

# Gospel Partners Love Gospel Progress

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[ 0 : 00 ]     Okay. Well, we good on sound? Okay, there we are. Well, it's good to be back in front of you.

Just ask for your prayers for BK as he is preaching at a church out in Abbotsford this morning. So he and Daniela are away. And so you guys have opportunity to hear from me.

I sometimes joke with people that my job when BK is gone is to make you wish he came back. So hopefully I don't do too good a job at that. Just want to call your attention to a couple things as a reminder.

As Chris mentioned in the bulletin, we have a Fall Fest coming up that's being spearheaded by the Rock Church, but involving us and involving Grace Church in 99. And information on that is in your bulletin as well as in the email you received this week.

Rock Church is handling sign-ups. That's online. There's a link to that. But if you're having difficulty with that, if connecting to the Internet isn't your thing but you do want to come, then just contact our church office and we'll help you sign up if you're finding that difficult to navigate.

[ 1 : 11 ]     So we want to make sure that everyone whose wine comes included. And there is an attendance limit, I believe, of 120. So if you're sitting around waiting to the last minute to sign up, you may not get a spot.

Just because of the venue size, there is a limit to how many can come. But those of you who were there for the one we did last year know that what an encouraging time that was to be a part of, to be in attendance.

Another thing that I don't believe is in the bulletin, but I just want to call your attention to, because I want you to just think about this possibility. November 17th and 18th in Kelowna, there is a conference on what's called cultivating soul care.

And soul care is, biblical soul care is basically another word for biblical counseling. And in particular, a culture of soul care at our church in which we know how to speak to and counsel one another at, you know, a simple basic level that I think every Christian really can develop and can be a blessing to one another.

I'm planning on attending, heading up to Kelowna for that November 17th and 18th that weekend. And what I encourage you, just sit and think, would I be interested in, would you be interested in joining me on going up to Kelowna for that?

[ 2 : 27 ]     Because that would be a really good opportunity to sit and think together, what could this look like in our church? What could this look like in our churches here in Squamish? To develop a culture in which, you know, each of us becomes competent in caring for the souls of another, in ministering God's word, God's truth, in loving people with God's wisdom towards one another.

Where we can become a model for people who know how to care for the needs, the mental health concerns, the struggles of others in our lives.

So sit and think about that and then come talk with me if that's something that you're really interested in being a part of. But I want to drop that, just take some time to think through if that's something you'd be interested in being involved in.

It would be great to have you along in that journey. What I'm going to do is pray for us as we prepare to receive God's word to us this morning.

So let me open in prayer before we open the Bible. Father, I thank you so much that, just for that reminder even a couple songs ago, that our worth is not in what we own.

[ 3 : 40 ] It is not in our fame, our success in life. It is not in our righteousness. I come to you this morning and asking, even before I speak, I know that it is so important for me to be able to speak heart to heart with others, to get out of the way, Lord, that my worth does not come from my ability to preach and to speak.

It doesn't come from my wisdom, my ability to articulate, from me being a good person, of being productive or successful. I confess before you, Lord, that I have a temptation to put my worth in any and all of those things, but it really is the cross of Jesus Christ because I know him.

And I pray for each one of us this morning that we may say that our boast, our glory and our joy is that we know and belong to Jesus Christ. Our trust is in him.

And so his gospel message is everything to us. We want others to hear the good news of who he is, what he came to do, to receive it and to live in accordance with it. Lord, would you transform us in this morning as we consider that mindset that we have as gospel, as partners in the gospel who work to advance the good news, to make Jesus Christ fully known in a world that does not know him, to make him fully known in our own hearts where we ourselves are just only scratching the surface of understanding him.

Lord God, may you advance that today. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand. Amen. So now I know some of you probably woke up in a good mood this morning, right?

[ 5 : 20 ] You're all butterflies and lucky charms and couldn't wait to get here. I know some of you. And then some of you, I can see you drinking your coffee right now, multiple of you.

Some of you are maybe still wiping all the dirt off your clothes from where a family member dragged you across the lawn and into the car to get you here this morning.

And this is just not one of those mornings for you. Well, I'm glad you're here anyway. There are a lot of things. I mean, just the reality is we're not always in a great emotional shape when we come here on a Sunday morning, are we?

I usually invite people, hey, whatever struggles you have in your life, bring them in. Bring them in. Don't leave them at the door. Bring them on in here because this is where we encounter the living God.

Our emotional states often, they sometimes serve as a weather vane for the conditions of our souls. And so imagine, let me explain what I mean by that because sometimes people who didn't grow up in the country don't know what a weather vane is.

[ 6 : 23 ] And you've got, but if you've ever seen a movie, like at the top of the barn, you've got that thing with a rooster and an arrow that swings in the direction of the wind. That is a weather vane. And so when the wind picks up, the weather vane will swing around and point in the direction that the wind is coming from.

So a weather vane will tell you where the wind's coming from. And in the same way, our emotions often, they serve as a fairly reliable weather vane for our souls.

