

A Life of Dependence Leads to Reward

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[0 : 00] I want to encourage you again to pick up one of these study guides on the way out. We're going to be working through a 12-week series on the life of Daniel.

And I say the life of Daniel instead of the book of Daniel, because we're going to go through the first six chapters or so and kind of evaluate kind of the narrative of Daniel and especially how Daniel's life and the life of his friends, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego point to God.

So pick that up. It should be a great time together. It certainly has been encouraging to myself as I have been thinking ahead and looking at the text, encouraging my own heart, reminding myself of the things that are there for us to learn.

Turn with me, if you would, to Luke 18. Luke 18. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 877.

Page 877. I want to begin with this question.

It's really been the governing question for us ever since we've been in this chapter, Luke chapter 18. And the overarching question of this chapter is, do you or will you depend on God?

[1 : 19] Now, I guess if I were to phrase that more personally, do you like to be dependent? Do you wake up in the morning and say, oh good, another day I can be dependent.

Another day I can ask for help. Now my guess is that like me, we don't want to ask for help. We don't want to feel like our life is dependent on others or dependent on God.

We want to feel like we have things pretty well together. But when we ask God to make us dependent, isn't it interesting how God delights in answering that prayer?

So that we wake up in the morning, and this has been one of those weeks, just feeling really overwhelmed with lots of things, and being reminded day by day how desperate I am for God's strength.

And by the way, there's no better place to be. And that's what God has called us to. God has called us to a life of faith. The just shall live by faith.

[2 : 32] That's what God has called us into. And by the way, that is not just a faith for a moment.

That is not just believing in God to save me for some future day in salvation when he's going to take me to be with himself.

But it's entering in to this life of dependence in trusting in Jesus day by day. It's reflected in the Lord's Prayer.

Give us this day our what? Daily bread. Do you realize what a grace that is? Of God. To make us dependent on him every day.

To welcome us in to fresh experiences of trusting him. Needing him. Asking him for help. And so, I feel in my own heart that we trust God to do the biggest thing in saving us from our deepest need, from sin, but why does my heart struggle so much depending on God day by day for the lesser things?

So, Romans chapter 8, where Paul says this, he says, If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

[4 : 02] And so, if God has given us forgiveness from sin, the greatest human need, and he's called us into relationship with him, and he's bridged the gap, as it were, the separation that existed because of my deficiency, my rebellion, and God in demonstrating his own love for us, in that while I was a sinner, Christ died for me.

He overcame the gap. He covered the greatest need of my life. So, why is it that I can trust God for that, but I can't trust God for the little stuff?

So, here Jesus is. He's encouraging his disciples. We've called this road trip reflections because these are the final parting words, really, of Jesus to his disciples and to those who are listening to

him along the way of calling them to the greatest things, dependence on him.

And one of the things that causes us to stand out from the world, Paul will say, and now abides faith, hope, love, these three.

The greatest of these is love. Those are really the three things that set us apart from the world. Our love for others and our love for God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbors yourself.

[5 : 32] Our faith in God, which is dependence on him day by day. That's what we're going to talk about today. And hope. Trusting God for what he's going to accomplish in eternity for us.

So, we don't like to be dependent. The truth is, none of us like to acknowledge that we have deep need.

But if we're going to grow in the Christian life, and if we're going to be those who are growing in faith in Christ, and growing in the way that we shine the gospel in the world, it's going to happen as he's producing, nurturing, cultivating in our life dependence on God day by day.

And so, Jeremiah will say in Lamentations 3, he says, Through the Lord's mercies, we are not consumed because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness. God delights in pouring out his mercy on us day by day.

[6 : 45] Are we coming to the well and drawing it up for ourselves? Enjoying those mercies day by day. Depending on him, moment by moment.

That's what God is calling us to. And that's what will shine the gospel. That's what this passage is about today. That's the sermon in a nutshell right there. And so, the way for us, I think, at times, to enjoy and benefit from learning how to grow in dependence is by having good examples.

And one of my favorite examples is George Mueller. Some of you may understand or know who George Mueller is. He lived in the 1800s. He had this life of deep dependence on God.

