

O Hypocrite, Where Art Thou?

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 2. Yes, it's true. We are in Romans chapter 2.

I invite you to open this text and to come and worship the holy God who demands our lives.

Who is certainly worthy of all the glory that we can bestow upon him. Let me just open up in prayer before we get to this text.

Dear Lord, holy, gracious Father. We thank you for your word. We thank you for the Apostle Paul and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Writing this letter to this Roman church who was struggling with so many different aspects of the faith between Gentile and Jew.

[1 : 08] And Father, there's aspects that we are going to see ourselves in. Everything from the relationship to the law and the gospel. How even Romans 1 defines our society.

And even as we get into Romans 2 and 3, how Paul then, quote unquote, targets the religious. It's so easy to see ourselves in so many aspects.

But what's so amazing about this text is that Paul begins with this glorious gospel. Father, never let it depart from us.

Our understanding or be on the mind how wonderful your gospel is. I pray for your Holy Spirit this morning to give me a spirit-empowered sermon.

And I pray that you give us hearts and ears to receive the message of this morning. We ask these things in your most gracious and holy name.

[2 : 26] Amen. Before I jump into the text, I think it's appropriate that we just step back for a little bit. And just, I want to give you a little bit of the context. And we've covered this a little while ago.

But I just wanted to remind us that, as we all know, this letter, Romans, is written by Paul, a church that is made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers.

We believe that this church, and it would have been more of a house-type church, but it would have begun shortly around 33 AD. Acts 1 and 2 records for us not only the ascension of Jesus Christ, but the descending of the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost upon the Christians who were there.

And among the people that were there in Jerusalem were these Roman travelers, these Jewish people who had come for the celebration of the Passover, who remained, who had witnessed, who had heard, who had seen these things of Jesus.

Then they hear the Apostle Paul give his message in Acts chapter 2. And from there they make their way back to Rome, and they return to their synagogues and the places of their community, and they shared this news of Jesus Christ.

[3 : 46] And this church begins, but it's a church birthed out of the Jewish faith, and it had a certain Jewish flavor to it.

As the church expanded, we see growth as Gentiles become part of the church. And then around AD 49, the emperor Claudius decides he doesn't want Jews and Romans anymore, so he pushes them out of Rome.

So this church that is left in Rome has lost its Jewish influence, and now the Gentiles are left to kind of continue to grow as best as they can with their understanding.

And what's interesting is, it was about 10 years later, the Jews start coming back. They start rolling back into Rome. And the church is different.

Now if you're unfamiliar with the New Testament, one of the biggest struggles that Paul had to deal with was a group of people called the Judaizers. The Judaizers were a group of, let's call them Christian people, but who wanted to add some of the Jewish aspects back into the Christian faith.

[5 : 07] They wanted to add some of the Mosaic laws, dietary restrictions. They wanted to enter in some of the Sabbath observances and some of the festivals.

And they taught that it's okay, you can have Jesus be Christian, but you can be a mega Christian with this stuff. You can be a mega Christian, right? But what was Paul knew that Jesus plus nothing equals everything, amen?

And as you have a glass of clear water and you start to add impurities, it becomes murky. So as you add the law back in, you end up dirtying this faith.

So here is Paul outlining the gospel. And it's important for us to notice this, why Paul presents the gospel in the way that he does.

In Romans 1, 16, 17, he says, For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, to the Greek.

[6 : 21] He recognizes that we know the Christian faith birthed out of Judaism, but it's now something new. It's a new covenant. And Gentiles are equal recipients of the law.

And if you're not familiar with the Gentile, a Gentile is simply anyone who's not a Jew. It's pretty simple. So for the last couple of months, we've been going through Romans 1.

And as you know, Paul gives an assessment of Gentile society. It is a society that has rejected God. And as such, God has given them over to the lust in their hearts, their dishonorable passions in a debased mind.

Romans 1, 32 provides us with an assessment of the Gentile culture. He writes, Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things to deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.

So we've been covering what does this Gentile society get into. So now as we come to Romans chapter 2, Paul begins to call out the Jews.

[7 : 40] Calls out the religious. And if you know your text, if you notice in Romans 2, 17, he makes special reference to the Jew.

