

"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor"

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[0:00] Almighty God, we thank you for your word. And we ask now that you will be present with your church, your sheep, and that you will continue to feed us from it.

May what we hear this morning contribute to our growth as your people. May we be strengthened. And if there are any here who do not yet know you, will you bring them?

Through the preaching of your word, to the saving faith in Jesus Christ. We pray this in his name. Amen. We're still in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

We've spent more time in this chapter than any of the chapters through our series so far. Hopefully we will finish this section today, this morning.

This section of Paul's letter, beginning really in chapter 8, all the way to the verses we read this morning. This section has been dealing primarily with food sacrificed to idols and idol worship more in general.

[1:15] Paul's treatment of this issue has been to set the principles of truth by which we are to work.

He's trying to set the principles of truth before the church. And one may know something to be true, you know this, right? You may know something to be true cognitively in your head.

This is the truth. But you don't know truth really, truly, until you apply that truth in concrete and practical ways in your life.

That's true for all things really, and especially true for spiritual things. And so Paul here is setting these truths before us. Not just the Corinthian church, before us as well.

He's setting these truths before us. And some of these truths that he's been advocating so far is that we, as the people of God, are to pursue love. Because love builds up.

[2:14] Rather than pursuing mere knowledge. Because what does knowledge do? It just merely puffs up. It's empty hair. And so he says, pursue love.

Because love is better than pursuit of just mere knowledge. And then he also tells us to forego our rights. Even though it's within our rights and our freedom.

To be willing to forego them in order to serve your fellow brother or sister for whom Christ died.

That's one of the things he, and this is part of this, from this wellspring of pursuing love.

It should lead us to being able to willingly forego our rights. And he also tells us, here in chapter 9, we saw this, that in the pursuit of all of this, we are to exercise discipline.

Like an athlete. We are to exercise self-denial. We are to exercise self-denial. Because in our Christian walk. Because we have a goal. That we're walking towards.

[3:17] And so, we are not to give in to the desires of the flesh. Which is some of the things that's been going on in the Corinthian church. And then, we saw last week, where he gave the command, Do not eat in pagan temples.

Because in doing so, you will belong to God. You will be kept holy by participation in Christ's body and blood.

When you eat in pagan temples, you're doing what? You are also participating with demons. We saw that last week. And he says, those two do not mix.

You are sanctified holy people. Do not go mixing and participating with things that have to do with demons. And so, that's where we were last week. Now, Paul goes on, in the rest of this chapter, in the verses we read this morning, to present situations that are specific to the Corinthians.

So that they can better apply the truth of what he's teaching them. Remember, we talked about how truth known cognitively, in your head, is not really truth until it is applied.

[4:27] To very concrete, practical details. Put into practice. And so, he's giving them examples of, in their own context, how they can put some of these truths into practice. Their culture, as we said before, is very similar to ours.

Their culture is interwoven all over. Every aspect of their culture is interwoven with idolatry. And last week, we saw that our culture is not dissimilar in that regard.

We just have different temples and institutions by which those idols in our day are worshipped and theirs were. But we actually have more idols in our day than they did. And so, very similar culture. It's a very similar mix of idolatry and worship of idolatry. And so, the challenge that's posed to the Corinthians, in their context, is that in a setting where this idolatry is so prevalent, the challenge posed by food sacrificed to idols is multifaceted.

There's so many different ways where they will have to confront this issue of food sacrificed to idols. The issue affected every part of their life. They can't avoid it.

[5:38] And the same is true for us. Maybe not specifically in terms of food sacrificed to idols. But the same thing. I want us to see that the same thing is true for us. In different aspects, where we cannot avoid confronting the truth that we are not to participate with idols.

And so, remember what we said previously about Corinth. If you were to go into a Corinthian restaurant, or go into the market to buy meat, and you want to source the meat, you know, that term, you know, especially the quality ones.

And this is true. If you go to a marketplace in Corinth, the quality meat, if you want to source it, it's very likely, most likely, that you will track the source of that meat back to one of the pagan temples in Corinth.

That's where the meat was, the animal was sacrificed, and some of the portion of that animal sacrifice is now sold to the marketplace, to be sold to the general public.

Such was the prevalence of idolatry that you couldn't escape if you, unless you want to become a vegetarian or a vegan.

