

Gospel Partners Honour One Another

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- [0 : 00] All right. I'd like to invite forward the kids for Junior Church. This is age 6 through grade 6, so come on forward, kids. We're going to be learning about the covenant God made with King David, which is very appropriate considering those of us who remain will be celebrating and remembering the covenant God made with us through Jesus Christ.
- When his body was broken, his blood was shed on the cross. So we're here to send these kids off to learn from Wendy and Mrs. Lindsay.
- So let me pray for you guys. Father, we thank you for this relationship that you formed with us, and I pray that as these kids learn the promises that you made to King David, Lord God, they may come away understanding that you're a God who keeps his promises.
- Who tells us the truth and is faithful to us. I pray that you may encourage them with this and help them point them towards Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. All right. Off you go, kids.
- Now, as for the rest of us, we're going to be hearing God's word to us this morning. And I'm going to start out with a bit of a story here.
- [1 : 20] I don't... Not really a story kind of guy, but in terms of, you know, telling these things. But there's a story about two brothers with the last name Jackson who ran a business in a small town.
- So a bit of a family business, but not a good sort of family business. Over the course of many years, the two Jackson brothers have cheated and swindled and robbed the people of the town.
- They've generally stolen from everyone they ever did business with. So the entire town and the community around it absolutely reviles the Jackson brothers. They despise them.
- Everyone is aware that they are disreputable, that they are dishonest. And then one day, one of the Jackson brothers dies unexpectedly from a heart attack.
- Now, these two brothers have never attended a church in their lives. But the remaining Jackson decides he wants a funeral for his brother that brings his brother respect and honor in the community.
- [2 : 27] And he knows that one of the little churches in town has a leaky roof that is going to cost several grand to repair. So, you know, maybe that actually sounds a little bit familiar.
- Anyway. So he goes down to the local pastor and he offers to give the church \$1,000 if the pastor is willing to host the funeral service at his church.
- And then he offers the pastor an extra bonus of \$5,000 if he will refer to the dead brother as a saint during the eulogy. So, as you can imagine, the pastor, who is a man of integrity, is really troubled by this sort of request.
- He is willing to hold the funeral service in his church building. Okay. He's willing to do that. But calling the dead Jackson brother a saint would be a disgusting and transparent lie.
- But he knows the church roof is in really bad shape. He knows the congregation does not have the money to fix it. This is a small town. Salaries are low. And word in a small town gets around really fast about this sort of thing.

[3 : 39] Everyone in town hears about the remaining brother's offer. And they are curious whether the pastor is going to do what he asks. So, on the day of the funeral, that remaining Jackson brother is very pleased to see the church is packed with all these townspeople.

The service begins. The pastor starts off at the usual prayers with the traditional remarks that he would give at any funeral. And finally, near the end of the service, he pauses.

And he looks at the body of the deceased Jackson brother in the casket for a few seconds. And then he turns toward the crowd that is seated in his church.

And then the whole church gets really quiet. And the pastor says, As you all know, the departed was an awful individual who robbed, cheated, swindled, and stole from anyone he ever did business with.

But compared to his brother, he was a saint. Now, imagine now I'm going to get a few spectators at the next funeral that I do.

[4 : 53] It's expected on such an occasion that we are going to find whatever way we can to praise and to honor the person who has departed. For some people, that's easier than others.

But we're looking for any reason that we can find to honor that individual. We'll find some way to praise them. What could we say if we wanted to honor one another in life or in death?

What good should we look for in one another's life? Well, let me begin with prayer. And then we're going to take a look at that from Philippians chapter 2. Our God and Father, we want to know and to understand from your word what do we look for in honoring one another?

What would that look like? What would it be like to create that sort of culture in our church? Where we can actually, with integrity, speak the truth and speak encouraging words.

I pray today that we would, you would open your word to let us see the importance of this in the church. Convince us of the need for this. And give us wisdom and eyes to see what you are seeing in one another.

[5 : 59] Lord God, may the words that we speak be the kind of words that our Father speaks to us. Lord, give us this sort of heart. Amen. Okay, we're going to see honoring one another happen.