But if you bear the name Jew, and rely upon the law, and boast in God, and know his will, and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the law.

So Paul begins to deal specifically from the Jew. And we're going to be dealing this from Romans 2, 17 until Romans 3, 8. And Paul will give himself his final assessment of the Jewish culture.

And I'm going to tell you right now what it is. It's found in Romans 3, 9, and 10. He says, What then? Are we Jews any better off?

No. Not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. As it is written, none is righteous, no, not one.

[8 : 49] But this morning, I want to answer for you a simple but key question for you. As Romans 1 is written to the Gentiles in mind, Romans 2, 17, to Romans 3, 8, is written to the Jew in mind, who in the world is Romans 2, 1 to 16 written to?

I don't know if you've thought much about this, but as you read the text, there's a switch in the words. And I want to call these attentions to you, but I can say that theologians, commentators, are all somewhat divided on this passage.

Is it written to the Jew? Or is it written to the Gentile? Is it written to moral Gentiles who were sitting outside of Gentile society and saying, hey, I know that's my society, but that's not me?

Or is it written to the Jew who's hearing Paul talk about the Gentiles and saying, look at those guys, man, they're really messed up. They got debased minds, right?

You know, is that what he's doing? Is it written specifically to an individual or to a group of people?

[10 : 17] Through this passage, we're going to see terms such as, oh man. And then we're going to see the use of the word you, which is second person singular.

It's probably a question I don't know. Has anybody even asked that question? Probably not. But I'm going to tell you it is a significant question to ask.

And I pray that this morning that the answer will speak to you. So let's look at verse one. It says, therefore, you have no excuse, oh man.

Now what Paul is using here is using a rhetorical device. And if you've ever read, anybody take philosophy or read any of the classical stuff?

Thank you, Miss Locke, for pointing that out. But a lot of the old stuff, you'd read these books and there was this level of rhetoric going on. So when you'd read the book, you're reading against somebody and you're kind of anticipating their answers.

[11 : 24] A lot of the Christian, Greek, Roman texts. So Paul is writing in that fashion. It's kind of like I'd be writing to Dave Nannery and he's writing about the blessings of owning a Nissan truck and I'd be talking about a Jeep and I'd be telling him, you know, I really like the Jeep, it's more superior, blah, blah, blah.

And he'd say, I know you're going to say the gas mileage, oh man, right? I'm kind of anticipating what his arguments are going. So that's what's kind of going on. Paul's anticipating some questions and some dialogue.

This was very popular. And we're also going to see use of the term you. Like I said, it's the second person singular.

But he makes the statement here. Therefore, you have no excuse, oh man, every one of you who judges.

The question is, this sermon really is only for you if you judge. This sermon is written to those whether they are a Jew or a Greek, it does not matter. But it's if you judge.

[12 : 37] Now, some of you might be here this morning and say, I never judge. I have an absolutely loving, uncritical mind. I never judge anybody. I love everybody.

So what I thought I would do for you this morning is I'm going to give you a test. And I'm going to give you a test. And it's going to be given to you in the way of Jeff Foxworthy.

Are you guys familiar with the comedian Jeff Foxworthy? You know you're a redneck when? Well, this is entitled You Know You're a Judger When. All right?

Have you ever judged someone on how they dressed, what color their hair is, or if they have, or now, have not tattoos? You might be a judger.

Have you ever judged someone because they don't volunteer as much in church as you do? You might be a judge. Have you ever critiqued a church by the type of worship music they sing?

[13 : 43] You might be a judge. Have you ever judged someone because their Bible is on their smartphone? You might be a judge. Have you ever judged BK or Dave because their sermons ran too long?

You might be a judge. Have you ever been critical of those who struggle with addiction and thinking they lack the moral strength that is needed?

You might be a judge. Do you feel superior to those who are less educated in theological matters than you? You might be a judge.

Do you assume that financial hardship is due to laziness or lack of faith? You might be a judge. Are you quick to form opinions about parents based on the behavior of their children?

You might be a judge. Do you feel the constant need to always offer your opinion?

[14 : 55] You might be a judge. Do you think that when people sin they deserve to suffer hardship? That they get what they deserve?