Our state of feeling serve as somewhat reliable weather vane for our souls. Not always. Sometimes we can have, I mean, everyone knows, right? When you've got, when you're, you know, maybe when there's something wrong with your body or, you know, hormones are going or things like that.

Sometimes our emotions can be affected by that. But also, it's often helpful to, sometimes I give people assignments and counseling, just log your emotional, you know, log your emotional, say, where am I getting angry?

Where is fear overwhelming my life? And just making a note. And you start to notice patterns. Because emotions point, often point toward what we consider to be important.

[ 7 : 31 ] Not what we say is important, but what deep down we actually operate as though it's important. Let me give you an example. I had an old roommate of mine and his, he had a coworker named Tom who had sometimes come over and Tom was a huge baseball fan.

And my roommate would tell me that he always knew the outcome of each baseball game, what it was the next morning, what the, I think it was the Cleveland Indians was the team that he was rooting for.

Because each morning, Tom would be cheerful if his team won and sullen if they lost. Tom's feelings were tied to the performance of his favorite baseball team.

Now, as for my roommate and me, our feelings were utterly unaffected by how well the Cleveland Indians did the day before because we could not care less about that team.

But like a weather vane, your emotions are swayed by what's important to you. If you care about, if you care about the Vancouver Canucks, your emotions will be affected by that. If you don't care, you will not be affected by the Canucks record.

[ 8 : 35 ] If you get emotional, either thrilled or devastated about your career, about your grades in school, about a love interest, then it's a pretty good bet that thing is important to you.

If you find your relationship with the Lord has a much smaller effect than that on your feelings, well, then it's a pretty good bet that you consider those other things to be a higher priority and more important than the Lord is.

Now, let me read from the Apostle Paul's letter to the first century church in Philippi. So this is the book of Philippians in the New Testament of the Bible, and I'll be reading chapter 1, verses 12 through 18.

I'd like you to turn there so that you have God's Word in front of you. You can see that to the degree that I can, I want to preach to you the same message that the Holy Spirit was bringing to those believers then.

This is the Word of the Lord to them in their day and to us today, given to us by the Spirit of God. So Philippians chapter 1, verses 12 through 18. And notice, pay attention to Paul's feelings.

[ 9 : 45 ] How does he write? What is his emotional state? How does he communicate? Get into his brain as we're reading. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Some, indeed, preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. And the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that, I rejoice.

[ 10 : 57 ] Now, if you are paying close attention as we read these verses, taking note of all the things Paul is saying and trying to get inside his head, you probably figured out Paul was having a worse time than anyone here in this room right now.

Right? Boy, when he's talking about his imprisonment, his chains, he is literally in prison and in chains. I mean, maybe some of you feel right now that I'm in prison, imprisoned in the situation in my life.

Well, Paul literally was and had been for several years at this point. He is writing this letter from the heart of the Roman Empire, likely Rome itself. He is under house arrest, having to provide for his own food and kind of helpless to earn money.

And so he's reliant utterly on the generosity of other people, which is the Philippian church came through for him and basically kept him from starving to death. Among other things. He's waiting to stand trial before the greatest tyrant who'd ever lived, before Caesar himself, before Nero.

Paul could be acquitted by Caesar and be free to go. Or he could feel a Roman sword cut through his neck as punishment for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 16 ] And that was a merciful death by Roman standards. That is a pretty lousy situation to be in. I don't know. Many of us might have been a tough place in our lives, but I doubt we're in prison with literally a sword hanging over our neck.

It would be tough to blame Paul for feeling angry, feeling frightened, feeling hopeless. If he were sitting in my counseling office, I'd be like, man, hard to fault you for feeling that way.

That's so understandable. But look carefully at what Paul wrote. Are these words of rage? Are these words of terror?

Are these words of despair? No. These are words of hope. These are words of joy. Words of appreciation.

What is his secret? Why is it that Paul's emotions, the weather vane of his soul, why is it not pointing in the direction of rage and terror and despair continually all the time?

[ 13 : 26 ] Why is he not dragged down by his rotten circumstances? Why is he even feeling happy? And I'm sure his emotions are mixed.

You know, Paul admits at other times in his life he's up and down sometimes. And yet that weather vane eventually will return to joy. Why? What's going on as he's writing this letter? And the answer is that Paul's emotions, his feelings, are tied to what he considers to be important.

And you can see that in verse 12. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. It is the advance of the gospel, the good news of who Jesus Christ is and what he came to do.

The progress that the gospel makes is it spreads across the Roman Empire as it reaches into the hearts of people and goes deeper and deeper so that they know Jesus Christ and can boast in Jesus Christ alone.

And their souls are satisfied in him alone. That's what's encouraging Paul. This gospel that is saving people from the power of sin and Satan, from the power of shame, that is encouraging Paul.

[ 14 : 40 ] And we read again in verse 18. In every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that I rejoice. So Paul, he is not dragged down.

