

Essential Truths for the Church

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[0:00] It's good to see all of you. I would encourage you to open up your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 1.! We'll begin our time in these next several weeks.

Over the next 11 weeks, the plan is to move through this little letter, letter to Timothy, and to do it about two messages for each chapter.

So it's going to be more of an overview than kind of a deep dive into this. But I think as we work our way through this letter, we'll be encouraged to see the things that really matter.

And the things that will help us, you see the subtitle there, the things that will help us to have habits of a healthy church. What are those marks of a healthy church? Those characteristics, those features that will help us to be the kind of people that God wants us to be.

You know, we live in a day and age where the world feels very unsettled. We live in a day and age where things seem to be topsy-turvy.

[1:06] Where things seem to be wonky, for lack of a better word. Where things are being, that we once believed were right, are being turned upside down, and are being painted in the light of being wrong.

But even when it comes to the church, there seems to be confusion over things that we would call basic Christian doctrine.

Let me give you some examples. Almost three out of four. Seventy-three percent. And by the way, this is evangelicals. People that go to churches like Maranatha across the country.

Seventy-three percent claim that Jesus is the first and greatest created being. Now, I don't know about you, but that is problematic for us.

For those who believe in Jesus as God, and especially in some of the readings that we had this morning about Colossians, where not only is he the head of the church, but he is the one who created all things.

[2:13] That by him, all things were created in heaven and earth. Fifty-eight percent believe that God accepts the worship of all religions, including Judaism and Islam.

More than half, about 56 percent, agree that worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church.

Now, again, when we think about the church and the makeup of the church, and as we're going to make our way through this study, Jesus as being the head of the church, having unified his people together and making us one body, in Christ we recognize the significance of our togetherness.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. And so much the more, as you see the day approaching. More than half, about 55 percent, of evangelicals believe that the Holy Spirit is a force, but not a personal being.

55 percent believe that everyone might sin a little, but that we are all basically good by nature. Almost half, about 44 percent, believe that Jesus was a great teacher, but was not God.

[3 : 38] These are some of the doctrines that we would say would be essential, foundational, not just for Christian living, but foundational for true, saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

And yet somehow, those so-called evangelicals, even in this day and age, as an evangelical world, we are caught up with the philosophies of this world, and captured away.

And so this letter to Timothy becomes that much more significant and important for us as we begin to understand the significance of truth as it relates to the Word of God, and the essential pieces that God has put in place to help us to be the kind of people that God has called us to be.

It's possible, and maybe even likely, that in hearing these statistics, it creates a measure of alarm in us. What are we to do? How are we to respond?

What resources has God given to us in order to be the kinds of people that He has called us to be? As we make our way through this little letter of 1 Timothy, we're going to see that preeminently, God has given Himself.

[4 : 55] God has given Himself to the church that He will build the church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. But God has also given us the resources of the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, and the people of God.

That these beautiful privileges, and these beautiful gifts of God are given to us as His people to help us to understand who God is, and to be preserved in such times as we're living in today.

As we think about the writing and the time of this little letter, 1 Timothy, we come to see some things in the beginning parts of this letter that will help us to understand that whatever Paul is writing about and whatever situation he's addressing, it is not the kind of situation that would have been true until after what we find in Acts chapter 20.

There, Paul had warned the church about a potential of heresy, a potential of doctrinal drift, but it hadn't yet happened. Acts chapter 20, verses 29 to 31 says, I know, and he's speaking by the way, the Apostle Paul has gathered together the pastors, the elders of the church in Ephesus.

He's meeting with them to kind of give them one last final pep talk, as it were, these parting words to encourage and challenge them in relation to their responsibility with the church.

[6 : 24] I know that after my departure, he says, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them.

Therefore, be alert. Remembering that for three years, I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. Now, just to pause for a moment and to draw this out just a little bit, I want you to recognize the significance of what Paul is saying to these leaders of the church, these pastors of the church, these elders and spiritual authorities.

He wants them to recognize, to be alert, because even within the midst of those spiritual leaders, there will become this tendency towards spiritual and doctrinal drift.