Well then you might be a judge. Do you believe that Christians aren't loving enough or accepting enough? You might be a judge.

Do you find yourself thinking less of people because of their past sins or their situation in life? You might be a judge.

And the final one is do you ever find yourself angry at the sins of people in this society? Then you might be a judge.

So if you have answered yes to any of these questions this sermon is for you. This section of Romans 1 is written for you.

[16 : 05] I think if we're honest it's easy to nod along when judgment is directed at our society but when judgment is directed at our own hearts we tend to recoil we tend to defend.

If you note in your bulletins this morning the sermon title is listed the righteous judgment of God. Well I lied to you. The real sermon title is oh hypocrite where art thou?

I didn't think you'd come. So let's go back to verse 1. Paul writes therefore you have no excuse oh man every one of you who judges for in passing judgment on one another you condemn yourself because you the judge practice the very same things for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself because you the judge practice the very same things and I wrote that twice.

We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you guys know what the number one quoted verse in the whole wide world is?

You guys know it? Bingo. John 3 16. Do you guys know what the second most quoted verse in the world is? Matthew 7 1.

[17 : 39] Judge not lest you be judged. Like a cat that hates water does man hate to be judged. Heck we live in a world today where we don't actually honor winners because if we honored a winner in a sporting event that means we would have to honor a loser in a sporting event and that would be judgment.

In fact I have this book entitled The Most Misused Verses in the Bible. Guess which verse is number one? Matthew 7 1.

Do not judge. We hate to be judged. But you know what we love to do? We love to judge.

Let's be honest we Christians can judge with the best of them. We've just taken the test. I think you've known it. Why do we judge?

Psychologists will tell us we judge because we want to project. Philosophers call it minimalization. If I can point to something worse than me I feel better about myself.

[18 : 55] What psychologists and philosophers have in common that it's all about making ourselves feel better.

However the Bible offers us another reason for this. The Bible tells us that we judge because we want to retain our sin and our self respect thus avoiding the judgment of God. what Paul is arguing here is as soon as we judge we expose ourselves to the judgment of God.

That's the folly in judging. You see what happens is when I judge others I have revealed that there is a standard that someone needs to be judged by.

But when I don't accept judgment it means I am claiming ignorance or excuse that I did not know. You see as soon as we judge we've revealed the hypocrisy in ourselves.

[20 : 09] if I can be insightful about other people's shortcomings can I really claim ignorance of my own sins and shortcomings.

Take a look at verse three. It says do you suppose oh man you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself that you will escape the judgment of God.

So my question for you this morning is if you know according to verse two that that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice judgment verse three we know that we can't escape the judgment of God.

The question is why do we do it? Why do we judge? Why do we sin? Do we honestly think God won't see us?

Do we think that God won't hear us? Do we think that God will not know? If you are a Christian and you're familiar with the attributes of God you say of course not because you know that God sees all, God hears all, God knows all.

[21 : 28] So this is what we who judge do. instead of leaning on the attributes of God we wrongly lean on the character of God.

God's forgiving. God's full of love. God's merciful. He'll forgive me, right? Notice verse four. Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience.

See the reason we judge and the reason we are such horrible hypocrites and don't confess is that we lean on God's grace. We lean on God's grace which is shown in his kindness, his forbearance or tolerance and his patience.

It's why when it comes to other people we want God's justice, don't we? we get mad at their sin, we're enraged by their sin. Let's cry out for God's justice.

Why have you not rained fire on them yet? But yet when it's my sin, my hypocrisy, my guess, my mess, God please have mercy.

[22 : 50] Please have mercy on me. You see then we want to quote God's character.

But what Paul is doing here in verse four, he's calling us out. He says God's grace, God's mercy, God's kindness, God's forbearance and God's patience is answered in the continuation of verse four.

Do you not know or not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? sin. It's not there so we can continue in sin.

It's not there so we can brag on his love and mercy and grace. It's so that we can have a right relationship with him.

If you are an older or mature Christian such as myself, you know firsthand that it's very easy to twist scripture. Psalm 103.8 says the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

[24 : 05] Who's ever quoted that or thought those words in the midst of sin, in the midst of judging someone, in the midst of hypocrisy? You see, if we actually have eyes at sea, we need to be honest with ourselves that our judging, our hypocrisy grieves the Father.