He is not discouraged by the fact that he's a prisoner. He is not lost endlessly in dark and catastrophic thoughts. Instead, at times he's even upbeat. Because Paul sees, he has eyes to see what you and I, if we were in a situation where we might not see.

Paul has eyes to see that the gospel is advancing as a result of his circumstances. People are hearing the good news that Jesus of Nazareth, that God's anointed king is Messiah.

This man that the Jewish people have been promised and looking for and longed for, they are hearing about him and what he has done. More than that, that Jesus is the son of God. He is God who has taken on human form to represent us to himself.

Which is just what BK has been teaching us from the book of Romans. And we're going to see in more and more detail over the coming months. Jesus lived that life of perfect obedience to God.

[ 15 : 55 ] He humbled himself and he died on a Roman cross. As a punishment for our own disobedience. He died on our behalf. He was buried and now he is raised to life again in victory.

Ascended into heaven, seated at the right hand of God. Before he ascended, he was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses. And now he reigns in heaven. He is preparing for his kingdom to arrive in full glory on this earth.

Where he sets all things right and ushers in a new heavens and a new earth. This is the gospel message that is advancing as a result of Paul's imprisonment. And in a world that is terribly broken.

Full of stories in the news that just seem to have no hope. No way out. Nothing but misery. Our one hope for this world is that we have a savior. Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who will set all things right. And that we get to be a bit of an outpost. Time travelers from that future world. Showing people. Giving them a glimpse of here is what the world will be when Christ returns.

[ 16 : 59 ] Come. Believe in him. Put your faith in him. Until Paul is upbeat to see that. Because Paul's life mission is to spread this good news across the Roman Empire.

And for this mission, he writes in another letter. Here is the kind of stuff Paul experienced. If you don't think imprisonment was bad enough. This is the, these are all the ingredients of a miserable life.

Right? Here in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul writes, Five times I received at the hand of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods.

Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea. On frequent journeys. In danger from rivers. Danger from robbers. Danger from my own people. Danger from Gentiles.

Danger in the city. Danger in the wilderness. Danger at sea. Danger from false brothers. In toil and hardship. Through many a sleepless night. In hunger and thirst. Often without food.

[ 17 : 55 ] In cold and exposure. And apart from other things, there's the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Sounds like a good life. And now he's in jail for it.

For this message that he has suffered so much for already. And he's rejoicing. Why? Because he loves to see the advance of the gospel.

To learn that more and more people have heard this good news and believed it. And now trust in Jesus Christ alone. As a savior of the world. As their righteousness before a holy God. And Paul sees his own life.

Following that pattern of Jesus. That he is dying and rising every day. With Jesus Christ. This is a lot of dying happening in Paul's life. But he sees the resurrection through it.

He sees the good coming from it. That's what he's talking about in this letter. He's like, I see glimpses of good coming as I die. Brothers and sisters, God our Father wants us to share in the joy of your brother Paul.

[ 19 : 00 ] Who one day you will meet in heaven. Enjoy it. The gospel is advancing. You enjoy it. The gospel is advancing. May you be happy and find a happiness because of this.

I know that if your emotions are anything like mine. They can be whipped around like a leaf in a hurricane. But you and I are being called to a joyful stability.

And that stability is like a buoy in the ocean. It does get rocked by waves of confusing emotion. Paul talks about in his life that he, you know, at times he was, you know, afflicted. Afflicted but not crushed.

Struck down but not destroyed. Despairing of life itself. But then coming back to hope. A joyful stability where you return like a buoy to the upright.

Is only possible when the most important thing to us, our life's work, is to see the gospel advance. When we start remembering this is what God is doing in the world and we find joy in it.

[ 20 : 07 ] Gospel partners love gospel progress. Gospel partners, they love gospel progress. It is so important to them. It brings them joy. Nothing less will satisfy them.

Nothing less will bring them joy. They take heart when they see the Holy Spirit at work among them. When they start to see people's eyes open that once were blind.

Ears that once were deaf are becoming unstopped. Hearts that once were hard as stone are softening. That's what you live for. Especially if it's your own.

Now, maybe you do value the advance of the gospel but you still find this joy hard to come by. Despite what I've said, you're not seeing it.

You're discouraged because you feel like you're not seeing the gospel advancing. All you see around you are people who don't care about God. People living for their own comfort and their own pleasure. People who have decided that their joy will be found somewhere else.

[ 21 : 11 ] Or people who are intentionally defying the wise and right commandments of our God. Maybe you've given up hope that the gospel can make any headway among your family.

Or at your workplace. Or in your neighborhood. Or even in this church. I've seen many people give up on church. Give up on church people.

But if that's you today. I'm here to tell you the Holy Spirit is about to give you four reasons why you're wrong. Four reasons why you're wrong. And four reasons why you should take heart. First the gospel is advancing because of God's purposes.

The gospel is advancing because of God's purposes. This is the reason that should give us the most hope. The gospel is advancing because God is at work.