And that's exactly what the Apostle Paul will write to Timothy about in this letter. The unthinkable has happened. The unimaginable is about to unfold.

And the Apostle Paul is going to bring a strong word to Timothy to try to help to address this issue that the Apostle Paul had touched on with the elders many years before.

[7 : 45] We find throughout this letter this issue of doctrine and truth and set against the backdrop of what was being taught in the day. We'll come to see that through our study.

And coming to 1 Timothy 3, verses 14 and 15, we begin to recognize that what God has given to the church to safeguard it from these kinds of things is the church itself.

Notice in verses 14 and 15 of chapter 3, just kind of provides a brief purpose statement for this letter. Paul says to Timothy, I hope to come to you soon, but I'm writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

In other words, Timothy, I want you to know how to lead God's church so that it points to the living God. I want you, Timothy, to know the significance of the truth, that the church is the pillar and buttress of the truth.

If it fails there, it fails everywhere. In the battleground, or the war for your faith, the war for salvation will be fought on the battleground of truth.

[9:07] And so, as we come to understand and recognize the significance of the church, we come to recognize the seriousness of truth and how that truth is meant to preserve and protect and help and guide its people.

And what Paul will do at the very beginning of this little letter is to draw out some of those foundational truths that will help to orient Timothy and orient this listening church as they're listening to Timothy read this letter that Paul had given to him.

Timothy will be reading this letter to the church and instructing both Timothy and this church on the things that matter. Paul will begin with those foundational truths right out of the gate and we'll see the first one in verse one.

Remember the head of the church. Remember the head of the church. And who is the head of the church? Church family? Who is the head? Christ is the head of the church.

Notice, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the command of God, our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, our hope.

[10:17] To Timothy, my true child in the faith, grace and mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord. The apostle Paul, as an apostle, wants Timothy to understand and recognize that he is a sent one.

Paul is sent by Christ. Jesus is not only the head of the church, Jesus is the one who sends out his representatives and all the ministry that we do in the church is meant to be directed to Christ, governed by Christ, and oriented to the worship and glory of God in Christ.

Paul, as a sent one, orients his entire life and being under the banner of sent one from Christ. first. And as Paul's pattern, he consistently orients his readers to recognize that while he may be the mouthpiece of the word of God to these churches, he wants them to understand where this word is coming from and who this word speaks about.

So that in Romans chapter 1, verse 1, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

In 1 Corinthians 1.11, he says, Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. Galatians 1.1, Paul, an apostle, not from man nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

[11:54] In Paul's letter to the church of Ephesus, Ephesians 1.1, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. than in Philippians 1.1, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.

Do you get the sense that the apostle Paul has come to recognize who really matters in his ministry? He has come to a place of recognizing that every part of his ministry is meant to please the Lord.

That who he is as a person is because of the work of Christ in his life and so that the direction of his life and everything that Paul intends to accomplish in life is meant to point to the glory of Jesus Christ.

I remember several years ago when I was asked to teach along with some people in Russia and there we were introducing ourselves and as was the custom, we tend to introduce ourselves by things about us, you know, my name is Andrew, I'm a pastor of Maranatha Baptist, I have six kids, I've been married for X number of years, I went to a certain, it was X number of years then it's different now, 27 years, 27 years, thank you, get that right.

I can't do what Andy does, he does the months and days and hours, I don't have it factored, I'm good enough to get close enough to the years. but assigning certain qualities to who we are, designating ourselves by what we do rather than designating ourselves like what Paul does here and so we introduced ourselves as teachers and then we went around the room and each of the students introduced themselves, hi, my name is Andre and I'm a son of the living God, hi, my name is Vadim and I have been bought by the blood of Christ around and around and around the room.

[14:00] Their identity was directed to Jesus and what Christ has accomplished for them. Paul does the same thing here, Paul wants Timothy to know that the reason why he has ministry in the first place is because of what Christ has accomplished in his life and so that everything he does in ministry needs to be directed towards the glory of God.