So that the objective or the goal of his life was stated this way. I have joyfully dedicated my whole life to show how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith.

And if you were to write a summary over his entire life, that no better summary would exist. He was a pastor. He was one who founded a Bible college. He started an orphanage that over the course of the ministry, over 10,000 children were a part of his orphanage.

[8 : 01] And he trusted God to provide the means to provide for all of those children. Throughout the duration of his life, he learned, of course, lessons on dependence and faith.

Let me just share briefly some of the things that he said. He says, We should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried. The more I'm in a position to be tried in faith, the more I will have the opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance.

Every fresh instance in which he helps and delivers me will increase my faith. The believer should not shrink from situations, positions, or circumstances in which his faith may be tried.

But he should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities to see the hand of God stretched out in help and deliverance. Thus, his faith will be strengthened.

The only way to learn strong faith is to endure great trials. The only way to learn strong faith is to endure great trials.

[9 : 10] It is through our daily dependence on God that we make much of him and we show that he is worthy of trusting.

He is worthy of our faith. So that's what this whole passage has been about. As Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem, he started in the region between Samaria and Galilee, and he's made his way over to the eastern side of the Jordan.

He's coming down that side of the Jordan. He's going to make his way into Jericho and ultimately up to Jerusalem. We know what he waits him there.

And here in these final moments and teachings of Jesus, he's interested in helping his disciples and those who listen understand the significance of faith and dependence.

That's what this chapter has been about. So that in chapter 18, verse 1, he says, He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. Learn to be dependent and learn that God is trustworthy.

[10 : 18] So that in verse 8, I tell you, speaking of God, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

Do we trust that God is able to answer prayer and to meet us in our place of need? Then he moves on in verse 9, and we see that now Jesus is now coming against those who are self-reliant. We find he told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt. So he tells this parable about two men. One who was the epitome of righteousness, a Pharisee in that day.

The other which was supposed to kind of encapsulate all that was wicked and ungodly in that culture, a tax collector. Both of whom were going up to the temple to pray. This picture of coming to a place of worship.

A place that represented where the presence of God was. The Pharisee, when he comes, rather than praying to God, we find that he's praying about himself.

[11:29] Some translations will say he prayed to himself. And that may be more accurate. He's the center of his prayer. He's really the only person he cares about.

And he wants to promote himself and let everyone else know in the room how great he is. I don't do this, and I instead do this. I'm not like that tax collector over there.

But then, in verse 13, this parable turns to the tax collector. He's the word for mercy.

This deep dependence on God. He recognizes something is true about God's character, that he is a God of mercy. And this word for mercy is the word propitiation, which is really the word for atonement or appeasement or forgiveness.

And what's taking place either in the morning or in the evening. It happened twice a day in the temple. Atonement was made for the people through sacrifice. And prayer would happen as a result of the sacrifices that were being made.

[12:42] And this tax collector, recognizing all that was happening there in the temple at this time, understands there must be atonement for sin. That he must receive forgiveness.

And that forgiveness only comes from God. He also recognizes something about himself. He calls himself the sinner. The direct article is used in Jesus' parable to refer to him as the ultimate sinner. The example of someone who is the chief sinner, as it were. And in this way, we find the gospel does obliterate self-reliance.

At least it should. We step into this passage this morning, beginning in verse 18. And we need to ask ourselves, is God dependable?

Is God reliable? Is God trustworthy? And if he is, it will not only show up in prayer, it will show up in my posture, but it will also show up in the way that I depend on him every single day for the things that I have.

[13:48] And this is where the rubber meets the road for us in Western culture. This is where dependence in faith will collide, will be tangible, so that we can say, along with George Mueller, I have joyfully dedicated my life to show how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith.

Does faith shine from our life as we're trusting God day by day with the things that we need help for? So we find in verse 18, we find in this passage this morning, two reasons why we can depend on God.

First, we can depend on God because God is good. You can depend on a God who is good. He's good. We find that in verses 18 and 19. Look at this with me for a moment.