[6:51] And that's not advisable. At least, that's my personal opinion about that. So, unless you want to be that, you cannot avoid meat's sacrifice to idols in pagan temples.

It's almost unavoidable. So, the Christian in Corinth will have to be faced with the question of, what do I do, then? So, Paul, Paul told us, he's the same Paul that told us last week not to provoke the Lord to jealousy.

Remember that. Do not provoke the Lord to jealousy. So, if you're eagerly, as a Christian, trying to live faithfully and not provoke the Lord to jealousy, what then are you to do when you go to the marketplace to procure meat?

Or what do you do when you're invited by your non-Christian family or your non-Christian friend to come over for dinner? Or, in our case, what are we to do when your friend invites you over to your Hindu friend or your Muslim friend invites you over to their house?

Each Christian, at least in the Corinthian context, each Corinthian Christian is faced with the task of applying the truth that Paul is telling them here into the very detailed, real, concrete aspect of their lives.

[8:19] And as we said, we face the same questions in our day. How do we apply God's truth in our context? How do we apply God's truth at our workplace,!

In our family, in the society, among our neighbors? I hope, as a Christian, you recognize that God's truth must be applied.

I hope we can agree at least on that. God's truth must be applied to every part of your life. It is not enough to just know it and to say you believe it if it's not applied concretely and you're living in obedience to it.

So, how do we apply God's truth in our lives, in our context? How do I apply God's truth regarding marriage when my adult son comes home with his girlfriend? How do I apply God's truth about human life if my teenage daughter were to get pregnant?

Or what if my daughter wants to play travel soccer league and unfortunately, as you know, they always play on Sunday mornings. How do I apply God's truth in that context, in that situation?

[9:32] How do I apply God's truth when my brother invites me to his same-sex marriage? So, you see, to faithfully live the Christian life is to bring to bear the truth of God's word in our lives and in our relationships.

We must make obedience to God and his word a priority above every other other consideration. And so, specifically in the Corinthian context of the food sacrificed to idols, Paul, in these last verses of chapter 10, is bringing his argument to a conclusion.

He wants to show them how to apply God's truth in their situation. And so, he begins by restating a principle that he's already said earlier in chapter 6, verse 23, he says, all things are lawful, but not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful, he repeats himself, but not all things build up right away. You understand when you hear that build up, right? The principle of love that builds up.

And so, all things are lawful, but not all things are helpful or profitable or edifying. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Paul is the same Paul that says, it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

[11:02] And as Christians, we are not to let ourselves be burdened any longer by the yoke of slavery. He said that to the Galatian church. It is for freedom. He believes it concerning the Corinthian church as well. It is for freedom that Christ has set you free.

Do not any longer be burdened by the yoke of slavery, the impossible law-keeping of the Pharisees. That can never make you holy. The Corinthians, well familiar with their rights, they also know this. They know that it is for freedom. They've been claiming that slogan after all. An idol is nothing. We're free in Christ. Yes, that's all true. It's true.

It's also true as Christians that if something is not expressly forbidden in God's word, you as a Christian are at liberty to make decisions about those things as long as those decisions are in accord with God's word and the principle of love.

That's what Paul is trying to bring to bear here. So for example, we read in the Decalogue this morning these series of Ten Commandments and we see some of the things God expressly forbids His children from doing.

[12:19] Thou shalt not murder. You shalt not commit adultery. You shalt not steal. So none of us can then come and say, well, I have liberty to, you know, someone, you know, stub on my toe, you know, cut me off in traffic.

I can pull out my Colt 45. Is that, you know, and, you know, and, you know, or as Jesus says, when you hate somebody, you're already murdering your heart.

I can start, you know, yelling at them, let them have it, you know. You can say, well, there's freedom to, like, you know, go on my computer and just, you know, you know, no one's watching, I'm not hurting anybody and, you know, open that site and just, you know, watch.

Or there's freedom to take some things from my workplace. You know, it doesn't hurt anybody.

They don't pay me enough anyway. You know, just start stacking some things. Stealing.

All of those things, you can rationalize, but we know God's word says, you shall not do these things.

But there are other things that are, there's no freedom here in terms of Christians, Christian liberty.

[13:28] This is not the issue of Christian liberty. Those things, God says, do not do. Obedience requires us to obey God and not do them. But there are other things. I'll give you some concrete example like smoking or drinking alcohol.