Why does Paul do this? Well, because the church belongs to Christ. It points to Christ. It's meant to obey Christ, to please Christ, to preach the message of Christ, to represent Christ in the world so that others can enjoy that same relationship through faith in Christ and forgiveness of Christ.

The church is preeminently belongs to Christ. It's his body. as Paul will tell the church of Ephesus in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 22 and 23.

He put all things under his feet. He gave him, speaking of Christ, as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

We could spend the rest of our time speaking about the beauty of Jesus Christ and unpacking the words that the apostle Paul puts here by the command of God our Savior, he says there in verse 1, and of Christ Jesus.

[15:23] Our hope, we could speak the rest of our time about those two words alone, the beauty of Christ and what he's accomplished for his church and for Paul.

But I want to just press in a bit and unpack this word by the command of Christ, the command of Christ. This will become a continuing theme as we work our way through this letter of 1 Timothy.

Thirteen times the apostle Paul will use words that point to command or urge or encourage or charge. These words that are laden with authority, laden with power, laden with direction and exhortation.

These are the kinds of words that the apostle Paul will use for Timothy. This word here in verse 1 is meant to describe authority, the authority that has been given by the apostle Paul through direct command of Christ and now delegated to Paul and to Timothy now to exert that same authority on behalf of Christ for his church.

This word refers to a royal command that is not negotiable but is mandatory. Paul was following this non-negotiable command of God.

[16:43] This command of God to carry out ministry to the church as a sent one. We're going to see these kinds of words throughout our study in 1 Timothy.

I've placed in your outline this morning a list of all of those examples, those places throughout this letter where these words are being used.

Urge, command, charge. I want to briefly just walk through them so you get a sense of the authority, spiritual authority and leadership that Paul is exercising over Timothy and the kind of leadership and authority that Timothy is to exert over this church.

Notice in chapter 1 verse 3, I urged you, that is the first one of these words, I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons, that's the word command, certain persons not to teach any other doctrine.

Then in verse 5, the aim of our command is love that issues from a pure heart. In verse 18, this command or this charge, he says, I entrust to you, Timothy, my child in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you.

[18:01] In chapter 2, verse 1, he says, first of all, then I urge or I command that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.

In chapter 4, verse 11, he says, command and teach these things. Then in chapter 5, verse 1, he says, do not rebuke an older man but encourage him, that's the same word he's been using throughout, for urge or command them as you would a father.

In chapter 5, verse 7, command these things as well so that you may be without reproach. In chapter 5, verse 21, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I charge you or I command you to keep these rules without prejudging.

In chapter 6, verse 2, at the very end of that verse, it says, teach and urge or command these things. In chapter 6, verse 13, I charge you or I command you in the presence of God.

And then finally, in chapter 6, verse 17, as for the rich in this present age, charge them or command them not to be haughty. You get the sense that the apostle Paul is exercising authority.

[19:17] This delegated authority that is issued from the command of God for the apostle Paul and the same authority exercised under the operation and instruction of God from his word to command the same things in the church.

Paul's life and ministry pointed to the Lord Jesus and the life and ministry that we are all having wherever that ministry takes you. If that ministry takes you into the school, if that ministry takes you into the workplace, if that ministry takes you into your community, your neighborhood, wherever that ministry takes you, you must be a representative of Christ.

How does the world see Christ in you? Paul was sent by Christ. In verse 2, we see that Timothy will be sustained by Christ.

So while Paul is sent by Christ, he wants to encourage Timothy to understand that whatever strengthening, motivating, preserving power that Timothy will enjoy, it will come from one source and one source only, from Jesus Christ himself.

Notice, to Timothy, my true child in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from where? From God, the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[20:40] There's so much we could say about the relationship of the Apostle Paul to Timothy and how that all came about and how young Timothy was when he was kind of commissioned by his church and kind of given over to the Apostle Paul for the work of ministry and growing and learning and being established and the work of his, Timothy's mother and grandmother, Lois and Eunice and the work that they did to train up and raise Timothy in the right things.

