

# Down is the New Up

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Such a privilege to anticipate being addressed by God this morning and having the privilege of sitting under His word as we continue through Philipians.

Well, last week, as you likely know, if you don't, you've been living under a rock. The 41st President of the United States, George H.W. Bush, died at age 94.

And, you know, after his death this past week, it's been remarkable. It's been striking to see the nation respond to what a remarkable man he was and what a remarkable life he lived.

He was one of the greatest generation, so-called, I think in so many ways, just right. You know, he was a fighter pilot in World War II, narrowly avoided death after being shot down by the Japanese in the Pacific of fate.

[ 1 : 07 ] He never quite got over, if you've seen interviews with him as he talked about those comrades who died or were captured. He returned to the U.S. He married Barbara.

I think they were married 70 years or something like that. Probably should have known that. But while his family had some means after getting back from the war, he overcame numerous obstacles and became a successful oil man in her politics.

Became the vice president under Reagan and then the president, the 41st president. And his remarkable life continues after that that you can read in other places. But over the week, the things that struck me were the aspects of his character.

Numerous people said he was a true friend. He was loyal. This was evident by the numerous people that came and responded to his friendship with loyalty as his body lay in state in the Capitol.

None of these scenes were more impactful to me than watching Bob Dole come and salute his president one last time. Helped from a wheelchair at 94, 95 years old.

[ 2 : 16 ] He was generous. Now, I'm sure he was generous financially. I assume he was generous financially. But more than that, he was a generous-hearted person. An old person would have used the word he was magnanimous, which is a great word if you're looking for one.

You know, after losing his race for re-election to Bill Clinton, he left a note in the Oval Office. I'm sure you've seen it. But one of the phrases, or a couple of the phrases in there, would, You will be our president when you read this note.

I wish you well. Your success is our country's success. I am rooting for you. That's a generous-hearted person. He was humble. People pointed that out.

He was not about his own interests. He was about the interests of the United States and the interests of those around him. After playing a major role in the collapse of the Cold War, the fall of Berlin, the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union, it was said that aides rushed into his office and said, President, you have to go to Berlin for Truman, for Kennedy, for Reagan.

You have to go there and celebrate for them. And he responded, what would I do, dance on the wall? This is a German moment, not an American one.

[ 3 : 29 ] You see that? A humble person lets others enjoy what God's doing in their lives. It rejoices with them. It doesn't take over the party.

Commenting on his humility, one friend said at the funeral, Those who travel the high road of humility in Washington, D.C. are not bothered by heavy traffic. That line is obviously humorous, and all the former presidents sat on the front row, laughed at it, but it struck me this week.

Sadly, humility is all but gone in Washington. But I wonder if the same thing could be said of the Church of Jesus Christ. Is the high road of humility bothered by heavy traffic, by congestion among us?

Or is the church much like D.C., where humility lies neglected? Beneath our confessions and professions of love, is there humility in an other-centered way of life?

Or the same self-interest and self-promotion that's all too common in the world around us? You know, the world is not our concern.

[ 4 : 43 ] But the Church of Jesus Christ is. And the Church of Jesus Christ is to be a place where that high road of humility is well-traveled and crowded. And as we studied last week, as Paul gets to the heart of his letter, he's calling us to live only worthy of the gospel, and central to living worthy of the gospel is what he says that it must be putting on humility.

It must be putting on humility. One of the former saints said in answering the question, what are the three most important virtues, they said, St. Bernard of Clairvaux said, humility, humility, humility.

And that's what we're going to see. I mean, the heart of this letter, most of this letter, is about humility. Humility. That's what Paul wants to get across to us. And that's what God wants to get across to us.

So where we're going, you know, the phrase for today is, at all times, pursue humility. At all times, pursue humility. Let's read these verses.

Chapter 2, verse 1. And so, if there's any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

[ 6 : 05 ] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. May God bless the preaching of his word.

So we're going to break this out in three points. First one is, pursue humility in love. Pursue humility in love. And, you know, we have to get our bearings in this text right off the bat.

You know, our text opens with an if-then sentence. You see it there. So if, there's the encouragement, if, it's implied later on, but if, if, if is kind of repeated in the original language.