Not just commanded, but actually happening in the Apostle Paul's letter to the first century church in the town of Philippi. So, you'll want to take your Bibles and turn to Philippians chapter 2.

Philippians chapter 2. And one of the beautiful things about some of, one of the things I love about the letters of the Apostle Paul is a lot of times, he'll tell us to do things, but he will actually model it in his letter.

He will do the very things. And we can watch the way he does it. Watch the way he speaks. Learn from him. And follow his example, just as we do with Jesus Christ our Lord. So, now notice what he does in verses 19 through 30 of Philippians chapter 2.

I'm going to read these. He writes, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.

[7 : 09] For I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth.

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.

And I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also. I've thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need.

For he has been longing for you all, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed, he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men.

[8 : 22] For he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me. This is the word of the Lord for us. Praising and honoring the things that are happening here in this passage.

This is something that we don't do as often as we should. We can go back a few generations to perhaps our grandparents or our great-grandparents, and we found that there was a tendency when raising their children to err on the side of offering little praise, withholding praise from their children, because they were concerned that their children would become too proud.

On the other hand, modern parents have tended to swing the complete opposite direction, being taught that children should be praised incessantly and regularly, and told how great and wonderful they are.

And maybe you've seen over-praised children grow up to be proud and self-absorbed. And so, okay, you're turned off on the idea of praising people. Maybe you carry some idea, okay, there's something really not good about praising people.

It does bad things. Maybe you're even afraid to admit it. Maybe you even get a bit of a tiny thrill when people are taken down a little bit of a notch.

[9 : 44] Praising people can sometimes make us uncomfortable or even receiving praise. But here's the thing. In the body of Christ, in the family of God, on the one hand, we do not conform ourselves to a culture that is all about the honor and celebration of the cult of the individual.

We're not here to elevate one another as little gods. Neither do we react and do the opposite, tearing each other down, refusing to utter words of honor and praise for one another.

We do things God's way in the family of God. And in God's eyes, honor is a big deal in relationships. A church family in which honor is absent is a church family in which shame is present.

When honor for one another is absent, then we will find that shame becomes present in our church family. So if we're going to be partners working together to advance the gospel, the good news of Jesus' kingdom, of how God has sent his son into this world as its king, then we need to be reminded that our partnership is strengthened, our gospel partners are encouraged when we honor and support one another in this way.

That is what gospel partners do together. Gospel partners honor one another. Gospel partners honor one another. Gospel partners honor one another. Now, again, we're not saying that we're doing this because that's the right thing to say or it fits our culture's idea of affirmation and praise.

[11 : 25] We're saying this because the Holy Spirit has spoken through the words of his apostle. In the 13 verses that we just read, that we just looked at, if you look through it and you look through how many commands does Paul give here, there's really only one pair of commands.

And that pair of commands is found near the end of the passage in verse 29. Now, Paul has been writing from his imprisonment in Rome, and he has promised to send Epaphroditus, this member of the Philippian church, that has come to visit him.

He's promised to send Epaphroditus back to the church in Philippi with this letter he's writing. And then he tells the Philippians, here's how you're going to greet Epaphroditus when he returns to you. He gives them instructions. He says, Receive him in the Lord with all joy and honor such men.

That's the only command that Paul gives here. Receive him in the Lord with all joy. Honor such men. Honor men like this. Now, honoring your brothers and sisters in Christ, that can feel a little awkward, as we've mentioned, especially if you're not used to it, especially if it's not really the culture you grew up in.

It might feel a little embarrassing because you don't know how this is going to be received exactly, and it might even feel a little intimidating. You aren't always sure what to say or how to say it.

[12 : 50] But God wants us to err on the side of being aggressive and honoring one another. Because that's what his servant Paul does here and what he models for us.

Err on the side of being aggressive and honoring one another. He wants us to look for reasons to celebrate one another, be on the lookout for reasons to respect one another, to think highly of one another, and not just to think it, but to say it.

So his servant Paul gives the Philippians two reasons why they should honor people like Epaphroditus and like Timothy. And the first reason, the first of the two reasons that he gives is that they're concerned for each other.