There is no injunction. I heard this as I was preparing this week. Someone asked a minister, well, do I have the Christian liberty to smoke my cigar?

And the pastor says, yes, you do, you filthy dog. You know? So, so the pastor already has, he has an opinion about, about smoking, smoking, and he expressed it, but he acknowledged that that brother in Christ has the freedom to, to smoke if he so chooses.

Right? There is Christian liberty in those regards. There are other things. I just give those as examples. There are things where we have Christian liberty to do.

So, Paul says, and in their context, eating meat sacrificed to idols because an idol is nothing. There is Christian liberty to go into the marketplace, buy meat, eat, enjoy, give thanks to God, spread, barbecue it, and eat.

[14:44] But, Paul is saying, while all these things are lawful, that is, you have the Christian liberty to do them. That's what he means by lawful. And you are indeed harmed with the knowledge of your right.

And your conscience does not prick you when you do it. Your conscience allows you to do it. Paul will have us know that that is not the only thing to consider when we're considering this.

So, as your freedom allows you to do it, your conscience does not prick you in doing it, but what of love? Are you compelled by love for Jesus Christ and for his bride, the church, for your fellow brothers and sisters, and for those who might see you as a Christian bearing witness to the name of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Are you concerned out of love for that? That that will then govern what you decide to do. Notice here that Paul is insane, given a bunch of, you know, how to's.

He is setting up the principle and he wants us to be governed by those principles. Right? And so he says, Paul is advocating you must weigh as Christians whether your actions and decisions are beneficial on the grounds of how would they relate, how would they impact others.

[16:05] It's not so much how would they impact you. You're not in view here. It's others that are in view. Will the exercise of your rights be helpful?

Will it build up the body of Christ? Will it make Christ more beautiful in the eyes of unbelievers as you exercise that freedom that you have as a Christian?

Because the truth is, brothers and sisters, you live not for yourself as a Christian. Your life is lived to glorify God and to use your life in service of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ to love others. self-giving love, self-sacrificial love. This is what Christian love is, agape love. A love that looks beyond yourself to the others, to the other, rather.

It's the same love in which you were loved by God. That is why love is not a choice but a command for Christians.

[17:14] And so Paul says in verse 24, let no one seek his own good but the good of his neighbor. Jesus told us, remember the parable of the Good Samaritan, who are your neighbors?

According to that parable, it's anyone who you come across in your life's journey is your neighbor. So you don't get to limit the circle there. Jesus Christ has brought in it.

And your life is meant to be sought for the good of your neighbor as a Christian. This is what true Christian community looks like. We live to profit one another, to benefit one another.

We live seeking to build one another up. This is the principle that is to govern our interactions and our thoughts as God's people. So not everything is beneficial.

Not everything that you do in the exercise of your freedom will build up your brother and will profit him. And so you must think, before I do this, will it be beneficial? Will it profit?

[18:22] Not my profit. It's very easy to say, well, of course it profits you. It's your freedom. But you're not in view. It's the profit of the other that is in view here. The aim is not your benefit.

It is to live sacrificially out of love for the benefit of the other person. And here, of course, is where the rubber meets the road. And I walk with Christ and I follow in him.

That, as we said last week, is the pain point as we've been seeing. That's the part that we know if we're honest with ourselves that we cannot do without the help of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot. We're so wired because of our sinfulness to think about ourselves first and foremost. To think about what benefits and profits us. We're outwired to do that.

And so, we need God the Holy Spirit to help us. And we need to continually repent of our selfishness. Someone asked me once, in my first, it's still true now, but in my first year of marriage, what do you realize?

[19:32] What do you realize about married life? And I, this was a constant repent. I just kept saying, man, I didn't, I knew I'm a sinner. I knew I'm selfish. But I didn't realize how selfish I am.

Until I had to live with somebody else. And consider their life. and consider them first before myself. And how hard that was.

How grating that was. How everything in me didn't want to do it. Well, that's true in every other areas of our life. But so, we need the help of the Holy Spirit to help us.

God's. So, the question is this, brothers and sisters, how are you living? How are you exercising your freedom?

Let's look at the concrete scenarios that Paul gives for the Corinthian church. he says to them, if your life is devoted to God, and if your life is devoted to the benefit of others, how is that to work out in specific situations of food sacrificed to idols?