So just asking this question, the idea is that if X is true, then we must do Y. You know what I mean? You, you, you're acquainted with a text like that. So essentially it's saying, if there's any encouragement in Christ, if there's any comfort from love, if there's any participation in the spirit, if there's any affection, any sympathy, you get the idea.

[ 7 : 16 ] But what do these phrases mean? They seem to build on one another. They seem to mount up steam, so to speak.

They seem to want to convince us of something. You know, it kind of reminds me of talking with a teenager, although I don't have any teenagers yet. You know, where a teenager may say something like, Mom, if I don't get that new pair of shoes, I'll be the only one in class without them.

And if I'm the only one in class without them, I'll be isolated and alone. And if I'm isolated and alone, I'll be made fun of. And if I'm made fun of, I'll wonder if you even love me.

And Mom, do you really want me to wonder if you love me? So buy me those shoes. Or maybe the kid's book, If You Give a Pig a Pancake. And on it goes until there's this big mess.

But the mounting ifs are meant to convince us of something. They're meant to leave us convinced of all that is fixed and true of us in Christ so that we pursue this other's focus.

[ 8 : 22 ]     Unity. So let's dive into them. It just says, If there's any encouragement in Christ. If there's any encouragement. Literally the word is comfort. If there's any comfort in Christ.

You know, I hear the word comfort and I often think of Hallmark cards and hand pats and nice people. And I'm for all those things. But this is not what they're talking about.

This comfort is saving protection. This is similar to Psalm 23 when he says, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thy rod and thy staff are with me.

They comfort me. Even more, he talks about, or what's implied there is his deliverance. Christ's deliverance by stepping in to receive the punishment for our sins.

So it's robust. It's solid. It's wonderfully strong comfort. Yeah, I was raised Presbyterian. Which means occasionally I can listen to classical music.

[ 9 : 21 ]     You guys can laugh a little bit, you know. Just give me a bone. Throw me a bone here. You know, every year I like to listen to the Messiah. Handel's Messiah.

One of my Episcopalian friends said it's the greatest piece of music ever written. But it opens with comfort ye. Comfort ye, my people.

Cry unto her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned. So that's straight from Isaiah 40. This is not God being nice. This is not God saying, I love you.

This is God announcing that I've cleared away everything that stood against you so that I might shower you with unending blessings. So is there any comfort in Christ? Is there any sense that he's cleared the way for us to approach him without fear?

That's what Paul's saying. We need that comfort. Oh, yes, there is. Any comfort in love, he continues. This is consolation. The idea is any consolation in love. Is there any assuring and steadying effect of love being poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit?

[ 10 : 28 ]     Any resting in the fact that the Father has chosen to love you even though he didn't have to and yet nevertheless has. Is there any consolation in that? Is there any steadying effect to that?

Is there any participation in the Spirit? He continues. Any sense that you've tasted of the Spirit? Any sense that he dwells with you? Any sense that he's active among you? Any sense that you have a deposit of something that you'll receive in full?

And Paul just keeps going. He keeps mounting these phrases. Any affection? Any tenderness? Any mercy? Any sense that you've been the object of something undeserved?

That's what he's saying. Any sympathy? Any compassion? Has Christ been like he was to those crowds who were scattered without a shepherd?

Like sheep without a shepherd? Has he been that way to you? That's what he's saying. Do you see? If all these ifs are meant to leave us thoroughly convinced of God's heart to us, it never changes.

[ 11 : 31 ] And if so, Paul says, pursue unity and love. Look at verse 2. He says, complete my joy, by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

You see that phrase? It's sandwiched with the same mind. One mind. Same mind. One mind. It's not merely thinking, having all of us think the same thing, but this idea in which we think the same thing and it sets a trajectory for our life.

It defines not just the way we think, the way we feel and the way we live, being of the same mind. That word in full accord is a wonderful word that just means one soul.

I love this. Marriage is one flesh. The church, Jesus Christ, is one soul. There's a unity that drives down to the deepest core of who we are and why we gather and why we do what we do is this one soul.

What's it united in? What do we have this mind for that we're living out and what are we united in? Well, in the same love. Essentially saying, having been an object of God's undeserved, others-focused love, so to live in it, so to put it on as a people, to live and be united together with an earnest desire to do others undeserved good.