2 Timothy 3.15 says, and from a child, Timothy, you've known the Holy Scriptures. Well, who did that? Well, his mom and grandma did that. Lois and Eunice did that. From a child, you've known the Holy Scriptures that have made you wise to salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in a very real sense, as a young man, Timothy was handed over to Paul to do ministry and to learn ministry from him and as a result of the investment of the Apostle Paul, there was this deep affection that happens between these two men and Timothy becomes useful for ministry so the Apostle Paul writes, in Philippians 2, verses 19-23, speaking and describing his usefulness.

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I too may be cheered by the news of you for I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.

No one like him who will care for you like Timothy for they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ, but you know Timothy's proven character, his proven worth.

[22 : 24] How as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me. The Apostle Paul in sending Timothy to Philippi and sending Timothy here to Ephesus and not only a representative of the Apostle Paul but especially as a representative of Jesus Christ in helping to convey the doctrines that will preserve this church.

But in all of the foray and all of the distress and all of the frustration that happens with spiritual leadership and all the conflict that Timothy is about to experience in following through with the commands that Paul is about to give, all of the hardship he's going to face, the only answer, the only help that he will ever give will be help that will come from God.

grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Timothy, look to God for your help. Look to God for your help and salvation and encouragement and strength.

So we need to remember, we need to remember that Christ is the head of the church. We need to understand that he is preeminent over his church. In verses 3 to 4 we come to see the foundation of the church.

Remember, the foundation of the church. Not only the head of the church but the foundation. And here we're going to see in verses 3 and 4 that foundation is the foundation of truth.

[23 : 56] The foundation of truth. He says, as I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine.

Any different doctrine. Now you may or may not know that the church of Ephesus was established on the apostle Paul's third missionary journey. You might remember that the apostle Paul on his second missionary journey had tried to go to Asia but God closed the door.

He tried to go to Bithynia but God closed the door. So he gets this Macedonian call in a vision. He ends up going to Philippi and the ministry will happen there. On his return trip to Jerusalem he stops in to Ephesus and would love to have stayed but he's unable.

He comes back now on the third missionary journey and we find the effects of that work. By the way it was a port city in Asia. Now finally Paul is in Asia and here's what happens in his ministry in Ephesus.

In Acts chapter 19 verses 8 to 10 it says this, And he entered the synagogues and for three months spoke boldly reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

[25 : 14] But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief speaking evil of the way before the congregation he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him reasoning daily in the hall of Tyranus.

This continued for two years so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord both Jews and Greeks. This was a church that was established on the truth.

A truth that the apostle Paul like no other city had spent significant time investing in the leaders and the people of this church so they were full up with the doctrine of God.

The apostle Paul was dealing with the leaders in Ephesus in such a way that unlike any other church that I'm familiar with in the book of Acts in particular had access to one of the preeminent scholars of the day the apostle Paul.

And this ministry in Ephesus flourished to such a degree that we find in Acts chapter 19 verse 20 that the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

[26 : 23] And so while God may have shut the door to the apostle Paul's ministry to Asia at large here he is in this port city of Ephesus and a result of his ministry there in teaching the word of God it says all of Asia heard the word.

Jews and Gentiles. God had a better plan. God's better plan was to send the to mobilize his people to make disciples in that place.

God allowed the apostle Paul to help them understand the excuse me the significance of doctrine and so Ephesus becomes the center of Christian activity.

Not only would Timothy remain here but will church history will tell us that the apostle John also spent a great deal of time in this city. But notice in verse 3 what the apostle Paul says.

He says charge some that they teach no other doctrine. This word other doctrine is a word that the apostle Paul kind of invents for his purposes.

[27 : 33] He puts two words together. This word other and there are two Greek words for other one is different of a different kind and one is different of the same kind.

Here the word is different of another kind. So it's not even close to the original. It's a gospel that is totally unrelated. It's a gospel that is totally different totally distant.

The apostle Paul will use the same kind of word for other when he's speaking to the church of Galatia and helping to expose the teaching that's happening there. In Galatians chapter 1 verses 6 to 8 he says I'm astounded that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

not that there is another one but there are some who would trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we are an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one that we preach to you let him be accursed.