[20:44] And look in verse 25. Paul begins with conscience, with your conscience, your own decision. this is speaking to perhaps some of them who are the weaker brethren, who are so overly focused, preoccupied with the food their conscience is pricked about eating these meat that are sacrificed to idols.

And Paul says, eat whatever, he says this to them, he says this to the whole church really, eat whatever is sold in the meat market without it raising any question on the ground of conscience. For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

So when you go to buy meat, to eat, for a party, for food, buy, pay, eat whatever is sold at the market, don't ask questions that will bind your conscience or that of another.

Because, as you do know, all of it belongs to the Lord. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. buy, eat, enjoy, knowing that all of it comes from God, the God from whom all blessings flow.

Acknowledge that all that you have to sustain you in this life is given by God. And in return, be grateful and thank Him for it.

[22 : 12] And be free to eat. So, Paul here is guarding against those who are overscrupulous. Those who are hypocritical among them.

Those who are just living, constantly fussing over every little thing. And you know, that's something that sometimes plagues us as Christians as well. We can be a Christian body that is constantly fussing over things and refusing to live in the freedom that Christ has already won for us.

And when we do that, we're living, it's dangerous to do that. We're given into legalism. It's actually a pride oftentimes when that happens. When we become overly, when we start overly fussing about things.

It's a wrong view of our standing before God. It might be because you see God as a God who's there with our armor ready to sort of bring it down over your head for just a little bit stepping over the boundaries, over the line.

But that's not the God that loves you and saves you and redeemed you and sustains you. And so, we are not to be hypercritical, either over with ourselves or with others.

[23 : 27] We're not to be fussy buddies. I don't know if that's a word. We're not to be like that in the Christian body. We're to exercise Christian freedom over the things that we have freedom about. We're not to exchange the freedom that we have for a yoke of slavery.

And so, in that regards, be free to eat. But what if you're invited by an unbeliever to his house for dinner? What if your Muslim friend or your Hindu neighbor says to you, come over for dinner?

First of all, I hope, if that were to happen to you, I hope that all things considered, I hope that you will say yes. I hope you will go. And I hope as you go, you will be gracious, a gracious guest, and eat what is given to you with gratitude to God who provides it and thankfulness for your host who prepared it.

We as Christians are not to isolate ourselves and live in ghettos or Christian bubbles. We're not Jews. Remember, in the Jewish tradition, you could not go to a Gentile home.

To eat. This is part of the freedom that we have as Christians. We can relate and we can interact with others. We do so, obviously, bearing the light of Christ everywhere we go.

[24 : 50] Right? We don't compromise our faith, our trust, our belief, but we engage with others. So, if that were you, you invited, you go. And then, Paul says, you eat whatever is given to you.

Whatever is set before you. Without raising any questions on the ground of conscience. But, verse 28, if someone were to say to you, this has been offered in sacrifice, what does Paul say?

Then do not eat it. But, but why? Note here that it's not because you're being fussy and you're being, oh my goodness, or you're being two-faced because you very likely know that it might have been sacrificed.

If you're in the Corinthian context, you will know that it's been sacrificed to idols. So, you're not being two-faced by saying, oh, someone says it, now I can't eat it. But the reason is for the sake of the one who informed you.

Verse 28, for the sake of conscience. Not your conscience because you have the freedom to eat, but the sake of his conscience. And this is important because oftentimes when we read this verse, we think it's speaking of another believer who's saying this to you.

[25 : 53] But it's very likely that this is an unbeliever saying this. This food has been sacrificed to idols. Notice that the word there is that this has been offered in sacrifice. So far, if a Christian were to say this, they would have said this food has been sacrificed to idols.

But this is, you're in the home of, the context is you're in the home of an unbeliever and then as they bring the food over, they said this food has been sacrificed to idols. Now, why would an unbeliever say that?

Well, in the Corinthian context, early on in Christianity, they couldn't tell the distinction between Christians and Jews. And maybe the pagan Corinthians, who invited you, knew that the Jews would never eat meat.

So a Jew, when a Jew goes to the marketplace, he will actually have to ask the question, where did this meat come from? Otherwise, they have their own butchery where they killed their own meat because they could not eat any meat that's been contaminated.

