing to hide. The statement from C.S. Lewis is very small.

But it's packed full of wisdom. He says this. There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, even every split second is claimed by God.

This is a good comfort. But then he finishes. And counter claimed by Satan. Say, our God and King has claimed this world.

And he says, I'm going to redeem it. I'm going to restore it back to its original form. And yet better. Because you will be there in all glory. We share the power to redeem this soul.

God invokes us and calls us to be a part of this as freed slaves. Now as children utilizing the lives that we have. And on the other side, Satan has claimed this world and claimed us.

[4 : 49] Not that he can own it. But he has lied and staked the claim to try and stop the redeeming of the world. Because at the end of redemption, what is waiting for him?

Judgment. And how does he do this? How does Satan lay claim to the same place that God has? By a crafty and very subtle means of entanglement.

Paul isn't worried so much about them being trapped in some kind of a gross pagan sin. Not necessarily when he's writing to Timothy, who's a pastor. Who has proved himself to be worthy of what he's preaching.

But he is worried about Timothy and his church falling into meaningfulness pursuits. And therefore being entangled in them.

So as we think about this word and these commands, we can assess our lives and ask ourselves, the lack of joy and the constant struggle. And it seems as if I can't get away from sin.

[5 : 52] And the constant worry and even wondering if God cares about me. Or if I even want to care about God. It's possible that this is what Paul is warning us against.

This entanglement. There's a biblical lexicon that I found really helpful in trying to grasp at the meaning of this word entangle. This is how it defines it.

Stating that it means to be involuntarily interlaced to the point of immobility. And was used literally of sheep whose wool is caught in thorns.

To become involved in an activity to the point of interference with other activity. This is what entanglement means. To be captured and caught and not able to do what you want to be done.

There's this story as I was reading through this. I came across this story related to 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 4.

[6 : 58] I don't know if any of you are familiar with Jim Elliott who's a famous missionary. Ended up giving his life to try and bring the gospel to cannibalistic people. And there's a story from Elizabeth in her diaries talking about her first interactions with Jim.

As she was meeting him at Bible college. And this is what she wrote down. Before she became Jim's wife. She was Elizabeth Howard. A student at Wheaton College.

Elizabeth had scrutinized the boys on campus and decided. Scrutinize is a really harsh word. She took assessment. Of eligibility.

Scrutinized the boys on campus and decided that there was really only one interest she had. And his name was Jim Elliott. He displayed a maturity and godliness she found most attractive.

When the school yearbooks were handed out. Elizabeth asked Jim to sign hers. Hoping that if there was any interest in her. He might indicate it. So in signing her yearbook.

[8 : 01] When he had returned it. She rushed to her room. Found his signature. And read beneath it. 2 Timothy 2.4. To which he wrote. He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep.

To gain what he cannot lose. Young ladies. This is not a bad idea to find out if a gentleman is interested in you.

But not why I read it. It is a side note though. When you have the heart of the king. What attracts you? When I read this paragraph. I found it interesting.

As she assessed the men in her life. That were at this school. She found it attractive. To what the man loved. This is what was attractive to her.

Not worldly pleasures. Not fitness. Not looks. But what the man was attracted to. Parents. This is a great way to teach your children. To think about their future.

[8 : 59] And their future spouse. Because guess what changes? Everything. Everything changes. Some of you have been in my office. And you've seen photos of my wife.

When she was in high school. And she looks exactly the same. In my opinion. And then you see photos of me. And you go. Who is that man? And I say. That is me. I am not who I used to be.

I have changed. But what comfort can I bring to my wife. That I still love the same God. And I still want to serve him. And that is something that I pray never changes. And this is something you want to lead your children towards.

But I have made this mistake. As I'm sure many of you feel the same confusion and frustration. When thinking about this application. When he says.

He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep. To gain what he cannot lose. There's comfort and sting in the same way. But how do I live out my life. Caring for my family.

[9 : 57] And obeying the responsibilities and the words of Paul. It seems almost impossible to be a good husband. A father. And yet serve Jesus as king every day.