With intention. With purpose. With certainty. Take a look again at verse 12. Philippians 1 verse 12. If you look carefully you see Paul saying. I want you to know brothers. That what has happened to me.

[ 22 : 20 ] Has really served to advance the gospel. Now think about what Paul could have written instead. About what has happened to him. I want you to know brothers. That what has happened to me.

Is an affront to justice. And I'm going to fight it to the bitter end. I want you to know brothers. That what has happened to me is horrible. How could God do this to me?

It is just not fair. But instead. Paul adopts a different perspective. He writes. Are you noticing something? What has happened to me.

Has really served to advance the gospel. Now maybe you have got that friend of yours. Who is always seeing the bright side. In everything. To the point that it is almost irritating.

Right? To a person who like. There is no dark clouds. There is only silver linings everywhere. You know. Now they call it. What is it they call it? Toxic positivity. Or whatever. They are just like. They refuse to ever see anything bad ever.

[ 23 : 15 ] Just always upbeat. Always upbeat everywhere. And kind of in. Sort of like in this state of delusion. About the bad things that are actually happening. Well. Paul is not going that far. We have seen already.

Paul. is well aware. That he is in a bad situation. He doesn't pretend that he's not. But his secret is.

While he holds on to. Yeah. This is bad. He doesn't give in to despair. Because he also sees. Reasons for hope. Paul has got. You know.

You might call it a growth mindset. He sees. Ways. And opportunities. That the gospel can advance. Even when he is struck down.

He's like. Even that is an opportunity. Just because I got struck down. Doesn't mean the world's come to an end. God is still at work. His grace still shows up.

[ 24 : 09 ] He is still sufficient. Even when I'm in prison. Paul is not doing this. And saying this. Because he's desperately trying to salvage. A hopeless situation. He is pursuing hope.

Because he believes. That the Lord God. Is working in all situations. To advance the gospel. Throughout the world. He remembers. In the middle of his imprisonment. This is what my God is like.

This is how he works. This is what he's doing. And I see it. I've got eyes to see it. Consider what he wrote. About his partnership. With the Philippian church. Back in verse 6.

If you look up a few verses. You'll see him say. I'm sure of this. That he who began a good work. In you. Will bring it to completion. At the day of Jesus Christ.

I'm sure of this. He is convinced. That God will make sure. That their partnership. Him with them. Is going to leave an enduring legacy.

[ 25 : 06 ] A legacy that will last. For at least 2,000 years. We're benefiting from it. Literally right now. For the future growth of the church. All the way until Jesus Christ returns.

And that God will sustain them. To the end. God is completely in control of history. God will work things out. According to his plan. And his purpose. And so Paul knows.

That the gospel is advancing. Because of God's purposes. Now he knew this. Do you know this? Do you hold fast.

To the truth. Do you remember? In practice. I confess. I find it difficult. At times. To share his confidence. In the sovereign plan of God. That.

That wavering in my confidence. Has come out over the course of my life. In a lot of simple moments. I mean. I remember a number of years ago. I was helping a man from. From our church. This is a church I was at.

[ 26 : 00 ] Years ago. And he was planning a 5k race. As an evangelism event. That would raise money for charity. And I remember that. We'd been doing it for a few years. But he was.

It wasn't turning out as well. As we'd hoped that year. Among other problems. Not many people were signing up. For the race. Despite all our efforts. To promote it. And I was feeling pretty anxious. About the whole situation.

I was worried the event. Was going to be a failure. And now. The man running the event. The funny thing is. He wasn't exactly someone. In retrospect. That you would choose. As a spiritual leader.

Or role model in the church. But the irony is. Sometimes. Words of wisdom. Come from the most unexpected places. And I remember that. On this occasion. He was very calm. And he reminded me.

He reminded me. That the Lord. Would do as he saw fit. The Lord was the one. In control. And we had nothing to worry about. Anyway. It all worked out in the end.

[ 26 : 54 ] The race went well. So. Shows me. That whole incident. Stuck with me. Because sometimes. Our doctrine remains. At an academic level. Just in our head.

At a confessional level. We say it. We talk about it. We sometimes enjoy talking about it. But it doesn't soak into our hearts. It doesn't permeate. All of our being. We have to marinate.

Ourselves. In this truth. It's what the Bible calls. Meditating on his law. Day and night. So until we reach the point. Where this good news.

Is controlling the way. That we reflexively. Think. And speak. And act. We become so familiar. With our father's voice. And his message. That it becomes a part of us. Perhaps we need to learn.

How to truly believe. The gospel is advancing. To God's purposes. And as the spirit works in us. There are ways. That you can sow. Seeds. That the spirit. Can cause growth.

[ 27 : 48 ] Can cause growth. Perhaps you can take. A couple of minutes. Each Sunday morning. To write down. Three ways. You saw. Or learned. That God was advancing. The gospel. In the past week.

Pay attention to it. Note it down. In your family. In your church. Around the world. In a book. That he titled. Polishing God's Monuments. Jim Andrews writes.