[ 12 : 58 ] All of us are in on this. No one's on the bench. No one can sit on the back row, so to speak, because all of us have one soul and one same and similar love, this desire to do others good.

So you may ask, or I may ask, coming to this passage, why is Paul beginning all of his exhortations with this? Well, because nothing undermines the gospel more than division among his people.

Nothing undermines the gospel more than division among his people. How can we proclaim a gospel of love and kindness and yet, as he later says in Galatians, bite and devour one another?

Obviously not literal biting, but through slander and gossip, destroying one another. So nothing impedes the gospel that way. Nothing impedes the advance of the gospel than energy focus on internal things.

And we've seen it happen, right? We've seen churches ground to a halt because of internal division. So Paul's reminding us of that.

[ 14 : 09 ] So let me make a few qualifications, though. Unity does not equal uniformity. Unity does not, ought not, mean we all look the same or have the same backgrounds or same social status, same political position, same race, same whatever.

That's not unity. Unity also does not mean we agree with one another on every little thing. Unity does not mean we will have the same convictions about debt or schooling or media or work or many other little things.

And I won't turn to the grace. We won't turn to the grace to be a place where there's lots of room to work these things out differently in personal conviction.

Unity is not uniformity. And we'll worship together. We'll begin to kind of look like one another, so to speak, not physically, but as a people because we get close, but nevertheless doesn't mean that we're a uniform people in which we hop in line and do the same thing or something like that.

Also, unity does not equal peace. We should strive, as Romans 12 says, to live peaceably with all. And when I was younger, I used to think everything could be resolved between two Christians if we were humble enough and worked hard enough.

[ 15 : 33 ] I don't think that any longer. Life is hard and we're weak. Some situations, peace and reconciliation won't happen this side of heaven.

And that's okay. I mean, it doesn't mean we dismiss it. It doesn't mean we slander people, but it does mean people are people and we can give grace in such a way like that. So it may not mean peace.

And there'll be areas of your life where you can be united or even in a church where you can be united with someone and where there's not the same peace. You know, you've worked through hard things and it's not completely where you would like it to be.

But it does mean we're united as one in love for the gospel and desire to do undeserved good to one another and showing love and treating others or not treating others as their sins deserve in this pursuit of humility.

Let me continue. Point two, resist self-interest. resist self-interest. You know, if we're going to be united together in love, then we must resist self-interest.

[ 16 : 38 ] In a passage, it's kind of filled with nuance. Paul kind of just layering these phrases together. This one is very blunt and clear. It's blunt and clear with no qualifications and no exceptions because of how absolute it is.

Do nothing. Nothing. Nothing. From self-interest. Now, Paul's already said in chapter one that some preach the gospel out of selfish ambition, but he seems to define it more clearly here.

Look at verse two. He says, do nothing from selfish ambition. If you go down to the beginning of verse, or actually that was verse three. Sorry about that. Do nothing from selfish ambition.

If you go down to verse four, it seems these are parallel. Let each of you not, look not only to his own interest. You see, you see what he's defining what selfish ambition and others' ambition might look like.

So therefore, selfish ambition is looking only after your own interest. Do you see? Selfish ambition is having a mind that's only on your own interest. It comes from a mercenary spirit.

[ 17 : 48 ] This idea of someone in whom or for whom self-interest is their only concern. You know, a mercenary is a hired gun, literally. They're hired soldiers.

They don't care about the cause. They care about themselves. They care about the paycheck. They care about money. Well, selfish ambition is the same way it's focused on gain. Whether that gain is money, applause, recognition, comfort, whatever.

It's a work of the flesh. It's opposed to the spirit. It leads only to quarrels, hostility, rivalry, and division. And we've all been on the receiving end of someone's selfish ambition, haven't we?

This feeling of being duped, of being a pawn, of being used, of not really being a friend, but actually being a vehicle that someone could accomplish what they wanted.

It's a sin that plagues Washington. It's a sin that plagues Athens, Tennessee. It divides churches, households, marriages, business partnerships, and much more. Do nothing from it.

[ 18 : 58 ] Do nothing. Do nothing. He continues, from conceit. This used to be translated, or was translated in the King James, vain glory. More literally, empty glory.