And not get entangled. Do I leave my kids and my wife. And at home alone. And only just do ministry. Because I don't want to be entangled in this world.

Do we believe God will provide the money we need. If I just go out and preach the gospel every single day. I think it's important. The word choice that Paul used here.

The difference between involvement. To be involved in the world. And entangled in the world. Yes. We are using language that is simple. And he's using wartime language.

And we have to be careful not to get over indulgent. To get over excited about the word picture. As they say. Every illustration has its holes. And this is true.

[10 : 55] That when you're on the battlefield. You're not thinking about. How you're going to bring home rent or food. You're trying to keep your head below the firing line. And keep your gun loaded. And pointed in the right direction.

Until you don't shoot your soldier next to you. Right. So the point of it is focus. The point of it is understanding. The limited nature of our life.

And how it's temporary. The battlefield we fight on is not physical. So let's not carry this over. You can't touch it. But you are definitely in a war.

The war is happening on the spiritual level. Which is the hardest part. For our hearts and our minds. Because we're so driven by passions. And by the flesh. And by gratification. Which is why Satan is so effective.

At keeping us out of the spiritual mind. So Paul is speaking of entanglement. He is speaking about the heart. And the desire. The heart and the desire of the person.

[11 : 52] The only way to be engaged in a war. Is to be engaged in the world. So we. We're literally fighting for the souls of people. But if we become monks.

And we remove ourselves. And live in bunkers. So we're not entangled. All of a sudden. What are we even fighting for anymore? So we talk. Invest.

Love. Provide. And care. For those around us. To share the light of Christ with them. To rescue them. But we don't get entangled. As they do.

Turn with me to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. Really quick. I want to read this to you. I think it's helpful. 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. To be good at what we do. We must keep our eyes and our minds.

Clean and pure. From being entangled. And there are tools. That help us. Here's an example.

[12 : 52] Of how Paul. Is pointing to the Thessalonian church. Of how they are to be kingdom minded. Focused on the work. And yet. They're going to live a life. That looks like everyone else.

2 Thessalonians chapter 3. In verse 7. For you yourselves know. How you ought to imitate us. Because we were not idle.

When we were with you. Nor did we eat anyone's bread. Without paying for it. But with toil and labor. We worked night and day. That we might not be a burden. To any of you.

It was not because we did not have the right. As ministers of the gospel. As pastors. They had the right. But they wanted to set an example. For this particular church. So they understood this.

To give you. In ourselves. An example to imitate. And so there. There wasn't one or the other. It wasn't. I need to work a job. Or I need to do ministry. Paul didn't see them to be separate.

[13 : 47] He didn't see them as two. Separate ways of thinking. Paul saw working. To provide for life's necessity. As part of the commission of the king. But he did this.

Work. Work. So that he could focus on the real task at hand. Which was what? If you want to write this in the margins. I'm just going to read it to you. This is Acts chapter 20 and verse 24.

As Paul's coming to the end of his life. Thinking about these circumstances. He says this. But I do not. Acts 20, 24. But I do not account my life of any value. Nor as precious to myself.

If only I may finish my course. And the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus. And what is that ministry? To testify to the gospel of grace of God.

So he is telling the Thessalonians. I am finishing this course. My life is meaningless. So I'm going to get a job. And I'm going to provide for my body. Which is the agents that God has used to proclaim the gospel.

[14 : 44] Now you might be saying. Well John that's Paul. We're not apostles. This isn't the same call. And to relieve that pressure. And I know you're excited to hear this. But that's actually not true.

The very letter we just finished. 1 Peter. If you want to look at there. 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 15. Peter is in the midst of helping the church understand. Stay in your city.

Stay in your job. Why? Because you're going to continue to be a mercy upon these people. You're going to respond with grace and patience. For this very reason.

1 Peter 3 15. But in your heart honor Christ the Lord as holy. Always being prepared to make a defense. To anyone who asks you for a reason.

For the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect. That's the longer way of saying. To proclaim the gospel. We are engaging in a world for a purpose.

[15 : 44] We're not entangling ourselves into the world for their purpose. This is the difference that is being made here. The distinction. So what we do for work is not important.