Many of us. Are in the emotional tank. Much deeper. Than necessary. Because we have become. Burden counters. Rather than blessing counters. We've.

Afflicted ourselves. With a lot of. Unnecessary suffering. Because we have. Forgotten. The gospel. We've forgotten. To see. The good. The good news. And how God is at work.

It's a good discipline. To keep an eye out. For God at work. The gospel is advancing. Because of God's purposes. It needs to be a discipline.

[ 28 : 45 ] Because sometimes. God works in ways. That we do not expect. I find that most people. Expect the gospel. To advance. Through human power. And wisdom. A great dynamic speaker.

And organization. We expect the gospel. To advance through. Popular church programs. And events. We expect the gospel. To advance through. Powerful signs. And miracles. Big mountaintop events.

Things that give us. A spiritual high. That wow us. We expect the gospel. To advance through. Terrific preaching. And a stirring music team. That lifts your souls. To the heavens.

We expect the gospel. To advance through. Christian rallies. And Christian movies. Through celebrities. Who endorse Christ. Through charismatic. Political leaders. Who pass the right. Legislation.

That get Canada back. To its moral. And ethical heritage. Where we don't expect. The gospel to advance. Is through our weakness. We don't expect it.

[ 29 : 40 ] To advance. When we're humiliated. In front of friends. At school. We don't expect it. To advance. When we've been fired. From our job. When we develop. Diabetes. Or cancer.

When the church. Fails to meet. It meet its budget. Year after year. To advance. Under the pressure. Of a culture. That is developing. A hostility. Towards biblical.

Christianity. The kind. That Jesus taught. But the gospel. Is advancing. Because of your suffering. The gospel. Is advancing. Because.

Of your suffering. That was Paul's experience. He writes in verse 13. It has become known. Throughout the whole. Imperial guard. And to all the rest. That my imprisonment.

Is for Christ. Paul had. No illusions. That those chains. He was wearing. That restricted. His freedom. That kept him trapped.

[ 30 : 36 ] He had no illusions. That they were a good thing. They were not a good thing. But God is in the habit. Of appointing bad things. For an ultimately. Good purpose.

Purposes. That sometimes run so deep. That we only see. One or two percent. Of what God is doing. In the Old Testament. Book of Genesis. You can read the story. Of Joseph. And his brothers.

His. Their descendants. Became the nation of Israel. And Joseph's brothers. Hated him. Imagine having. Your. All your brothers.

Hate you. Then they. Trapped him. And sold him. Into slavery. In Egypt. Expecting him. To die there.

Yet God. Used this awful. Act of betrayal. For his own purposes. Joseph. Rose. To a position. Of power. In the land. Of Egypt. He stopped. Helped. The Egyptians. Stockpile grain.

[ 31 : 33 ] So when an awful. Seven year famine. Took place. Throughout that part. Of the world. Guess what? His brothers. Ended up being able. To have food to eat.

Instead of starving. To death. Joseph's brothers. Were acting out of. Genuine malice. When they betrayed him. But Joseph. Told them.

In Genesis. Chapter 50. As for you. You. You. You meant. Evil. Evil. Against me. But God. Meant it. For good. To bring it about.

That many people. Should be kept alive. As they are. Today. God. Used Joseph's suffering. To ensure. That Israel's family line. Would be kept alive. That line.

One day. One day. Led to Jesus Christ. As the savior. Of the world. If Joseph. Joseph's suffering. What he endured. Saved you. And Jesus himself.

[ 32 : 29 ] Would be crucified. In the greatest act of evil. Ever perpetrated. When sinful man. Appointed himself. As the judge. Jury. And executioner.

Over the holy. And righteous. Blameless God. But after Jesus. Rose again. From the dead. The leaders. Of the early church. Here is what they prayed. To God. In Acts chapter 4.

They said. Truly in this city. They were gathered together. Against your holy servant. Jesus. Whom you anointed. Both Herod. And Pontius Pilate. Along with the Gentiles.

And the peoples of Israel. To do. Whatever your hand. And your plan. Had predestined. To take place. At the center. Of the Christian faith.

Is this truth. That God used. The ultimate. This terrible evil. Of his suffering son. To accomplish. The ultimate good. Of bringing many sons. To glory. Paul expected.

[ 33 : 26 ] That the Christian life. Will follow that same pathway. That Jesus life followed. A path of suffering. That leads. To glory. And resurrection. Path of death.

That leads to resurrection life. His own life. Took that shape. He urged his follower. He urged his churches. To think this way. And if you read.

Philippians 2. Verses 5 through 11. You see him. Urging them. Adopt the mindset of Christ. In this regard. 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. 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. The lowest of the low.

[ 34 : 24 ] Therefore God. Therefore God. Has highly. Exalted him. And bestowed on him. The name that is above. Every name. So 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.

That is the story. Of Jesus life. And the more you follow him. That becomes a story. Of your life too. The gospel is advancing. Because of your suffering.

Whether it's the hardships. We face as a church. As a community. Whether it's the hardships. You face as a family. Or as an individual. Sometimes these sufferings. Are severe.