Throughout Philippians, Paul's been talking about the glory of God, which we saw several times in chapter 1, and we'll see throughout the rest of the letter. But self-interest is not after the glory of God. Self-interest is focused on gain, on its own gain, and that gain is empty, what Paul says.

So don't be focused on it. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty glory. Nothing. Nothing. We have to hear this command. Nothing.

No exceptions. No qualifications. This changes the way we live. Changes the way we work and do business. But here, the way it's focused, it changes the way we do community. It changes the way we live.

You see, what Paul's begging us to see is that before we can pursue humility, we must realize that the default setting of our hearts is selfish. Self-interest is not something we choose to pursue.

[ 20 : 03 ] It's the default setting. When you refresh that computer, it's self-interested. It lands on. It's hardwired at birth. It's no surprise that self-interest comes naturally.

It's as natural as a fish swimming in water. A fish doesn't choose to swim and we don't choose to care most about ourselves. If you notice the way he says it, look not only, you know, that reminds you of the great commandment, love your neighbor as you love yourself.

And that's not Paul's way or Jesus' way of saying, make sure you love yourself or make sure you look after your interests. The point is, that's so natural that that's the way he wants us to live, naturally loving others in that way.

Do you get that? Do you see? He's appealing to this natural way in which we don't have to think about self-interest. It comes and flows in our lives just naturally. It's why we look at our self first when we look at that old photo.

It's why when we go to the old yearbook at mom's house, we go immediately to our picture and laugh at our braces. You know? It's why we always replay and win the arguments in our mind.

[ 21 : 07 ] You know, it's why we can't stop that inner evaluator in our mind who's always measuring our day and this moment to see if it meets what we want. And that inner evaluator may be at work right now.

We can't silence that thing in us. It's why we care most about what we care about. It's why we speak before we listen. It's why we think nothing of others being patient with us but have so much trouble being patient with others.

It's why this command is not just for Satan, Hitler, his demons, and a few really bad self-absorbed people. It's for us. All our hearts are bent on self-interest.

We have a deep problem. So how do we keep this command then? I mean, is this Paul beating the proverbial dead horse?

You know, how do we keep this command? If this is true, then how do we do nothing from it? I'm serious. You know, we can try hard to think of others.

[ 22 : 20 ] We can try hard to listen carefully. We can try hard to be kind. Try hard to speak well. And those things will help for a little while. But they too ultimately fail.

So how do we keep this command? It's in this moment that we must remember that only the gospel is powerful enough to change the default setting. Only the gospel is powerful enough to change our deepest interests.

Only the gospel is powerful enough to change our hearts. It's the best news. Jesus said, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

What is born of flesh is flesh. What is born of spirit is spirit. What he's saying is that the change that we need cannot come from within us. It has to come from the outside.

It has to come from another. It has to be given. You know, this is the season of giving and this gift is what we need more than anything else. You know, at one point, it is distressing.

[ 23 : 22 ] You know, it's distressing. This is one of those gifts that take a little bit to swallow, like your wife gives you a dieting book or something like that. You know, or maybe you give your wife a cooking book, you know, and if you do give your wife a cookbook, I've given her a few over the years, you know, add a few qualifications.

Not, you know, that lasagna was terrible. Let's shape it up. And you give her. But this is similar in that way. It's a gift we have to swallow a little bit.

We have to realize that we have no other choice. That if we want this change that deep, we have no other choice. We have to admit that we're a sinner and we've made a mess of our life.

We have to give up control. We have to swallow our pride. You know, it's distressing, but at the same time, it's incredibly freeing news.

And God's eager to give it. God can change your heart. God can change your desires. God can change your longings and your goals and your dreams and your joy and your peace. Christianity is not in the business of telling you a few good things to do.

[ 24 : 30 ] Christianity is in the business of changing your heart. That's what we're after. That's what I'm after. This is the joy of Christmas. As Hark the Herald said, born to give a second birth.

If it's just fixing up the first birth, we have no hope. But if he gives a second birth, we have everything we need. I dare you to believe it. Do you?

Has your heart actually been changed? If we were to grab a cup of coffee, could you tell me when you stopped trying to do more good things and when God calls you to be born again?

If we were to walk through the days of your life or walk back through the history of your life, were there these moments where you realize, I'm not that man that I was back then.