Your career decisions have nothing to do with who you are before God. Or for anyone else. I really don't care what you do for a living.

Other than make sure it's not illegal or sinful. That's the only thing I care about. But that should go without saying. I don't care if the president of any country or governor or mayor to walk in here.

They are the same as you and me. They're our brother and sister in Christ. We care not how wealthy they are. James gets very irritated with this. Where they started creating caste system.

The wealthy sit over here. The poor. Well you can stand on the wall. Because you're really not going to be contributing to our church. We've lost sight that the job is purely a conduit.

[16 : 43] It's a tool. It's a mechanism that we need to function in our world to be involved in the mission. But let's not get entangled with it. But here's a fun one. Sometimes when you hear this type of language.

We start thinking about the king's work. And it's like, I mean I know I got to eat kale. But really? Can we figure out a way? It can taste. I know some of you love kale. Shame on you. But it's like, can we? And you say you love kale.

But then you like dump ranch all over it. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. You don't love kale. That is a mechanism for ranch. I'm a blue cheese guy, so.

I didn't even know where I was going with that. It's a good thing I have notes. So what about entertainment? Right? Oh, I figured. I remember. We're trying to figure out how this all works together.

And when we think about the Christian life living for the kingdom, it just kind of puts a bad taste in our mouth. We don't have the sentiment that Paul does. It's like, yeah, my life is really meaningless. But I find meaning. And I find joy.

[17 : 42] And I actually find like spiritual energy and adrenaline to get me excited about what's coming ahead. So how about things like entertainment?

What about entertainment? How does that play in to this idea of not being entangled? I think this is the perspective that we should have.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. This is the perspective that we should have not only about our work, but all of life. And this would include, I would call, mercies and bereavement.

Not bereavement, but mercies and refreshment. As those of us who have been set free from the bondage of sin, to see all of creation as the tools for God's glory and for enjoyment, we are encouraged to use many of these means provided to us for his good.

We know that anything can be taken and turned upside down. And we're warned about this. About food. About drink. About intimacy.

[18 : 52] Money. All of these can be abused and used inappropriately. But will you understand that the mission that's been given to us is for the advancement of God's light.

This is 1 Corinthians 10 31. So whether you eat or you drink. He's talking about this issue with eating meat of the idols. But whether you eat or whether you drink or whatever you do. Whatever your hand finds to do.

Do it so that God is praised. Let me tell you what. My wife laughs at my daughter and I, Karis. We are audible eaters.

You just might hear us, mmm, as we take a good bite of food and we don't even know we're doing it. It just kind of happens. It's like, oh, man, this is so good. There is an acknowledgement of the glory and wonder of a king who has created taste buds and satisfaction where we can taste and see that the Lord is good.

And we can enjoy the art of cooking. This is what he's getting. When we are acknowledging that in a world that is full of chaos, the wonder and power of God is still there.

[20 : 00] As a fallen world, the psalmist wrote, the heavens declare the glory of God. In a fallen world, the world still glorifies our king. The world wants to use creation as its God to satisfy its soul.

But we who have been liberated, we use creation for the wonder and the joy of our king so that he is glorified. So, yes, we can take all aspects of life in balance and use them.

At times, I think it's even encouraged. He says it this way that we need to have times of fellowship, that we rejoice with those who are rejoicing. We weep with those who are weeping. And so, I don't find it wrong for us to engage in things that reflect all of God's life and purpose.

I was thinking about this yesterday. We had a family over and the kids were hitting golf balls and some were talking in a field. And the other ones were making me nervous as they were racing dirt bikes in my backyard and hoping they wouldn't crash.

But I was laughing because I know for a moment of time, because myself and another person jumped on these dirt bikes and we're riding them.

[21 : 11] And for a moment of time, guess what I wasn't thinking about? I wasn't thinking about anything else other than the pure enjoyment of what this activity brought. Those are mercies from our God.

Those are moments of rest where we can take those and use them for our hearts and our minds as long as it is for God's glory. And we're not using them to medicate ourselves.