And a ruler asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

Again, Jesus is on this road with his disciples, and we find from Matthew's account, now all of these synoptic gospels are beginning to converge. And the stories are now kind of picked up from Matthew and Mark, and now we're going to carry them through together along with Luke to the end of the book.

[15:10] We find from Matthew's account in chapter 19, verses 1 and 2, that this wasn't a small gathering. Jesus had finished these sayings. He went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan, and large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

Of course, he's healing and teaching. Pilgrims that are coming along with this crowd into Jerusalem, and certainly Jesus is picking up followers along the way.

We find some things about this ruler from Matthew and Mark. We find from Matthew that he's young. It's mentioned twice in the text.

We find from Mark that he's reverent. He comes, he kneels before Jesus. There's this measure of humility, this dependence that's showing up, even in his posture towards Jesus.

We come to understand that he's knowledgeable. He knows the law. He believes himself to be devout. He's tried to follow the things that the Mosaic law has set forward. From an outward appearance, he was the ideal Jew.

[16:17] And the fact that he is wealthy, which we also see in verse 23 of Luke chapter 18, he was extremely wealthy, this would be a marker, a clue to the people in that day that he was favored by God.

He was blessed by God. And so from an outward appearance, he had it all together. Luke is the only one to mention that he's a ruler. It's possible that he was a ruler in a synagogue.

It's also possible that he was a ruler from the Sanhedrin, but it's unlikely because of his youth. It's probably more likely that he was influential and a wealthy man, a civic leader, as it were, a leading man of society, a respected layperson, somebody with repute and distinction in the town or the region.

But in spite of his position, we find that there is humility in his heart. What must I do to inherit eternal life? He's mindful of Christ's position. He recognizes him as a teacher, as a rabbi.

He's thinking carefully. As we look through the gospel accounts, the issue or the subject of eternal life is really prevalent in the gospel of John.

[17:31] So he's heard Christ's teaching. He's aware of eternal life. He's asking the right question. Jesus will help to point his attention, direct his attention on the fact that God is good.

And in speaking of God's goodness, he begins by helping this man understand that God's goodness stands apart from us. His goodness stands apart from us.

Only God is good. Why do you call me good, he says. No one is good except God alone. It may seem like Jesus is avoiding the question.

It may seem like Jesus isn't really answering it directly. But Jesus wants to underscore the faulty nature of the question altogether.

What is the standard of goodness in your mind? What do you fit in relation to that standard? What are you depending on? Is essentially underneath this statement that Jesus is making.

[18:35] And of course, this man, aware of the Mosaic law, would have also been aware of the other passages of Scripture, the Psalms in particular, which Paul kind of summarizes and compiles in Romans chapter 3 to talk about the nature of man when he says this in Romans 3, 10 to 18.

As it is written, none is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good, not even one.

Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. In their path are ruin and misery and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

We are not inherently good. We are corrupt to the core. And to understand what the Bible says in relationship to our nature is the beginning of learning that our need and dependence on God in the first place.

Only God is good. And compared to his perfection, we are corrupt, we are worthless, and we are wicked, according to this passage.

[19:51] What are you trusting in? And essentially, Jesus is saying, only God is good. Of course, that comes to us from 1 Chronicles 16, 34. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His steadfast love endures forever. Or Psalm 34, verse 8. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. His goodness stands apart from humanity.

And now, in verse 20, we're going to see that his goodness is revealed to us in the law. Now, Jesus begins to, in establishing that only God is good, now he lifts up this standard that God has set so that by his grace, he can allow this young ruler who has evaluated himself probably against the backdrop of everyone else around him can now evaluate his life against the backdrop of the perfect standard that God has set in his law.

God's goodness revealed in the law. Verse 20 says, you know the commands, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.

Jesus strengthens his argument here. By the way, the law is not arbitrary. The law is not just a set of rules that God put together because he thought we needed something to obey.

[21:14] No, the law is a reflection of his very nature, his very character. By giving us the law, we come to know who God is. The law shows his purity, his perfection.

The law was meant to expose our sin and lead us to God. It was meant to show us that we need him, that we are distant, that our sin has separated ourselves from him and that only God is good.

here in our passage, Jesus, he doesn't confront the ruler head on, but he wants to expose his heart, his deficiency, his understanding.