Gospel partners honor one another for their concern. Gospel partners honor one another for their concern. And you can see this concern so clearly. I mean, concern is all over these verses.

Paul begins by heaping praise on Timothy for this very reason. And look in verse 19. Here's where you see it show up. He says, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.

[14 : 05] For I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. So Paul is marveling at Timothy's attitude. He absolutely loves it.

Paul loves the fact that Timothy is always wondering how the Philippians are doing. They are on his mind. He is always praying for them. He is always looking for ways to benefit them.

Paul can trust that Timothy, when he shows up at Philippi, he is going to do everything that is needed. He is going to do a lot of good there. Paul is unconcerned about sending Timothy there.

This is such a rare character quality. If you know someone like this, whose heart is one of concern for others, single that person out for praise.

Because individuals like this, they are worth more than all the diamond mines in the world. This is important. This cuts against the grain of our own self-oriented way of thinking.

[15 : 15] Our forefather Adam, he sinned, and we too have joined him in rebelling against God. Part of that nature within each one of us is we are now each one of us trying to establish ourselves as our own little gods.

We're trying to elevate ourselves to save us from our own shame. Now, we know that the world doesn't revolve around us, but we're trying to remedy that situation with our actions.

And that's the way that most of us are. And unfortunately, that is actually the way that many churchgoers are. Paul is honest about that. He knows that. Look at verse 21. He says, They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

He actually sees Timothy as special and unique. Sometimes, I've heard so many times people say, Oh, the church is full of hypocrites. And that becomes their rationale for walking away from the church in contempt.

As if that's news. Paul's writing this in the first century. They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's different. Timothy's different. So we honor men like this.

[16:27] He knows that many professing Christians are occupied with their own interests. They don't have eyes of concern for the interests of others. And so when he sees somebody who is different from that, someone like Timothy, someone, a gem like that man, he singles Timothy out.

Because Timothy does seek the interests of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ loves the Philippian church, so Timothy does too.

Because that's what you do when you love Jesus. When you love him, you don't resent the church. You don't have contempt for the church. You have a love for the church.

You have a heart for the church, warts and all. And Timothy exemplifies what Paul wrote about in verses four and five. When Paul writes of this mindset, he says, let each of you look, let each of you look, not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. That last sentence there in verse five, that tells us, this is the mindset of Jesus Christ.

[17:38] Jesus recognized that looking out for the interests of his church, that was going to cost him something. He meant walking the pathway of the cross, of humbling himself.

Now here's what Jesus Christ has sacrificed for his people. And you can read about it as you look up to verse five. He says, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, by being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. So you see, Jesus Christ, he loved his church, he loved you and me, and he loved his father in heaven so much that he chose to be one of us.

And though he was God, he did not use his divine status to his own advantage. And I want to stop there for a moment because sometimes people look out for the interests of others for the purpose of their own advantage.

I see this often, people pleasing. I always have my eyes on other people, trying to keep them happy so that they will think well of me. So they will take care of my interests if I pay attention to theirs.

[19:07] Sometimes we look on the outside like we're doing this, like we're utterly concerned with the interests of others and neglecting our own, but we're just doing it as a way to get our own, to get an advantage for ourselves.

And that's manipulation. And that's a fear of man. But that's not the way Jesus is operating. That's not why he's looking out for the interests of others. He was God, but he didn't use his divine status and twist it for his own advantage.

Instead, he became a man and he became our champion. He became the second Adam, the perfect man. He stands to this day as our representative before God.

And he lived the perfect, righteous life that we were meant to live. He took the punishment for our sinful rebellion that we should have received. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

That is the pathway that a person whose heart is for others must take. There's no way around it. That is the concern that Jesus Christ has for us. That's the concern that he has for you.

[20 : 17] And that's what it cost him. It cost him his dignity. It cost him his glory. It cost him his life. And so when you find someone who shows that sort of concern for God's people, that sort of concern for the church, you have found someone whose life has taken on the shape of Jesus' life, whose pathway through life is following Jesus' pathway.