And short term. Chemotherapy. A lot of major. Major life problems. Sometimes they are. Very hard and long term. The loss of a loved one. Chronic pain.

[ 35 : 21 ] The life of the difficult spouse. Sometimes the low level. But unrelenting hardships. Of infertility. Or unwanted singleness. But through it all. Maintaining the mindset.

Of one who loves the gospel. If we do that. Those who aren't believers. Will notice something different. There is a joy. That continues to emerge.

As a pattern. In your suffering. The weather vane. Comes back. You have to make an effort. To remind yourself. Of the gospel. Because. Every day.

You drift into forgetting it. That's why we come here. Week after week. We come here to remember. To remember together. Because you need to remember together.

You're not going to remember by yourself. You need other people to help you remember. We hear God's word preached. To remember. To sing. To remember. We celebrate communion. This do and remember it to me.

[ 36 : 17 ] Jesus said. Because we've got to remember. Sometimes you need to remind yourself. Sometimes it means reciting a scripture.

Like Philipians 2. 5 through 11. And every morning. Having someone in church text you. A reminder each day. Do what it takes to remember. When unbelievers see the weather vane of your emotions.

Swaying back and forth in the wind. They'll notice that it just keeps coming back. To joy. Because you keep remembering. You keep loving the advance of the gospel. You know that the gospel is advancing.

Even because of your suffering. And rejoice. Good news. The gospel is advancing because of your brothers and sisters. The gospel is advancing because of your brothers and sisters.

Paul writes. Verse 14. Through 16. You see there. You see him say. Most of the brothers. Having become confident in the Lord. By my imprisonment.

[ 37 : 14 ] Are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry. But others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love. Knowing that I am put here.

For the defense of the gospel. Now. Kind of funny. That Paul's fellow Christians. His brothers. Would become confident. Because Paul is in prison.

Now when the Roman government. Appointed Paul to prison. And to trial. And a possible execution. I really don't think they thought. That would serve as motivation. For further criminal behavior.

When you tell your friends. That you know what. I was speeding in a school zone. I got a \$200 traffic fine. They're probably not thinking. You know maybe I should try speeding in a school zone too. It is not the incentives.

Of the Roman justice system. That is encouraging these other Christians. To tell the good news of the gospel. Quite the opposite. It is because they have been watching. Paul's life. And Paul's ministry.

[ 38 : 18 ] They have followed closely. His single minded passion. For advancing the gospel. They see that Paul is willing. To bleed himself to death. For the gospel. As he puts it in the next chapter.

Even if I'm being poured out. Like a drink offering. For you. There is something deep down. In their souls. That when they see him.

Following the pathway of Christ. Seeing the gospel. Playing out in his life. In the very shape of his life. And they see his mentality. And his mindset.

And see his eyes fixed. On the resurrection life. And his eyes fixed in Christ. And is boasting in the Lord. That makes them yearn. To join him there. To join him.

Even in suffering. In a radical devotion. To this mission. To make Jesus Christ known. I think our churches. Are full of people. Who. Who want to do the right thing.

[ 39 : 15 ] Who may even be willing. To lay aside comfort. And security. And start taking risks. For the gospel message. They just don't know how. And they haven't seen it done. Paul makes it very clear.

In this letter. He's setting an example. For them to follow. With himself. With Jesus Christ. He later talks about. And you've also got. Timothy. You've got. Epaphroditus.

Who came. And his life. Took the same shape. As well. Paul's putting forward to them. Here. Here's people for you. To look at. And imitate their way of life. Watch them. Walk in their footsteps. And you'll be walking.

In the footsteps of Christ. When you're confident. In God's sovereign purposes. When you find. In suffering. That there is joy. In seeing the gospel advance. They're attracted to that.

People pattern their lives. After your example. Not because you're perfect. But because you're. Weathervane is pointed. In the right direction. That's one of the reasons. I mentioned earlier. About needing to develop. A culture of soul care.

[ 40 : 12 ] In this church. A culture where we take. That responsibility. Upon ourselves. That I am responsible. For caring. And for caring. For others in the church. I want my life. To start taking on.

The same shape. And manner. That Jesus did. So that I. Not only can I care for you. But then you start looking. At my life. And thinking. I want to look like that too. And that's how.

A church's culture changes. And becomes. A light. And a dark town. Not because you're perfect. But because your weathervane. Keeps coming back.

To the right direction. People become motivated. To speak the good news. Boldly. Because they love God. Because they love the good news. Because they love you. And they love the work. That you love. This love.

Overcomes. Their fear. Of what other people. Will think of them. And what other people. Will do to them. Partners in the gospel. Are precious. To the Lord. He treasures.

[ 41 : 08 ] Our partnership. And that's why. He wants to see it continue. And to grow all the more. Over and over. In this letter. To the church. In Philippi. Paul gives. Them examples.