What you're trusting in is not good. Only God is good. He gives this law, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness.

Honor your father and your mother, which is the second half half of the Decalogue, the second half of the Ten Commandments. It focuses on the part of the commands that relate to others.

[22 : 19] And so in essence, Jesus is saying, kind of encapsulating the commandments, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

This is the section of the Decalogue that focuses on the loving your neighbor as yourself. because as it relates to true love, love for God, how do we know that we love God the way he expects us to love God?

Well, it shows up in the way that we love the people that God loves. In Matthew, chapter 5, verses 27 and 28, we understand that the posture of loving God and obeying these commands is deeper than what happens on the surface.

It's what's really, truly in the heart. And Jesus will say on the Sermon on the Mount, you have heard what was said, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It's not about the externals, it's about what's inside. And then in Matthew, chapter 5, verses 21 and 22, Jesus will expose what true murder looks like when he says, you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder.

[23 : 34] And whoever murders will be liable of judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council.

And whoever says, you fool, will be liable of the hell of fire. I love how Ray Comfort, if you're familiar with his ministry, how Ray Comfort will go to college campuses or go to the beach cities of California.

and his approach is to use these kinds of questions to draw out his listeners. To help them see how far away they are from God's perfect standard.

Where in the beginning of the conversation, they'll say, well, I'm a pretty good person, of course, I'm going to heaven. Well, then it'll lead them through this progression of questions and one by one they'll say, well, I guess if I've lusted after someone in my heart, I'm an adulterer.

I guess if I have hated someone in my heart, I'm a murderer. And of course, as it relates to stealing, as it relates to bearing false witness, as it relates to honoring our father and mother, those things are so apparent and it should have led this man to the right conclusion.

[24 : 46] The honest answer should have been, no, I'm far from good. I've come to a place of understanding nothing good exists within me. Any of you who are aware of Ray Comfort will appreciate and understand that approach to ministry and so that by the time he's done, everyone who has listened to his gospel presentation has come to that conclusion but somehow and for some reason this rich young ruler was not able to make that connection.

He was not able to be honest with himself. But the statement instead would have a reverse effect. Instead of this man being led to the place of recognizing his sin, he comes to a place as we see in the next verse in verse 21.

He said, all these things I've kept from my youth. And now Jesus needs to press in and help him understand that God's goodness cannot be achieved. God's goodness cannot be replicated. God's goodness cannot be duplicated by human effort. It is God's goodness and God's goodness alone. You can almost see this man's smile on his face.

He's ecstatic. All of his hopes have been confirmed. He's relieved. It's exactly what he expected Jesus to say. If I live according to the law then I get heaven.

[26 : 08] If I obey the commands I'll get rewards not only on earth but also in heaven. What a relief. He's stoked. I've kept all these commands from my youth.

Of course none of that was true. He drew the wrong conclusions. He was not being honest with himself. It's kind of like those videos if you've ever watched them of the kids that are in the room and you see them they've marked themselves with lipstick right?

And mom comes into the room and says what you been doing? Oh nothing. Or my favorite this is two little girls who thought they would get to play in some desitin and so they've coated each other

with desitin their faces and their hair.

Mom comes in and says hey what you guys been doing? Oh nothing. And it's as clear as day. It's as plain as the desitin on their face.

But he would not acknowledge where he really was in relationship to perfection. He was unwilling to acknowledge that he was dependent. this man is doing the exact same thing these two little girls are doing.

[27 : 22] And with this inflated view of himself essentially what he's doing is blaspheming God. He's inflating himself he's bringing God down and by doing that he is cursing God to his face because God is standing right in front of him.

Jesus says here in verse 22 Jesus heard this he said to him one thing you still lack see all that you have excuse me sell all that you have distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me.

You see God's goodness can't be achieved on our own. Can't be achieved. I love how Mark recounts Christ's response in Mark chapter 10 verse 20 and 21 it says and he said to him speaking of the rich ruler teacher all these things I've kept for my youth and Jesus looking at him loved him. Jesus looking at him loved him. What an amazing description. This man has ignorantly blasphemed God. He's made much of himself he's he's brazenly declared himself to be righteous and effect has brought God down and what does God do?