I'm not that woman that I was back then. I'm not after a day, but I am after a change. Jesus said, all you need is to believe on me and I'll do this for you.

[ 25 : 46 ] All you need is to believe that there is one mediator between God and man. The man, Jesus Christ. He is the only one that was fully God and fully man.

The only one that could stand in the gap and the only one that has offered himself in our place for our sins so that we might have new life. Romans 8 says the same spirit that raised him from the dead is one that animates our life.

Do you believe it? Only the gospel is powerful enough to change our hearts. We're hopeless with this command without the gospel. And only the gospel is powerful enough to unite people like you and me in a cause like this where we're not focused on our own interests but on the interests of others.

During the final stretches of the Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant commanded the Union Army. Pretty close to here actually.

General Sherman continued to wreak havoc throughout the South and was making his way through Georgia while Grant was slowly working to get to Petersburg to stop the Confederates there.

[ 26 : 59 ] Yet some in Congress grew restless with Grant. Said he was too slow. No. And Sherman was not. Right? And so they wanted to promote Sherman to a rank to Lieutenant General to a rank equal to Grant's.

And when Sherman found out about this idea, he immediately let it be known that he didn't want any part of that. Then he wrote Grant these words. He said, I would rather have you in command than anyone else.

For you are fair, honest, and have at heart the same purpose that should animate us all. I just love that. Two generals fighting on two different battlefronts and yet united.

Grant responded no less admirably. He said, no one would be more pleased by your advancement than I. And if you should be placed in my position and I put subordinate, it would not change our personal relations in the least.

That is just incredible. Now obviously they were friends but more important they had a shared commitment to a larger cause of a union victory. They were not after their own interests.

[ 28 : 08 ] It didn't matter who sat first or who sat second or who sat wherever. They were united in their cause. Are we the same way? It must be that way in the church.

It doesn't matter who's in charge. It does matter that we're humble and glad to follow. Only the gospel is power enough to unite us in this way and pull us away from self-interest.

Point three, pursue the interest of others. Pursue the interest of others. This is when it gets fun. Once we've been transformed by the gospel and we've been slowly changed from caring mainly and only about ourselves, pursuing others is where the fun is.

Look in verse three. He says, right at that middle of the sentence, but in humility count others more significant than yourself. That's a strong transition, but in humility.

Humility. Humility wasn't popular in Rome nor is it popular in Athens. In a Roman colony like Philippi, social status and values were locked. They were ordered and established and people treated others as that status engendered.

[ 29 : 28 ] So the who's who were treated like the who's who and the who's not were treated like the who's not. And humility in associating with the lowly was not highly valued, but it must be in the church.

That's what he's saying. In humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Now humility is one of these things that's hard to get right. You know, it's one of these things that's easy to say what it isn't than it is to say what it is.

And it's not necessarily always being modest. Always saying, I'm just a failure. I'm not smart. I'm not talented.

That could be humility, but it's probably not. It's not always being agreeable. It's not always being shy. Humility does not equal shyness.

Humility does not mean we're always submissive. It doesn't mean we're always nice. It's not the unwillingness to receive a gift. You know, some guys, no, no, no. You can't pay me for this. Well, that could be humility and generosity, but it may not be.

[ 30 : 33 ] It may be defending their own interests. I think C.S. Lewis says it, or gets it right when he says this. Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man, he will be what most people call humble nowadays.

He will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person. I just love those words. Those are great. Greasy, smarmy person who's always telling you that, of course, he's a nobody.

Probably all you will think about him is that he seems to be a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. He will not be thinking about humility.

He will not be thinking about himself at all. I think that's dead right. That's exactly what this passage said.

Look down at verse 4. So the truly humble count others more significant than themselves and how do they do that. Look in verse 4. He says, they count others more significant than themselves by looking to the interests of others.

[ 31 : 45 ] They count others more significant than themselves by not like thinking less of themselves and saying, I'm a nobody, I'm just a failure or something like that, but by being consumed with others.

Look at that. Looking attentively, focusing attentively, steadying their attention. So humility equals loving or looking to others' interests in such a way that we seek to do them good, to build them up, and to bless them.



You know, in the New Testament, this is a sidebar concern for the Apostle Paul or for Jesus. It's quite possibly the core of Christian virtue. If love is the most significant virtue, the cardinal virtue, then humility is the road on which all love travels.