Someone who is experiencing and portraying the glory of God. Someone whose life becomes a picture of the gospel message. And that's why Paul writes back in Philippians 1, verse 8, he says, God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

It's not just Timothy. Paul himself, all throughout this letter, is showing the kind of concern that Jesus Christ has for the church at Philippi. Jesus Christ has this concern for his church in that first century town, just as he has a concern for Squamish Baptist Church today.

And Paul has learned this concern from Christ. And you can even see it where he talks about, verse 28, he wants them to hear the news about Epaphroditus as he says, so that I may be less anxious.

Because their anxiety, their concern, their waiting, wondering what is happening, that troubles Paul. He doesn't want them to experience that.

[21 : 46] He actually feels a godly anxiety about it because he's concerned for them and for their welfare. He's learned that from Christ and then Timothy, in turn, has learned it from Paul.

And Epaphroditus has also learned it from Paul because he writes in verse 25, I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need.

For he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Now the background, what you can pick up from these little comments that Paul is making is that Epaphroditus, we learn in the book of Philippians, that he has brought a financial gift from the Philippian church.

That's important because Paul is under house arrest and in the Roman system when you were in prison awaiting trial, you had to support yourself financially. If you ran out of money, good luck.

You couldn't go out and make more because you're under arrest. So Paul is running out of money in prison and then Epaphroditus shows up with money from the Philippian church.

[22 : 58] They've raised some money to support him in prison. But thanks to this journey, so, you know, traveling can, you know, sometimes when you travel you can get sick, right? Like the last year I took a couple flights out east that ended up the first time with me getting a cold and the second time with me getting COVID.

So, you know, traveling can often get you sick but it's nothing like traveling was in those days. Traveling was an arduous journey. There was no guarantees. Bad stuff could happen.

It was asking God for traveling mercies was no joke back then. Really needed. And he, in fact, became sick on his journey so ill that he almost died. Now, what's fascinating is Epaphroditus, by the mercy of God, Paul says, he has recovered.

He's back to health. But now he's more worried than ever because the last thing the Philippian church had heard, the last news update they had heard in a day when there's, you know, there's no cell phones, there's no updates, it's like news travels as fast as a messenger will get to them.

They've heard that Epaphroditus has fallen seriously ill to the point of death and they haven't heard that he's gotten better yet. They're just sitting there waiting for the next news update probably for weeks.

[24 : 14] And Epaphroditus, this breaks his heart. He cannot bear to think that they are in that terrible pain as they wait for news of him.

He is so concerned for their welfare, you know, in our day and age, for their emotional welfare, we suppose we could say, their pain becomes his pain. That's the sort of concern, the sort of empathy that we honor when we see it in one another.

You see all over the kinds of relationships that are existing around Paul thanks to the gospel message of Jesus Christ and thanks to people whose lives have taken that same shape themselves.

So brothers and sisters, if you know of someone in this church, if you know of another believer, even at another church, if you know of anyone who is showing concern like this, you receive that person with joy, you enjoy that person and you honor them.

Gospel partners honor one another for their concern. That's what we do. And then the second reason that gospel partners honor and praise each other is for their proven worth.

[25 : 30] Gospel partners honor one another for their proven worth. They're eager to praise other believers but they don't just praise anybody who shows up and seems to be doing a lot of good things.

There's a lot of people, you think of some of the parables Jesus tells of people who receive the word with joy but then quickly fall away. Paul is less interested in people who are sort of a flash in the pan, show up, seem full of joy, seem excited, seem to be doing good things and then times get tough or they get distracted and then they disappear.

He's also not interested necessarily in people who seem to be full of charisma, full of talent, full of success. He's more interested in people who stay the course, who keep showing up when life is hard, who remain faithful to God and faithful to one another day in, day out over long periods of time.

Earnest obedience that just keeps showing up. That consistent faithful commitment to the interests of Jesus Christ is what he honors.

That's what we mean by proven worth. Think of it like gold that has been tested and proven that endures. Remember what he says in verse 21 about so many of the professing Christians he knew.

[27 : 01] He said, they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But then he turns to Timothy in the very next verse and he says, you know, you know, you've experienced, you've seen it.