Whatever was taking place in Ephesus whatever the apostle Paul is addressing is a different kind of teaching that is totally unrelated to the original and because it was totally unrelated it was totally unnecessary and dangerous and risky for those living in that city to hear.

[29 : 03] It was going to totally dislodge their hearts the possibility of their hearts being diverted and taken away in order for the church to remain healthy it needed to be established in the truth but in order for the church to be healthy it also needed to be sustained by faithful leaders sustained by faithful leaders notice I urged you he says there again in verse 3 when I was going to Macedonia remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine Timothy was exhorted to exert spiritual leadership these disputes over secondary matters where the Bible was not clear became the subject of conversation and argument what seemed to get the most attention were these myths and genealogies there seems to be this competition that is happening among the various leaders in the church whoever they were they were they were focused and they concentrated their energy on things that were uncertain things that were unhelpful things that gathered a following to themselves things that led to disputes things that exposed these teachers as being ignorant and unfit for the task as we work our way through the letter of

Timothy we'll see more of the flavor of this teaching as it addresses various areas of life but Timothy notice was not to remain passive Timothy was not to remain on the sidelines Timothy was not to stand at a distance Timothy was to engage if he was going to help this church remain as a pillar and buttress of the truth he needed to remove these empty talkers Timothy though young was encouraged to exercise his spiritual authority to admonish these teachers to cease Paul's instruction is clear charge certain persons command certain persons and this word by the way is aggressive it's stern to command to order to direct to give instruction it's a word that's used both in the military and in legal terms so in other words the apostle Paul is telling him to exercise the authority as a general or as a judge to be strict to be official to be authoritative to command these teachers to stop this is forceful this is not gentle this is direct and uncompromising and strong but this was for the sake of maintaining and establishing truth because truth alone would help this church to remain and to stand the test of time demonstrates the kind of leadership and authority that Timothy was to exercise over this congregation and we turn to our next purpose statement remember the purpose of the church why was Timothy supposed to act this way what was the motivation for this kind of command this kind of force this kind of pressure we find the purpose of that command in verses 5 to 7 notice the aim of our charge is love love that issues from a pure heart a good conscience sincere faith certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussions desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions this word for aim is the word tell us it's the word end it's the word that points to result or purpose the reason why I'm telling you to do this

Timothy is because of love that is the goal that is the motive that is the destination those are the kinds of people that real truth is meant to create to help to engage and nurture individuals who love one another individuals who first have a love for God and then have a love for one another Paul's directive seems forceful and strong but underneath the surface of this command is a desire for love Paul understands the significance of the spiritual drift the doctrinal drift that can happen and what that will do in the hearts and minds of individuals who are led astray these individuals who are wondering their faith is not sincere and this is a word that is contrasted with hypocrisy it's not the kind of hypocritical faith but the kind of sincere faith we find a little more of their motivation in 1st Timothy chapter 6 verse 5 speaking about the same group of individuals talking about constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth imagining that godliness is a means of gain under it all was a love for self and especially a love for comfort and money and promoting their own welfare they had wandered away this wandering away comes from a verb that means to be wide of the mark or shoot past the goal any of you who've understood the significance of wandering maybe you've been on a trail and you have gotten lost on this trail how many individuals even over the past year because of wandering and hiking out in open spaces especially in places where there's no water or resources the danger of those kinds of things going back several years we had a wanderer in our home and one of our kids who go nameless one of our children at age one and a half my wife and I we were out counseling an individual and this little person decided that they were going to explore and wander on their own and so they walked out of the front door as a little toddler trying to figure out and find where to go and they wandered across our front lawn they crossed the street they wanted to go to the park and there they were enjoying the park and no one knew where they were the wandering that opens us up to danger kind of wandering especially as a year and a half year old and fortunately there was someone who saw all of this happen saw the door open saw this little wanderer walk out and toddle down the stairs and across the street over the park saw this young person in our home brought him back and yes