And we're using them, or as Paul would say, entangling ourselves. To the moment to where now it controls our heart. We live for entertainment. So when our minds and our bodies begin to find their purpose and meaning in life through these activities, which I think are given to us by God, we move from involvement for God's glory, showing the world that one can engage in these things, and yet not do them sinfully, we move to being entangled with them.

And so how do we know, though? How do we know, John, I've been entangled? When we choose to center our time and our money on things that are not centered on the kingdom, on what entangles us or prevents us from being soldiers.

Parents, you teach your children the value of their faith and loving the following of the king every week, every Sunday, every Lord's Day, and throughout the week.

[22 : 40] They see it as the joy and source of life existence, or they see it as something that happens to be in between real life, whether it's sports or entertainment.

This is not a session on guiltting people into being faithful to church. This is the exact opposite. It's a call to examine what the Bible is opening our eyes to, and the very thing that we want to grab onto as our hope and our security is fleeting.

Nothing in this world is more important to live for than our king and his kingdom, and the promises have never failed. We sing of his salvation. We sing of his mercy and his grace, but yet we disconnect it from our life.

He literally knows what's best for us. This is why he rescued us, and he says, Dear child, if you will trust me, I've saved you, I've cleansed you, I'll forever bless you. Let me now use you, and you will have the joy of being used.

Do not get entangled in this world. It cannot offer you anything that I have not already offered you. I love being around people who have had tragedy in their life.

[23 : 58] When they're on the other end of that tragedy, they have a reality and an awareness that is refreshing.

They seem less enticed by the things that I think are interesting. They've experienced the lie and the promises, and they've come out on the other end, and God kept them.

But their heart and mind, you can't entice them enough anymore, because they tasted and saw that the lie of the world and the lie of Satan is only destruction.

Most of the time, it's because of the poison that is in our world. There's all kinds of ways in which this happens.

This church here is filled with people, and people that aren't even here, because they are still wrestling with these struggles. They find it hard to get here on a Sunday. This is who I want to be around, because they are reminding me that every time I'm enticed to put my trust and my faith, or to get entangled into something that's outside of the joy of what I have in Christ, that the results never are what we want them to be.

[25 : 21] There's a reason why grace is at the beginning of the church name, because grace requires unmerited favor. We bring in brokenness, and God replaces it with affection.

We bring in incapacities, and he brings it with full power. This is unmerited favor. We do not gather into a church because this is where good people come.

We gather into this church because this is where broken people who've messed up their life come for significance outside of themselves. I love the phrase in the song, if all I have is Christ, I have nothing left to gain.

I so want that to be a reality in my life, and it is not. Every day I think there's something else to gain outside of Christ, and that is entanglement waiting for us.

And this is at the heart of Paul's instructions, to see that there is nothing this world can give us that Christ has not already given to us. So we don't need to get entangled with it. We don't need to let our heart be drawn.

[26 : 32] But that doesn't mean we are disconnected from our world. We're not involved in the world. We use the world for the kingdom instead of being used by the world to destroy the kingdom.

That's the difference. Paul isn't removing you from the world. He says, oh, you're in it. You're in the world. You're involved in everything. But the difference is, you're going to be there saving it instead of being destroyed by it.

And this leads us to Paul's last phrase. If you go to 2 Timothy chapter 2, we're going to read verse 4 again. The soldier gets, no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuit since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

I'm sorry I forgot to do this in the beginning. If you were not here last week, you'll notice I abruptly ended my sermon last week. I grossly miscalculated how long that sermon would be.

I apologize. So I ended it to pick it up today, and we added to it. So if you're thinking, I'm missing something. What happened to the first three verses last week's sermon? No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuit since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

[27 : 48] I find the ESV to be a good translation here. I read a lot of different other translations. I was looking at it in the Greek to just make sure I understood the heart and thrust behind what he was saying.

When you are focused on a target, shooting something, we were talking about skeet shooting at the ministry retreat.

And yes, to answer all the questions, gentlemen, you can bring your own shotgun. That's what we're shooting for skeet. What is it we do first? Right? You have to focus your attention.