Over time, Timothy's proven worth how as a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel. Timothy has proven himself to be consistent and faithful.

He is so committed to his partnership in the gospel, the partnership that he has with Paul, that Paul refers to him as the son that he never had. As a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel.

And oh, that God would raise up in this church a generation of young disciples of Jesus Christ. That those of you who are older would see them as your own sons and daughters.

As those who are taking up the mantle of gospel partnership to this town, to this world. Who are carrying on the good news of God's kingdom.

[28 : 11] And who in turn one day will pass it on to the next generation. This proven worth is demonstrated when gospel partners endure through trials.

Because trials and testing come for everyone. If you are a Christian, they will come for you because they came for Jesus Christ. That is how God grows and matures us.

You do not grow up, you do not grow mature without testing. Those who have little concern for the interest of Jesus Christ do not embrace trials that way.

They either avoid them or they give in to them. They don't endure. What happens is that over time as trials keep accumulating, life keeps getting hard, things don't go the way that you want in life.

And so, and actually I'll do a quick survey. Raise your hand if your life went the way you expected. Okay? So those of you who are younger, look around how many hands are up. Whatever you expect your life to be right now, let me tell you, it's not going that way.

[29 : 16] I don't know what way it's going, but it's not going that way. Don't be surprised when, and it doesn't mean your life is going off the rails when it doesn't go the way that you imagined and anticipated.

It does not mean your life is going off the rails because if we're walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our life will look like his. That will mean trials.

Those who do not have a love for Christ, whose interests don't align with Jesus' interests, what happens is over time, a gap emerges between their expectations of the Christian life, this wonderful, perfect life that looks good on a billboard, and the reality of the Christian life, which can lead down into hardship, suffering, shame, and death, just like Jesus did.

This was not the life they signed up for, so they fall apart. Whatever little semblance of faith that they had is taken away. Sometimes they want to keep calling themselves Christian, but they pursue a version of the Christian faith that just is shallow and suitable for them, but does not honor Jesus Christ as Lord, does not seek his truth, does not long to see their lives follow the course of his life.

But gospel partners, people like Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus, they just aren't like that. They know what they signed up for.

[30 : 45] They signed up to honor Jesus Christ as Lord, and they signed up so that their lives would start looking like Jesus' life. They signed up to conform their mindset to his, and as they walk through life, they find that he is there with him.

He has walked that path they are with. The Lord has been there too, and his spirit is with them, accompanying them. They look for the glory and honor, not that they can accumulate for themselves, not that they can squeeze out of other people, but the glory and honor that comes from Jesus Christ, from knowing him and being known by him.

And so, as a result, they are resilient people. They experience all the hardships of life, stuff does get to them, but they don't fall off or drift away when times get tough.

Though they fall, they are not cast headlong and broken on the ground because the Lord upholds their hand. So they're like Epaphroditus. They're so eager to devote themselves to partnership in the gospel that they are willing to lay down their lives for it.

Paul writes about Epaphroditus in verse 27 as we've seen. He was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him and not only on him but on me also lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

[32 : 18] I'm the more eager to send him therefore that you may rejoice at seeing him again and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy and honor such men.

For he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me. The reason Epaphroditus has become such a committed gospel partner is that he is devoted to what Paul calls the work of Christ.

He is a part of this partnership, this work in advancing the gospel. He is taking what Jesus did, the good news that he preached and he is extending it outwards to a world that has not heard it, to people who have not seen Jesus in person.

The message that Jesus proclaimed, Epaphroditus, now proclaims to those who were not there when Jesus was proclaiming it. The pathway Jesus walked that they have never seen in person, his life becomes a display of that pathway.

remember that Christ demonstrated a consistent pattern of humility and sacrifice in his life. He wasn't content just to be made nothing, to be born in the likeness of men.

[33 : 38] He humbled himself further by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, the place of lowest shame. And so believers throughout the ages, Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, myriad saints after them, all these believers, all these saints have patterned their lives after Jesus Christ.