I blew it didn't I you were all thinking of it anyway so the danger of wandering and it wasn't long after the same little wanderer decided to follow after his mom who was taking a dog for the walk at two years old walked all the way down the street about a hundred yards and then turned the corner and hey neighbor across the street is that your little person walking down the street we understand the significance of wandering and if anybody of us understand the significance or the danger of wandering then this element of love is what's going to bolster our heart to respond we cannot be silent we cannot allow wanderers to have their way we cannot as people who love stand at a distance because we're concerned about the potential conflict or the potential risk of relationship we will engage we'll do what we have to do to draw those wanderers back because of love love for those who are part of our body our fellowship finally remember the people of the church remember the people of the church it says here in verse 8 now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully understanding this the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient for the ungodly and sinner for the unholy and profane for those who strike their fathers and mothers for murderers the sexually immoral men who practice homosexuality enslavers liars perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed

God with which I have been entrusted remembered the people of the church now I know that this is about the law and the law is good but the law is good because it helps you and I consistently come to terms with who we are every one of us in this room are in this list and by God's grace because of what we find at the end in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with whom we've been entrusted it is that gospel that has taken us from where we are and has now placed us into Christ and has given us access to his righteousness but every one of us in this room fit the category of sinners that the apostle Paul is talking about here don't forget who you are and as we come to terms with who we are we come to realize the wonder of the grace of

[39 : 46] God for us we come to terms with understanding that if this is his church and he's bought us with his precious blood then we have an obligation as his people to please him and worship him and to seek to do that which is consistent with his standard Jesus himself says this in Luke chapter 5 verse 22 kind of a summary of what we read I have not come he says to call the righteous but sinners to repentance there's this equalizing force that happens when the law is used the right way the law is meant to expose who we really are and the law is meant to point us to the reality of our need that need that can only be found in Jesus Christ himself and so even this morning even now the question is is the law for you have you come to a place of recognizing that you're in this list that you are one of the number of the unholy and profane one of the number of those who perhaps have even stricken your father or mother one who's been sexually immoral one who struggles and has maybe even participated in homosexuality one who's a liar a perjurer

I love this all encompassing category and anything else that is out of bounds with sound doctrine have you come to the place of recognizing who you are as a sinner and have you come to understand that you will never enjoy freedom from sin without the forgiveness of God have you done that have you enjoyed and experienced the benefit of the saving cleansing power of God has he made you one with himself by forgiving your sin paying for it on the cross rising again and and and for those of us who've come to terms with that and have recognized who we really are has it created in our hearts a tenderness to those who are like what we were rather than posturing ourselves as those who are looking down on all those ungodly riffraff that we've come to a place of recognizing oh they're not a whole lot unlike what I was has it created in your heart a tenderness to those who also need

Jesus and a zeal and desire to make sure that the people that God has put in your way whether they're neighbors or family or students fellow classmates whoever they might be is there a burden on your heart to use the law in a way to lead them to the great law giver and the one who alone fulfilled the law Jesus Christ have you placed your trust in him have you given your life to him have you asked him to be your savior to forgive you of sin and to exercise his authority over your life may God help us to be those who walk in step as a healthy church in coming to know our head in coming to understand the foundation of the church and that is the truth of the word that are oriented in a way that love drives us and so as disciples of Christ what does Jesus say to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion they will know you're my disciples by your love do the people in this world know that you belong to Christ because of the love they see in your life and not polluted kind of love not blended kind of love not worldly love but the kind of love we're talking about here the uncompromising love of God that comes through the gospel that kind of love and it's God helping us as the people of the church to come to terms with our desperate need for a savior

Lord thank you for this great word and for the opportunity we have to look over the next several weeks be reminded of what a healthy church looks like Lord we as we evaluate our own lives we know how far we need to go may that not discourage us or disappoint us but Lord may it invigorate us to be the kinds of people you've called us to be thank you for this opportunity this morning to look into the scriptures thank you for Jesus for the example that he said thank you for the spirit and your indwelling reality in our lives enabling and strengthening us thank you for the word of God that gives us clear instructions and Lord thank you for the people of God that can encourage us and strengthen us and even confront us when necessary God may we be faithful servants and representatives of you in Jesus name amen God bless you have a great week miracle

Thank you.