Well God in Christ looks at him and loves him. Can you imagine the scene? I envision Jesus there with a tender smile on his face maybe tilting his head to one side and in his eyes and in his face essentially he's saying you really don't understand but I love you anyway.

[29 : 11] He gently provides this next statement one thing you lack sell all that you have distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come and follow me.

Jesus puts his finger on the one thing that this rich ruler cannot escape his own covetous heart his own self-reliant heart his own desire for personal comfort in his life.

This statement is entirely consistent of course with what Jesus says throughout his ministry. In Luke chapter 14 verse 33 he says therefore any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Or what he says in Luke chapter 12 when he says fear not little flock for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the needy.

Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail where no thief approaches and no moth destroys for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

[30 : 21] Now this is a hard word for us but essentially what Jesus is saying is he's saying allow yourself to be open to the possibility of giving what you have to God.

Live with an open hand. Pray the prayer God all that I have belongs to you. Take it however you will and grow in my heart a compassion for others so that I'm willing to step in and I'm willing to address the needs that I see when they arise.

Jesus is interested in the kind of heart that is attached to heaven to eternity. It's attached to seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Jesus is saying you need to be dependent not self-reliant. You cannot be good like God. You need to understand essentially the essence of the Old Testament summarized in two statements.

Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. And as you come to understand a heart that is tuned to obedience to God and love for God it's going to reflect itself in a posture of generosity for others.

[31 : 44] And by the way it's not that Jesus is commending a works-based righteousness. Give all that you have and then you'll be saved. No. what he's trying to help this rich young ruler understand is that a heart of faith in salvation is a heart that depends on God for everything not just salvation.

That's what is at the heart of Jesus' command. Love God like God loves others.

1 John 3 16-18 brings us home where John says by this we know love. He laid down his life for us. We ought also to lay down our lives for the brothers.

If we're going to love like Jesus we're going to be those who lay our lives down for the saints. As Paul will say in 2 Corinthians he says he who is rich made himself poor so that we through his poverty might enjoy his riches.

By his grace we've been saved. The same posture exists in the heart of believers. A willingness to live with an open hand. A willingness to distribute to those who are in need.

[33 : 02] As we find in verse 17 if anyone has this world's goods sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him how does God's love abide in him?

Little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed in truth. let the rubber meet the road as it relates to dependence on God and a willingness to follow in God's steps by meeting the needs of those around you.

Fortunately our passage doesn't end there. God is dependable because God is good and in the final verses here we can depend on God because we have a God who saves.

You can depend on a God who saves and I draw these points out of verse 26 and 27 just look at those with me briefly we're going to just quickly move our way through these verses it says those who heard it said then who could be saved?

But he said what is impossible with man is possible with God. God overcomes the impossibility he overcomes our rebellion he overcomes our self-reliance he overcomes our blasphemy to give us himself through Jesus Christ and to draw us into faith in him and to forgive us of sins and bridge the gap and usher us into salvation to lead us home to heaven you can depend on a God who saves he overcomes the impossible in verses 23 to 25 Jesus wants to establish that no one can save themselves salvation only comes from the Lord notice it says in verse 23 when he heard these things speaking of the rich young ruler he became very sad for he was extremely rich Jesus seeing that he had become sad said how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God in Mark's account in Mark chapter 10 verse 22 it describes this man as being disheartened disheartened by the saying he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions it broke his heart it crushed him in his spirit in Matthew chapter 19 verse 22 it says when the young man heard this he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions in our passage he became very sad it's important to note as one commentator notes sadness does not always lead to repentance your sadness doesn't compare or correlate to repentance you can be sad you can be grieved you can be sorrowful it doesn't mean you're saved because only godly sorrow produces repentance and that kind of sorrow is the kind of sorrow that leads to turning it leads to dependence it leads to trust it leads to forgiveness it leads to looking to Jesus as the only way for salvation recognizing one's own deficiency and looking to god for help sadness does not always lead to repentance as we find here to receive the treasure he wants speaking of this rich young ruler to receive the treasure he wants the ruler must give up the treasure he has and that's true for every one of us in the room if we want to enjoy and experience the treasure of god we need to be willing to lay down whatever earthly treasures we have here give them over to god with an open hand entrust them to him so we can enjoy a life of confidence and faith and trust in him that he can show through even great trials that he's dependable that's what the christian life is intended to produce in us a life of dependence not a life of self reliance jesus confronts this man because no one can save themselves and then he turns in verse 26 and 27 to demonstrate once again god alone can save he is the god who saves verse 26 those who heard it said who then can be saved but he said the things which are impossible with men are possible with god christ's response to this situation of course shattered their conventional wisdom in their minds they felt as though this rich man had it all together he was the picture of god's favor and blessing on his life and he was