They have demonstrated their proven worth by their consistent humility, by their sacrificial love for one another in Christ. And so gospel partners honor one another for their proven worth.

Now notice how God responds to the person who has blazed this trail of humility, sacrifice, and concern.

First, here's what God the Father has done for Jesus Christ our Lord. The first one ever to do this. He says in verse 9, therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

In other words, Jesus Christ went low. He gave up his own interests. He did not use his status for his own advantage.

[35 : 12] And so, God honored him, highly exalting him, giving him the name above every name. Everyone, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He has celebrated his victory over sin and death and God demands that every being on earth from the lowliest beggar and rags to the kings, to the presidents of nations, to the highest archangels in heaven, he demands that they praise Jesus Christ and they call him Lord.

And that is what brings not just honor but joy to our Father in heaven. He enjoys it when Jesus Christ is honored as Lord. When we worship God, whether in song, whether in prayer, whether in our actions, we declare the supremacy and we declare the victory of Jesus Christ.

And we share in that supremacy. We share in that victory because we are called by the name of Christ. To be a Christian is to have Jesus Christ's name assigned to you.

He is with you. You are with him forever. That means that his victory, his glory is yours forever. Forever. Forever. Forever. Forever. We are united with him by faith.

[36 : 35] Why? So that all our trust is in him and we are not boasting in ourselves. We are not trying to attain honor and glory apart from him. That is the way God has set up the world.

That is the way we are saved so that Jesus Christ may be honored above all because that is what gives God the Father honor and joy and glory. And because there are some of us who reflect that glory of Christ Jesus because they know him.

They know his heart. Their mind has become like his mind and therefore they have concern for one another and therefore they have a proven worth that endures.

God urges us to honor them as well because he says anyone who starts looking like my son I want you to honor them. To encourage them when they are weak.

And in fact you are going to find that the more you do so the more you honor one another and praise those who look like Christ the more joy it brings you to speak highly of them.

[37 : 42] The more it becomes natural to you to honor those who have devoted their lives to advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ. And this is how it ought to be in the church.

We ought to say with the apostles that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So we don't honor those who simply want to escape the hardships of love.

We don't honor those who appear talented and successful at no cost to themselves. We don't honor those who show up with a lot of energy and excitement but then quickly fall away.

We honor those whose love and concern for others has cost them dearly. We honor those who are looking out for the interests of others even at their own expense. We honor those who even though times are tough they just keep showing up again and again and you can count on them and you can trust them because they are walking the pathway of Jesus Christ.

And when we honor them we are too because that is the pathway of everyone who loves Jesus Christ. Now if you are wondering how to get started it is actually a lot of different ways you can do that.

[39 : 03] You can literally do this the moment the church service stops here. Walk up to that person that you have in mind. Has someone come in mind when you are thinking about this? Whose face comes before your eyes?

You can go up to them after the church service this morning and just tell them hey I see it. I see what God is doing in your life. I want to honor that. You can send them a card in the mail the old fashioned way.

Call them on the phone. Scary. A text message, an email. Just reach out. My experience with doing this for other people is it always feels really weird and awkward and I'm like oh no they're just going to get all weirded out by this and people always respond really well.

Like it actually just makes their day. And when their backs are turned and you're talking about them with others, speak highly of them. Honor them, these precious partners in the gospel.

Sometimes we're not sure what to say to them. If you are not sure what to say, the beautiful thing is God has given us lots of examples of the kinds of things we can say.

[40 : 24] What does Paul say in honor of those who he wants to elevate and honor? He affirms the value of his partnership and he calls Epaphroditus, here's some of the words he uses, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier.

He talks about him as though he's working and fighting side by side, knit together, belonging together. He values his partnership. You can call out things like this. They're unique perspectives and insights that you see because they have the interests of others in mind.

Their quiet ministry in the church, they just keep showing up quietly, not drawing attention to themselves, but yet faithfully showing proven worth. The sympathy that they show to others who are suffering, that caring for the interests of others.

Their boldness in proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers, even though it could potentially bring them shame, they just keep showing up. Their generosity and hospitality, that concern for those in need.