It destroys our relationship. Now, this is a place where Christians get confused.

These are the questions that confuse Christians ask. Does that mean I am not to judge? Does that mean I am not to be critical? Does that mean I am not to rebuke?

And the question obviously is how do I correct someone if I'm not allowed to judge someone? question? Well, the answer to these questions is found in the Sermon of the Mount in Matthew 7, 5, and I'm going to ask Ryan to put this verse on the slide for us.

Notice he says, you hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

[25 : 31] A few things I want you to pay attention in this verse. Notice in this verse, it does not say that you're not to judge, but it actually comes with instruction.

So what that means is, if you pull the log out of your eye, you're free to go and judge the person who's got the speck in their eye.

Notice that word judge is not in there. The way we take the log out of our own eye, it's pretty simple. It's called confession and repentance of sin.

It's going before the Lord God. We know this. Lord, forgive me. But notice what else it says. It says, and then, only upon confession and repentance, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Like I said, it doesn't say you are now free to judge him or her, or that you can simply point out the speck in their eye. But note that word see clearly.

[26 : 37] It's an important word. It actually means to see with understanding, to see with comprehension. It means to understand the person, the sin, and the issue that they're dealing with.

carefully examine, look intensely. And notice when we do this, it doesn't come by judging them.

It comes by knowing them, by understanding them. It means you enter their life carefully and with intention to understand. Have you ever considered when you feel the need to point out a speck in your brother's eye?

They might not know there's a speck in their eye. But more often than not, have you ever considered that they have a speck and they realize it's a serious speck, but they might not know how to remove it?

They may be too weak to remove it. they may be too discouraged and downcast in life to remove it.

[28 : 05] You see, when we judge or we point out this speck, when we do not see clearly to someone who is struggling with the speck in their eye, the result is shame.

There is a sense of not being able or incapable. It doesn't matter if you're speaking about someone's eating habits, money management, or even parenting habits.

There is no shortage of roads to shame in our lives. In fact, the matter is most people are aware of their speck.

But sadly, most people need help in removing that speck. There's actually, you might be unaware of this, there is actually a biblical term that the Bible uses to help someone with their speck.

It's called discipleship. discipleship. So this morning, I want to share with you several practical aspects of discipleship that I pray will help you see clearly and love your brother or sister to help them remove the speck in your eye once you have confessed and repented of your judging spirit hypocrisy.

[29 : 48] One of the myths that people have is in order to disciple someone, I have to know everything more than that other person.

What that usually means is I got to be older, I have to be wiser, I have to be better in almost any aspects of life. life. The reality is most people are only disciplined by a person for a short term, helping them with that issue.

If you have a gift in that area, you understand you don't have to help them with everything, but you can enter that person for that set period of time to walk with them.

Paul uses this word walking throughout all his epistles and it means to walk along. And that's the idea of discipleship. I walk along my brothers and sisters in this Christian faith.

We are called, after I've yanked my log out, to see clearly. And what you notice about when you pull out the log, guess what it does?

[30 : 49] It gives you an understanding of the issue that they're dealing with. There's another term that the Bible uses. It's called loving your neighbor.

It's not sitting back commenting on their life, giving them critical exposition of what's going on or why they're in sin or why they're struggling financially.

It's a desire to enter into their life, understand, and to help them. Myth number two. In order to disciple someone, I must be perfect at it.

I must be perfect at it. At other times, the reason why people don't disciple is because it hits too close to home. Right?

Hey, I've dealt with that sin. It just grieves me. But have you ever thought that that makes you perfectly suited to be the one to understand them, to understand the shame, the struggle of how to get things right with them?

[31 : 57] it's kind of funny. This past week was kind of weird for me. I had three different pastor friends call me looking for counsel. And you know you're at a weird stage of life when you're as young as I am, and you're offering some sort of wisdom to other men in the ministry.

I certainly noted that every single one of my advice to those guys was don't do what I did. Every single time. This is the mistakes that I made.

Don't do it. Right? There's another way to go about this. Most often times we're passionate about not the things we got right, but we want an opportunity to make things right that we got wrong.