If you're going to aim at something and take a target at it, you have to draw your focus to the object and you would do what? You close off anything else that could possibly distract you from that target and you zero tightly in.

As the famous movie quote says, aim small, miss small, right? Turn with me to Titus chapter three. I want you to see something here.

[28 : 49] When he talks about since his aim is to please the one who listed him, Paul is saying this broad world can attain you in a lot, but we have a focus.

And our focus is on the king and we are concerned with him and his heart and his desires. The focus of our life is not aimed on our pleasure or our protection or our safety or what people think about us.

And does this mean our life is simply miserable and meaningless because we serve a narcissistic, selfish leader? Thankfully, no.

Just hear how Paul describes our king, the one who we are taking aim on, the one who we are looking unto. He says this, Titus three, verse three. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy and hated by others and hating one another.

It's a good description of everyone in this room. We somewhere fit in that mess. But when the goodness and loving kindness of our Savior appeared, he saved us.

[30 : 08] Not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5 says that he poured the love of God into our hearts. What a phrase. Put that on your wall. God poured his love in me through the Spirit.

Verse seven. So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. So our salvation, our current relationship with him as he dwells within us and our future of eternity.

The saying is trustworthy and I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

We are making sure that we're not entangling ourselves and we're setting our aim on a God who loves us at our worst. Who does not just say, all right, I'll set you clean.

[31 : 21] Now don't mess up. He says to your child, you're going to mess up. Therefore, I'm going to come live inside you to animate you and to keep your faith alive. And by the way, whatever future you're worried about, I have eternally secured it in my grip.

So he goes, I want you to insist on this. I want you to keep it focused. Don't let anybody lie to you. Don't let anybody manipulate and change this. Keep your aim on this message. Why?

Because we can devote ourselves to something that matters then. We can devote ourselves. We don't have to try and save ourselves. We don't have to judge other people. We can devote ourselves to being involved in the world as lights, showing love and kindness so that we can be able to give an answer to saying, I am this way because of my king.

I am a broken, messed up sinner who needs his mercy. And if you want to know how I got here, it's because of these truths called the gospel. Because of what he has done to us and how he loves us and cares for us and lives within us, we have the reasons now to say no to the entanglement, set our aim, and go, I just want to do what pleases my king.

I just want to do what pleases him. And through this power, he sets us free to do it. He does. We can devote ourselves to him and never look at the end of my life and say, well, that was a waste.

[33 : 00] No one will ever at the end of their life go, man, I wish I would have served God less. That new car and that extra wife affair, whatever it is you want to throw in there that you think you're missing out on, you'll not get to the end and go, yeah, I wish I would have done it different.

This is why we preach the gospel in our reading, in our singing, in communion, in my sermons. We preach the gospel because we have to insist that our aim is always Christ.

If you walk out of here this morning and your thought is this, I need to try harder. Let me shatter that clay and we put Christ the solid rock back in front of you.

No, you're not walking ahead to try harder. You're walking ahead and saying, without Christ, I have nothing. So, what is Christ for me? Who is Christ for me?

And what is Christ for the world? That's what I want you to walk out of. Put your faith in Christ to remind us constantly, every week, of our purpose.

[34 : 07] We have to come back and think about our life from a spiritual nature and not allow the flesh of this world to draw us in. And this is where we were getting to in our last week's point on the value and the purpose of the church in the kingdom of the war or the war of the kingdoms.

Because our aim now, as Paul says, our focus is Christ. His focus is the kingdom. Our church must remain as a place to prepare us for this very work.

This is how the Bible describes the gathered church. Sundays are not a day for fun times and entertainment, free childcare and a cool concert. By the way, they did a great job.

There was no dig on them. I would rather hear this than any other band in the United States. Amen? Yeah. Yeah. And for all the musicians who serve up here.

No, Sundays aren't fun days. They are feasting times where we celebrate what our king has done for us and to us and through us. And we come to receive nourishment and to nourish others so that we can lay aside the entanglement, set our focus and aim back on Christ.