Not so much, first because it's been sacrificed to idols, but also because it has to be killed in a particular way. According to the Mosaic law, not so with a Christian. You have the freedom to eat. Remember what God told Peter as he went to Cornelius' house?

[27:08] So, you have the freedom to eat. But maybe this unbeliever thinks, you know, well, you know, I don't think Christians are supposed to eat this and it says it to you. Let's think of other contexts in our day.

You know, as a believer in Jesus Christ, that even though the world hates Jesus and thinks Christians are a bunch of fundies, fundamentals, that's what fundies is.

It's not that you're a fun person, it's actually derogatory. All right? Christians are a bunch of fundies, but when they see Christians do something, they're like, wow, I didn't think a Christian is supposed to do that.

Even unbelievers are suspected. If you say you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you follow Jesus, they expect you to live in a certain way. And so maybe even those things are not particular sins, but just an exercise of your freedom.

Let's say you meet with your friend in a bar, and you, as some of the men in this church will often do, right? You meet in a bar, and you're drinking beer, and you're just fellowshiping, not giving to drunkenness or anything like that, just drinking a pint.

[28:14] Maybe someone who's not a believer has grown up to think like, you know, Christians are not supposed to do this, and comes along. I didn't think Christians are supposed to do that. This isn't a point, or more likely, this friend is coming and he says, well, you know, I don't, you know, I don't think Christians are supposed to drink a pint.

This is an unbeliever. Again, this is not a Christian. What do you do in that context? For the sake of the conscience of that person, you exercise love, even though you have the freedom.

You exercise love, and you abstain from eating. That's the principle that Paul is setting up here in verse 28. If that person says, this food has been often sucked, then do not eat it for the sake of the one who informed you.

And it goes on in verse 29. I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? Paul here is not defending himself.

And interestingly, I think that the Corinthians probably have observed Paul do this when he was with them. He went to Gentile homes, and he ate whatever was given to him, and he went to Jewish homes, unbelieving Jews, and he followed their own strict particularities about food.

[29:31] Even though he's a Christian now, and he has the freedom. Remember what he said earlier in the previous chapter? To the Jew, I was a Jew. To the Gentile. To the Greek, I was a Greek. And he did that, and they observed it.

But Paul is saying, it's not because I'm two-faced, it's because of love. And it's not because my conscience is pricked, or I'm injured by my own conscience, it's for the sake and the conscience of the other that I'm doing it.

My liberty is not determined by your fussiness, even as an unbeliever, but it is because of love for you. And it's for the sake of the gospel that I will forgo the rights and my freedom.

So verse 30, if I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Here's the principle again. All that you do is to be done for the glory of God. So not only love, which is the first principle, do it out of love, because love builds up, but also do it to glorify God.

[30:47] And now verse 32, give no offense to Jews or to Greeks. These are unbelieving Jews, unbelieving Greeks. Give no offense. And give no offense to the church of God.

He has already said that in chapter 8. Your weaker brothers, give no offense to them in the exercise of your freedom. And then he says, just as I, Paul is using himself as an example, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do.

Now Paul is insane. I'm a people pleaser. What he means there is that I try for the sake of the gospel to love everyone. Paul will not compromise. We've already seen this. He will not compromise the gospel for the sake of anyone.

He will not compromise the truth of God's word. And we are not either to do so. but we are to try to please everyone in as far as Christian freedom is in view.

Not seeking our own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved. And there's the third thing, right? Love builds up. You do it out of love. You do it to glorify God. And you do it for the sake of the gospel message, which you are a representative of, and you are a proclaimer of, so that many may be saved.

[32 : 09] Do you know that, brothers, that your life, every aspect of it, you live in it, in view of others to see Christ's light reflecting in your belief, in your faith, in your actions, in the way you love others, in the way you give of yourself, in the way you sacrificially love others in the church.

What did Jesus say? By their love, right? it will be known as mine. And so Paul says, be like me in this regard. This has been my ministry, apostolic ministry.

Be imitators of me. Verse 11, chapter 11, verse 1, this is the worst division of chapters ever. Verse 1 should go with the previous chapter.

So Paul says in verse 1 of chapter 11, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. I wonder if we can say that. And Paul isn't putting himself up like, look at me.