[37 : 58] a person who was devout at least externally in every way certainly this man is going to heaven but what this man could not understand is that it didn't depend on him his riches his goodness his supposed goodness his position in the community the apparent favor of god on his life was only a barrier was just an obstacle to true conversion because he was depending on that rather than depending on god luke chapter 12 verse 21 says the one who lays up treasure for himself is not rich towards god do we see our wealth as an opportunity for generosity do we see our resources as a means of growing in faith in god as a stewardship and a means of strengthening relationship with other believers that god has put us in community with are we recognizing that all of the blessings that god has given to us through financial wealth is a means by which we can grow in faith in him and by the way from the standpoint of where we stand as a people in America in relation to the rest of the world

I just did this quick survey if your combined household income is \$50,000 and my guess is that most everyone in this room is about almost there and you have a house \$50,000 and you have a

house then you are in the top 10% of the world's richest people we are a rich nation and so it's incumbent upon us as those who are putting our faith in God to demonstrate our dependence upon God the responsibility and the accountability we have is that much more finally in verses 28 and 30 we recognize that the dependence on God leads to great reward that it's not empty that we're not laying down the things that we have and turning them over to God in a way that doesn't have great benefits to us all throughout the gospels

Jesus is commending laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven but not just what happens there what we find in our passages there are benefits in the here and now notice verse 28 and Peter said see we have left our homes and followed you and he said to them truly I say to you there is no one who has left house or wife or brother or parent or child for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life there are benefits in the here and now for dependence on God and not just what we gain in terms of relationship with him and intimacy and seeing his faithfulness and growing in our walk with him but just look around look around at how your family has grown because of what Christ has accomplished in making us one together and this is what Jesus draws attention to his mother and brothers came to visit him and he says in Luke chapter 8 verse 21 he says this he answered them my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it whatever sacrifices you make for the sake of the kingdom today are petty compared to the all surpassing glory of God and the wonder of what

God has offered to us through the company of his saints through the fellowship that we enjoy through the giving and receiving that happens among believers as they are investing in one another and sharing with one another and encouraging and shepherding and helping the benefits that we enjoy in the economy that God has created through salvation that draws us in together and makes us one through Christ what a blessing nothing is lost everything is gained are we going to be those who are willing to walk in dependence day by day trusting in God for the daily bread willing to give God with an open hand saying whatever I have Lord it belongs to you help me to use it and help me to grow in my dependence on you through my stewardship and through blessing those around me may I demonstrate through my life that you are faithful and dependable you are trustworthy may the gospel shine through us as we depend on him this way let's pray

Lord thank you for the times that you put your finger in our chest and you help us to understand that the truths that are there are inescapable and really as we come to this passage we all walk away coming to realize that we're not a whole lot different from this rich young ruler in that we struggle with the idea of living with an open hand of entrusting our resources to you how radical how even reckless it may seem to sell our possessions and give to the poor that's not good stewardship Lord help us to understand what you're calling us to help us to understand the delicate balance between stewardship and faith and how using those resources that you've entrusted to us is a means by which we can bless others but also a means by which we can grow ourselves in dependence upon the one who will never let us down the God who is good and the

[44 : 29] God who saves make that picture ever more present press yourself your image into our life we pray in Jesus name amen God bless you have a great week