To pattern their life after. Gospel partnership. Requires us. To look for examples. To imitate. And then in turn. To become examples. Ourselves. Faithful to others. So they can follow our example.

Of trust and contentment. And plenty and hunger. Abundance and need. Can you be an example. To your.

Not just to your children. But to the other children. In the church. And as you grow older. Will you always have. Always be able to say. Follow me as I am following Christ. To take people under your wing.

To become a mother and father. To the children of our church. And in turn. To look for examples. Yourself. To follow. The gospel is advancing.

[ 42 : 07 ] Because of your brothers and sisters. And that's good news. It doesn't all fall on you. We're in this together. And Paul gives us still. One more reason to rejoice. It's one that may surprise you.

He writes. Beginning in verse 15. Some indeed. Preach Christ. From envy and rivalry. But others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love.

Knowing that I am put here. For the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ. Out of selfish ambition. Not sincerely. But thinking to afflict me. In my imprisonment. What then?

Only that in every way. Whether in pretense. Or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that. I rejoice. So rejoice. The gospel is advancing.

Because of your rivals. The gospel is advancing. Because of your rivals. Now. What do I mean by rivals? What's Paul talking about here. When he brings up people.

[ 43 : 04 ] Who preach Christ. From envy and rivalry. How can that be? How can there be preachers out there. Who are proclaiming the gospel of Christ. In order to afflict Paul. Well. The problem is not the content.

Of what they're preaching. If you've read the rest of Paul's letters. Especially his letter to the Galatians. You know. Paul pulls no punches. When it comes to the gospel. He is deeply loyal to Jesus Christ.

He is an apostle. Who's been entrusted. With a very particular message. And anyone. Who compromises that message. Anyone who distorts that message.

Paul utters strict warnings against them. But in these verses. He isn't doing that. He's writing about these rivals. That they're preaching. What they're preaching is even true.

Christ is proclaimed. They're preaching the true gospel. His criticism of them. Is that these men are teaching. They're not teaching bad doctrine. They're men of bad character.

[ 44 : 04 ] They're men of bad character. Preaching good news. They are individuals. Who are jealous of Paul's ministry. Perhaps on a personal level.

They don't get along with him. Perhaps they're. They just. They don't like him. They don't like. What he's doing. Perhaps they've got a different vision. For the churches in Rome. Or elsewhere in the empire.

Or they want to elevate themselves. Put themselves on a platform. Make themselves feel good. At Paul's expense. They view it as a competition. Maybe they think.

Maybe the success of their ministry. Is they're thinking that Paul. They're probably thinking that Paul. Thinks the way they do that. If I'm succeeding. He's probably sitting there. Languishing in prison. He's just getting eaten away. By our success.

And here you thought. The lack of unity. And the celebrity culture in the church. Was a modern problem. It is one of my favorite things. When people criticize the church. Oh it's a church full of hypocrites.

[ 45 : 03 ] Oh people. I'm like. Why don't we open the New Testament. And read the book of 1 Corinthians. And you come back and tell me. Whether dysfunctional churches. Are a new thing or not. People usually tell me.

Church is full of hypocrites. And they say it like they're. They're revealing to me. Some. Something I've never realized before. That I'm just gonna be like. Whoa no. Oh my. I had no idea.

Are you kidding me? I've read the Bible. I know the church is full of. Trouble and problem people. I know that the reality is. Sometimes we're in a community here.

In a. In sort of an extended family here. With people that we probably wouldn't have picked to be in our family. Right? That's the beauty of the church. You start learning how to make peace.

With people you would not naturally be at peace with. And Paul. Is showing us that way to peace. Because these people are thinking. That Paul thinks the way they think.

[ 46 : 01 ] That it's all about rivalry. And being on top. And who's in charge. And Paul's like. Who cares? Who cares? I don't care. Who cares? They are badly mistaken.

If they think their success is eating Paul up. Verse 18. What then? He says. Only that in every way. Whether in pretense or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that.

I rejoice. He is enjoying the success of his rivals. Who thinks that way? Who thinks that way?

When someone who's out to get you. Is succeeding. And you're like. Yes. Paul. Refused. He will not play their game. He will not get sucked into their game.

Of rivalry. And ambition. And conflict. He's like. Not going to play your game. I'm not. He is not going to get drawn into that. All he cares about is.

[ 46 : 59 ] Hey. The gospel is advancing. It doesn't have to be me. And if it's advancing. Because of his rivals. Because of people who don't like him. People who want him to. Who are quite happy.

That he's in prison. Well that's perfectly fine with Paul. Their motives may be bad. But Paul thinks that the. God's work. God can even work. Through people with bad motives.

God. I mean. I know of stories of churches. That are messed up. Whose pastors are really. Not great people. And yet God saved people. In that church. God was still at work.

Still transformed lives. The scalpel. May be rusty. But God used it. To save someone's life. Praise be to God.

It's so good. That. We don't have to get. Everything right. And perfect. For God to be at work. Otherwise. How do you explain. Our church. Right. God is at work here.