Amen? And in another person we have this chance to help them, to come in with real life experience. The solution that I offer you isn't because of my brilliance, but because of my failure.

It's why we know when we go through trials of struggle, that God just isn't using us to sanctify us, but he's using us so that at one time we can come along, another brother or sister in the faith and show them the pitfalls to avoid, the roads to shame to not get on, those areas of life that only add more pain.

[33 : 27] You find out at some point you can speak authoritatively into their situation, mainly because you didn't get it right or you weren't perfect.

But what you are is forgiven. The third myth that surrounds the idea of discipleship is the only way to disciple is for someone to do it just like me.

You can't force people to be like you. For those of you who are parents, how did that work for you and your kids? When you tried to force them to be like you.

At one of my former churches, we had an accountant and he was very passionate. He took a Christian course on how to manage money and he was really passionate about helping people.

And when he offered that first class, it was packed. It was incredible. And even though he had the right heart to help, he would find himself judging people.

[34 : 35] Like, why in the world did you let that credit card get up so high? Right? That doesn't help. And he would just continue to bring shame upon every decision. How come you don't own your house by now?

But then when you look into his life, his house was given to him by his parents. And he would say, well, I can live on \$50,000. Why can't you live on \$50,000? He would say to different people in the church.

Well, he had free rent now for the rest of his life because his parents gave him a house. He was blessed with life with a good job, with parents who provided for him, and he failed to understand that.

Although he experienced God's wonderful gift of grace, he didn't recognize that he had received God's wonderful gift of grace. When he offered it, the next time, no one showed up for the class.

You see, our roles as disciples of Jesus Christ is to teach biblical principles and bring biblical wisdom to bear into another person's life.

[35 : 44] And we do this with love. love. That is why our time with Chris Hamilton was so valuable. If you weren't here, he ran a parenting conference for us about a year ago in May.

And it wasn't very structured in this is what you do, this is what you don't do. It just simply imparted God's wisdom out of Proverbs for us.

In case you guys don't know, I'm really not an overly structured guy. You could say to me, I'm going to give you six steps to become a millionaire.

I'll throw it away by step three. You know, I just can't do it, man. I don't trust the system. It's got to be more organic, right? But sometimes that has to be in our relationships.

Some relationships aren't structured. They need to be organic. Sometimes we need to spend time with a person. All right, I'm here to help you with your money issues. All right, let's see the books. I'm not showing you any books.

[36 : 43] I don't even know you. Like, and that person might have the most wonderful, kindest heart, willing to do those things. But we still need trust. One of the best ways to do that is to consistently bring God's word to bear in our lives.

And the fourth point, you point out that your brother or sister has a speck in their eye. They agree. They agree on the root problem. They agree on the appropriate solution.

Doesn't mean they know how to do it. And that's why you're there to help them. That is why they need help and discipleship. They need someone to invest in them.

In case you do not know, we offer a class. It's a discipleship program. Here I go, Mr. Structure. It shows up once in a while. But we do every man a warrior. And every man a warrior, and I would challenge every single man in this church, because you will get the testimony of every single man who has got there, who's taken the course, is going to tell you why it's been life changing.

And it's not because so much the program. We're learning how to worship God. But more importantly, well, within that worship of God is understanding biblical principles for our marriage, biblical principles, and how we see and raise our children.

[38 : 08] But we've come to an understanding with one another that we are united in needing help. We are united in needing encouragement. We are united in needing one another's prayer, encouragement, to love the Lord as God's called us to in the families.

Do I get an amen from every man a warrior guy out here? There we go. You guys know it. It's not because that program is so wonderful, but it provides an avenue where we can come together and be united in who we want to be as men of God.

It's why you women are growing so much in the BSF program. You're there with one another. You're learning God's truth. You're supporting each other. You feed each other.

I see all the food you eat every Wednesday. And here's my fifth point. let's say you love someone.

You see the speck in their eye, but you realize that you may not be the right person to disciple them. It's perfectly okay to refer someone else to help them.

[39 : 20] If you don't know, I'm going to tell you, God has blessed this church with many different people from many different walks of life, with many different skill sets. And if you do not know myself, Dave, or Chris, just as the elders of the church, we will be the ones to help find that person for you.