Their confidence and enthusiasm in Christ, that they put the interests of Jesus Christ first. and that they keep persistently doing that.

[41 : 47] Their sense of the holy and the sacred. What interests Jesus is what interests them. Tell them all the ways that you value your partnership in the gospel with them.

And don't be afraid to tell them how happy you are to see it. What kind of reaction that produces in your own heart. That's what Paul does. One of the amazing things about Paul is how open he is with the way he's feeling.

He describes a happiness that he wants the church to feel when they get the experience of having Epaphroditus with them again. Verse 28, he writes, I'm the more eager, that's Paul, that's his own heart, I'm the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice, that you'll be happy at seeing him again, that I may be less anxious.

Receive him in the Lord with all joy. Enjoy him. He mentions that, he mentions that joy that he is looking forward to hearing about and sharing with the Philippian church, that Epaphroditus gets to be back with them healthy and strong and whole once again.

So if you want to honor your brothers and sisters in Christ, just tell them how you feel. Say what you really think. Express to them how happy you are at being with them.

[43 : 09] Tell them how it would hurt if they were taken away from you. Now, maybe you're like, well, that's not me, I'm sort of a contrarian sort of person. Well, Paul's not afraid to be provocative if you've read any of his letters.

And Jesus is not afraid to be provocative. They're not afraid to speak truth when it's needed. But they're also not afraid to open their hearts and to be honest with those in need.

To pour out their hearts for the gospel partners they were with and tell them what they really thought, what they really felt. I yearn for you with the affection of Christ Jesus. I love and long for you.

You are my joy and crown. That's the way Paul talks. Isn't that amazing? Gospel partners just aren't afraid to praise one another.

They aren't afraid to honor one another. They don't wait for the graveside service to speak these words. They don't wait until the obituary is written. They honor one another now while it's still today.

[44 : 15] While they still have opportunity. I think just offhand. Just I want to honor Murray Purdy. Coming in faithfully showing up.

A good friend and brother. This morning he showed up when the alarm, the fire alarm thing was going off and he's just faithfully demonstrating his proven worth. As a brother in Christ.

Ministering behind the scenes. Not drawing credit and honor and glory to himself. Murray my heart is for you. And I love you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us be people who do that.

Who speak of one another in this way. Show your concern. Let your concern and your proven worth be honored. May Jesus Christ be known in the way that we speak.

Let me pray. Our God and Father. We are coming to the table of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Lord's Supper. knowing that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the one who is to be honored above all because he humbled himself to the point of death even death on a cross.

[45 : 34] He did this. To glorify you Father. And to bring your people to glory.

Lord God may our church be one where we understand this. Where we live this out. Where we ourselves expect that our lives will look like Jesus' life.

Where we expect that we are going to be walking the path he walked. Dying the death that he died.

Experiencing the shame and reproach of the cross. But with our honor and glory and joy safe and secure forever. Because Christ has been raised from the dead.

Ascended into heaven. Seated at the right hand of God the Father. And he will come again to judge the living and the dead. This is our confidence before you.

[46 : 36] And so Lord God help us to remember this. Let us remind one another. As long as it is called today. That this is who we are. This is who our Lord Jesus Christ is forever and ever.

Amen. We're going to be celebrating communion together. The Lord's Supper. We've seen here and what we see here is a picture of the gospel message.

Jesus Christ to form a covenant relationship with us. a relationship written in his own blood. Signed in the dotted line in his own blood.

He gave his life on the cross. What we're doing in communion is we are remembering and re-experiencing that again. This do in remembrance of me Jesus says.

Why? Because this is a marker of that covenant relationship that we have. We gather together. We remember it again. We are reassured again. So for everyone who has marked their entry into the new covenant with baptism who now wants to continue remembering it together we invite you forward to enjoy the blessing of being called a son of the living God through what Jesus Christ has done.

[48 : 00] So let me receive these words of inauguration that the apostle Paul himself wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

So if you are called by the name of Christ come on forward you can come forward up through these center aisles take the bread and the cup go back on the outside aisles bring them to your seat and then we're all going to eat together once we're finished singing.

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