[ 48 : 02 ] That whole illustration. On that. But I think. I'm going to just skip that. And just. Bring up. That's something. That's very important. In our day and age. Especially as we're working together. Like this is significant. In our town.

We're working together. With Grace Church of 99. And the Rock Church. And there have. There has. You know. As Glenn brought up. At our last worship night. You go back. 10. 15 years. And there is a spirit.

Of rivalry. Among the churches. Among the leaders. Of the churches. I'm grateful. That that has. Dissipated tremendously. Because that's just. No way to live.

If the Rock Church. Grows. And explodes in numbers. And exceeds us in size. Praise God. If Church of 99. If God.

Does a reviving work there. Passes us over. To do a reviving work there. Praise the Lord. May he do so all the more. God.

[ 48 : 58 ] God is at work. We don't control the Holy Spirit. But I'll be honest. Over the last number of years. I've seen the Holy Spirit. Show up in churches. Where I was like. Really? That one? Come on.

But the Lord knows. Where he is going to go. He is wiser than we are. He is not afraid to work. In places where. We probably wouldn't have picked.

Where we see problems. All over the place. And yet. He does a reviving work. We're not in control. Of where the Spirit goes. All we do is celebrate.

When people are saved. When the gospel is advancing. When the good news is preached. And people start boasting. In Jesus Christ. And not in themselves. And not in anything the world has to offer.

Who are living for that eternal life. And living for that good news. Paul says in that scenario. You rejoice. You enjoy it. You savor it.

[ 49 : 56 ] Is that how you think? Is that how you feel? And the good news is advanced. Even through people that. You're thinking really Lord.

Through them. Is it okay with. You have people who don't like you. Meet with success. As long as the good news. Of Jesus Christ is preached. Is it okay.

If you're running a ministry. And your ministry. Is failing. And eventually dies off. I've had that happen to me. Numerous times. As long as the gospel is proclaimed.

If it's another ministry. And another place in the church. Where God is doing great things. And not in your area. Is it okay with you. If your kingdoms fall.

As long as the kingdom of our Lord and Christ. Stand strong. And grows. As his gospel advances. Are you willing to decrease. So that he may increase.

[ 50 : 55 ] Believe it or not. God may choose to advance the gospel. Even through your rivals. Sometimes he does that. We don't always know why. Whether it's the suffering we endure.

Whether it's the rivalries we bear. These things. I've seen them eat away at people. But it won't eat away at you. If you make the advance of the gospel.

Your single mission and purpose. If you think Jesus is worth it. If you think. That he really is the Messiah. The son of the living God. If you really think that he came.

To be savior of the world. If your love is fixed on our Lord Jesus Christ. And his glory. Your weather vane will be okay. And you won't mind letting go of your own glory.

Because you found all the glory you need. I will boast in my redeemer. So if the gospel advances. Because of your rivals. It'll hurt. It will. But the pain.

[ 51 : 55 ] Will be accompanied by joy. If the gospel advances. Because of your suffering. It'll hurt. But the pain will be accompanied. By joy. And if the gospel advances.

Through your brothers and sisters. Who love you. Well that'll be nothing but joy. And you'll see it through it all. That the God who works all things. According to the counsel of his will.

He is working in you. He is at work through you. He is at work in this church. And in each church in Squamish. That honors the name of our God. And preaches the gospel.

And he is at work to advance that gospel. Through the city and this nation. Sometimes in subtle and perceptible ways. And so through it all.

Your weather vane may waver. But in time. It returns to the joy of your master. Gospel partners. See this gospel progress. And they love it. So to God alone be the glory. Our father.

[ 52 : 49 ] We thank you that. Lord we confess that if our hope. We're set on. What we own.

If we're set on our fame. If we're set on the elevation of ourselves. If we're set on us. Living the ideal American dream. Living the perfect life. Living the ideal life.

We always fantasized about. If we're set on us. Living comfortably. If we're set on us. Always being able to do whatever we want. If we're set on our bodies.

Holding up. And being healthy forever. We know at some point. That we will find ourselves. Bitterly disappointed. Crushed and destroyed.

But our. We come to you to say. And to remember. That our hope is set on the living God. That our hope is in Jesus Christ. Our boast is in him.

[ 53 : 49 ] Our joy is in him. We brag about him. He's the one thing we can brag about. He is the one constant in our life. The one place our glory belongs forever and ever.

Our refuge and our shelter in the storm. Our salvation and our song. We celebrate and honor him. And ask that we may have opportunities. Even this week to speak of him.

To those who do not know him. That they may see in our eyes. And hear in our voices. That we really love him. That we trust him. That our joy and our boast is in him.

As we come to know who he is. And what he is like. More and more. May our lives start to take on the shape of his life. May our mannerisms start to look like his. The way that we relate to people.

The way we honor you. The way we treasure what you treasure. May it look like Jesus Christ. So that his name may be honored. And as a result Lord God.

[ 54 : 53 ] May we be known as people who. We always come back. To the joy of our master. Amen.