[35 : 26] The church is the training ground for our souls and the souls of our children. And we keep the truth at the center of our community. This is why even at youth on Thursday nights, sure, we have some time of fun once in a while and summer camp has fun, but I want these kids to learn that without Christ and they go and try and find the meaning of life anywhere else, they will only be disappointed and not only disappointed, but they will be destroyed.

Their confidence, their image, the scars that will remain. Many of you in here know this to be true. We want these youth, these young adults to find the hope that is far beyond what the world is lying to them with.

But church, we need to partner with you, the parents. You need to work with us. We need to train to prepare you. You need to let us help train you and help train your children so that our focus is in the right place.

I pray that we continue to build upon this idea of kingdom living through every book of the Bible that we go through. My hope is that if you look at your life and you're thinking, man, everything I do, John, is a disaster.

I am a fake. I'm a fraud. I feel like, I feel like I'm just waiting to be caught. I'm not, I just feel like I'm drifting from day to day. I look at other people, a.k.a.

[36 : 56] I'm on social media. I know I'm on like an anti-social media kick. Deal with it. We look at other people and they're like, man, I don't have, okay, I shouldn't say I've dealt with it. So, but we look and we compare, don't we?

We do. We compare. I wish I was like this. I wish I had that. I wish I had those disciplines. I wish my children looked this way. I wish my husband looked like that. I wish my wife would act this way. And we get into this and we're, where is our aim at that moment?

We should look at the world and go, yeah, the world is, it's one big box of broken Legos. My son came running down the stairs in hysterics because, and they have big boxes of Legos up there and one of them tipped over and went everywhere.

And he literally looked at the disaster and goes, I don't think I can handle this by myself. Dad, can you help me come clean it? This is how we feel about our life, right? It's like an utter chaos and we want to try and put the pieces back together, but they can't.

They can never go back. So then, we have to put our focus somewhere. Every week, come back and remember that it's Christ for you. Whatever you failed in this week, whatever you failed in a multiple week, it doesn't matter where you have been.

[38 : 07] The wonder of the gospel is that you cannot wander too far from your God. God. Well, John, that just sounds like I could just live and do whatever I want.

You just admitted you didn't like doing sin, so I'm not telling you to stay in it. You just said, I don't like my sin. Great. Don't stay in it because you don't think God cares or God's love or God will forgive you.

The purpose is you cannot wander too far from God to remind you that grace will bring you all the way back home. So whatever you're doing to pretend, this idea of putting on a facade, all of us have felt this.

We need to turn and look back to Christ and what we're looking at is a king who laid down his life, who grabbed you into his arms and says, child, you are mine. I've adopted you.

I've clothed you in righteousness. I will always care for you but this is what I need you to do before you come home. Before I bring you home, I want you to go and take the love that you have experienced for me and rescue other people.

[39 : 13] Take your heart and use it for me. And then he says this, I will give you joy unspeakable and full.

You will be lacking nothing. The other option, it's not like, well, that's an okay option. I think this one's better. There is no other option.

There is disaster and destruction or there's eternal hope and joy and satisfaction. So therefore, if this is the truth, church, we should be wise in our life.

This probably means, this is my last point, this probably means we need to start caring for each other, confronting one another, building one another up. That doesn't mean me and the elders.

What's interesting is Paul writes to the church and says, consider how to build one another up, confront one another, care for one another because it's better for that awkward conversation to take place than for you to get entangled.

[40 : 13] Why? Because of grace, because of the gospel, not because we are creating some kind of spiritual hierarchy in our church. Amen? Let's pray.

Father, I'm thankful that I don't stand here in my own strength and my own confidence. I would not climb those stairs. I feel like a fool as I sit here and try to convince them to put their aim on you while I struggle to put my aim on you.

May they build me up. May they care for me. May they strengthen me as I attempt to do for them. May we all admit our weakness. May we all admit we need more of Christ.

Lord, the only reason I can ask these requests is because your son sits at your right hand and he intercedes for every child here. Lord, hear my intercession and grant us forgiveness and grace and hope.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee, where everyone is in equal need of grace.

[41 : 23] To plan a visit or to learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org. house
Jim