I'm an apostle. Follow me. This is not one of these prosperity preachers, you know, this big man of God figure. I'm larger than life, just do whatever I do, follow me as a celebrity.

[33 : 21] Because look what he says, he qualifies in which way there to be imitators of him. Right? I, myself, I'm following Jesus Christ. He's the one who's laid down this principle in his life that he lived on earth.

Sacrificially loving others, giving of himself, compassionate for those who are poor, compassionate for those who are sick, compassionate for those who are lost, compassionate all the way to giving his life on the cross.

And I, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, I'm living in that same cruciform! way. And I want you to follow me as I follow Christ. That's what Paul means. I want us to maybe reflect on this one issue before we pray.

I mentioned last week and I mentioned it today. One of the pressing issues in our day, in our context, situational situation, that will hit most of us, if it hasn't hit you yet, it will eventually hit you, is the issue of the idols that we are forced to capitulate to in our day.

we talked about it briefly last week, of the same-sex gender, sexual confusion of our world. Right? That is the Caesar we were commended to bow down to.

[34 : 39] You can believe in whatever you do, but look, you can't, you have to fly the flag when July, is it June or July when it comes along? Fly the flag, you know, genuflect to the idol of our age.

And that will affect us, and it does. What happens in your workplace? When you're working in a secular government business, big business place, they all genuflect when it comes to that.

Are you pressured? When you're pressured to do the same thing, to acquiesce and to say, well, you know, love is love. I'll carry the flag, I'll put it on my dick column at office, or I'll say something, or I'll go to the workshop, and I'll just repeat the slogan, even though I don't believe it.

That might be easy for you to do, but because love builds up, and the unbeliever's watching, and your Christian brother's watching, will that inform, then, the more difficult task of saying, no, I can't do this?

This issue is not easy. It's not the path of least resistance to love the way Christ calls us to love, to stand upon his truth the way he calls us to do.

[36 : 00] It's a hard thing to do. It requires the help of the least. In that situation, what would we do in those situations? What if someone, I give the example, someone you love, invites you to their same-sex marriage, marriage?

And you know marriage, what a marriage is. It's between a man and a woman. It's not a Christian institution, it's a creational institution, ordered by God at the beginning of time.

What do you do as a Christian? How do you exercise? Actually, in this issue, it's not an exercise of freedom. It is what we talked about last week.

Do not eat in pagan temples. It's a command. But how do you exercise that, that obedience to God's word, in a way that will inform others of your faith, glorify Christ, love that builds up, and

preach the gospel?

If we're honest with ourselves, these are the implications of what we've been going through in chapter 10. It's not something, sort of out there that will not affect us. And I raised these examples, and I said before that these are pain points for all of us.

[37 : 25] It will affect you. If it hasn't yet, it will. But brothers and sisters in Christ, determine now to follow Christ, to obey him, to follow his way, to live for him.

it will mean that you might be seen by the world as haters, as bigots, as hateful people. But that's what love, true love, actually looks like.

This is the kind of love that builds up. I know that this is hard saying, and I do invite you actually this week, if you have any questions about what we're going through in Esraelian chapter 10, please reach out to me by email, or come to me after church, either this Sunday or next Sunday, during the coffee hour, and ask me.

if you have a particular situation in your own life, that's similar to some of these things that we've raised, that's why we live in the body of Christ together, right? To be able to inform and counsel and help one another and build each other up.

That's what love is, right? In the body of Christ. So you're not to just think about those situations on your own. You live in the context of the body of Christ. And so if you have any of those questions, please raise them with me, or with someone, another brother, assistant Christ, who you trust.

[38 : 45] Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you have set an example for us of faithful Christian living, sacrificial, agapes, self-giving love.

We thank you, Lord, also that you've called us to freedom and that you've given us the freedom to exercise that freedom in ways that are that we may love one another and build each other up.

And we confess, Lord, that sometimes it's easier to go the path of least resistance or in our sinful flesh to desire our own well-being above the well-being of our brother or sister for whom Christ died. We repent of ways in which you've done this in the past. And we ask, Holy Spirit, that you will help us. Help us, Lord, to love one another the way Christ loves us.

Help us to love one another in building one another up. Help us to love our neighbors in building them up and bringing them to the light of the gospel.

[39 : 56] We need your help in this regard. And we ask that you will empower us and strengthen us to do it. Boldly, faithfully, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.