There's an area that you're struggling with. We know that God gives his church spiritual gifts, and they're not all encapsulated in the three of us. There's other people here who are wonderfully gifted, and we know that are looking for wonderful opportunities to pour into someone.

All right, let's get back to the text in Romans 2.5. Note that this text comes with a warning. If you believe that God's grace is an encouragement to sin, then you're in really big trouble.

In fact, if you think God's grace is an encouragement to sin, it's a sign of a stubborn and unrepented heart.

Verse 5, But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

[40 : 49] God's grace is the space that God gives us to repent. It's not to be used as an excuse for sin.

Peter echoes this in 2 Peter 3, 9 and 10. He says, The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

See, the judgment that Peter and Paul are referring to is the exact same thing. It is the day of wrath that comes like a thief in the night.

What that means is, when God's final wrath come, it isn't announced, Jesus Christ is coming in 24 hours. Get your house in order. Know what it means, is that when he comes, there is no warning.

[42 : 06] So for you to want to continue relying on God's grace, that I'll have time to repent, I'll have time to make this right with God.

It'll be too late. Thus the heaviness of the warning. Thus, the fact of the matter is, you do not know when God will take you from this earth.

That is why today is the best day to deal with your stuff. That is why today is the day of confession and repentance. That's why today is the day that you are to seek God.

That is why right now you know there's a Holy Spirit working in you because you understand that you are convicted. You're convicted of your judging heart. You're convicted of your hypocrisy.

And you know that not only affects your relationship with God, but affects your relationship with the church. Maybe today isn't the day of wrath, but today can be the day of salvation.

[43 : 17] This could be a big day of change for you. Perhaps today is the day where you let one of God's saints come into your life to help you walk and deal with the speck that you know that you have.

And you're tired. You're exhausted. And you're discouraged. My encouragement to you is let the Spirit work through the power of His people.

That's how God does it. He uses us to bring a newness of life to those here today. Perhaps today is a way that you will walk differently as a Christian.

A Christian who doesn't judge, but a Christian who seeks God's sees God's children as Christ the King sees His children.

Maybe today, instead of loving, God will give you a heart of love for your fellow saint that's here this morning. Let me pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just...

[44 : 35] Listen, the fact of the matter is it's a struggle we all deal with. That's why it's covered so many times in Scripture. Sometimes we think we're clever, we're helping by making observations, but in fact we're judging and we're developing a critical heart.

And oftentimes those critical hearts can develop into a root of bitterness. Causes us to lose our way. The fact of the matter is we are all familiar with people who at one point or another have left the church.

Some for a short time, some for a long time. Some of the things that I see in common is they judged.

The church is full of hypocrites. As the old saying goes, you might as well join them. Sometimes we've been hurt by a judgment spirit.

Sometimes we've come and we've prayed for help and no one's helping us. Sometimes we come and we bleed all over each other, just hoping someone is going to care for us.

[45 : 44] Even though we don't even know how to rightfully go about getting the help that we need. My prayer for this church is that we will deal with the logs in our own eyes and be willing to work with our brothers and sisters on the speck in their eyes.

That we will set ourselves to have relationships. To know, to see clearly. It doesn't mean we're going to do that for everybody. But for those that are here and God has providentially placed before you, whether it's a co-worker, someone who just happens to be sitting next to you in a pew or lives on the same street, or your kids share the certain same age, there's plenty of avenues.

And Father, I pray that you'd use this passage as a rebuke for those mature Christians who are just sitting here on their humps, sitting on the log, not doing anything, not engaging with your people.

You have brought them here for a reason and you've given them these gifts and we all need their gifts. We need them to connect with us. Father, our call as elders is to present this church as mature believers in Christ.

We can't do it on our own. That's why Paul calls us to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We're thankful that we're able to add a level of training, even for a small church, to come and do the things that we're called to.

[47 : 28] Because there will never be a man or woman in this church who will say, who can say that, use the excuse, I was never trained. It's here. Relationships are possible.

People do want to build in. People do want to care. So Father, I pray that you would make these people known to us as they are known to you.

May we not hide. May you give us courage and strength to step forward. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.