No love is expressed without humility. Look at Romans 12, which we have for you. Others just fill this passage.

We, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. Love one another with brotherly affection.

[ 32 : 53 ] Outdo one another in showing honor, contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own eyes.

Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peacefully with all. Now, that's a big passage to read right now in this message but the idea is that driving through all those things is others.

So when Paul turns to ethics, when he turns to how to live and the most important book he wrote, it's just filled with your mind being focused on other people. The interests of others.

You know, it's no surprise that successful businesses do a wonderful job of anticipating and meeting our interest. everyone's up in their game nowadays, it feels like.

[ 33 : 58 ] Everyone's trying to beat Chick-fil-A. But perhaps no one does it as well as Apple. I read this great interview several years ago where Tim Cook said, the CEO of Apple, confessed, they did not set out to create what you needed.

That doesn't seem to be a good idea off the top. He said, they set out to create what you didn't know you needed. And that's why that iPhone just changed our world.

They just keep coming out with an iPad. I remember when that thing came out. Now I use it all the time. It's like, well, I need a legal pad for that works like a computer, but now I just have to have to have it.

You know, if Apple can do it, how much more can we in the Church of Jesus Christ? This is where God wants to just release us, release our creativity, release our gifting, release our desire to do others good by pursuing the interests of others.

What would it look like to reorient your life in this way? What would it mean you've got to stop doing? And what would it mean that you've got to start? How would it change the way you treated your spouse, your employees?

[ 35 : 14 ] How would it change your generosity? How would it change your whole budget? How would it change what you sought to instill in your children? You know, Christmas is a wonderful season of thinking this way.

How could you pursue the interests of others this Christmas? How could you surprise those in your life? How could you delight them? How could you give them something they never would have expected?

How can you serve? It's incredible. It's the backbone of the Christian life, you know. It is what drives so much of what we do to consider the interests of others an incredible gift and to catch them when they do not anticipate it so that you might remind them of God's love and favor for them in Christ is incredible and a precious gift.

Now, you may be thinking, that's not right. I mean, who's going to look after me? If I'm looking after everybody else's interests, who's going to make sure my interests are met?

Or maybe you're thinking, if I'm all about the needs of others, doesn't that make me dependent on them? Does it make me like a parasite needing others?

[ 36 : 26 ] Does that make me clingy? No one ever likes a clingy friend. Does it make me like that? In some ways, yes. humility will demand much of you.

It's a risky line of work. It will call you to the trenches. It will cause you to do things you don't want to do for others. It will load you down with responsibility.

It will summon you to say hard things and to withstand hard things without flinching. It will sometimes mean that you are overlooked and forgotten. And if it's for Christ, though, humility will never disappoint.

Biblically, it will lead to grace and honor and blessing and joy. Regardless of what our culture says, humility will lead to contentment and exaltation. Biblically, the way up is down and always is.

Jesus said, everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. Peter says, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

[ 37 : 37 ] And this exaltation awaits for all who go humble. Not in the sense that you're exalted above your enemies and all those who are able to mock you so that you may get the one laugh. No, not in that sense, but in the sense that the Lord would not overlook one humble thing, one humble thought, one humble attitude, one humble action.

And he might invite you into his heavens at the end, show a highlight reel, not of your self-interest, but of all the humility and all the interest of others that he gave you the grace to perform.

And he might say, well done, good and faithful servant. Humility will not lose. In the end, it will win. And all those who hide in humility, clothe themselves with it, will be exalted along with it.

and will receive the reward. Humility will never disappoint you. I pray, at all times, pursue it. Pursue it for your soul's joy.

Pursue it for those around you. Pursue it for the church. Surest way to kill a church is to promote self-interest, and many churches do it and die.

[ 39 : 00 ] We're not better than them. But the surest way to build a church, and when Paul wants to build that church in Philippi, he says the surest way to do it is to promote humility. The humble interest of others.

That's what we need. And that's what God's eager to give. May God bless us and help us. Let us pray.

Father in heaven, we don't want to step away too quickly from these commands.

God, I pray that you would help us. God, I pray that you would soften our hearts more and more so that we might be consumed in this way with the interests of others for the glory of Christ.

I pray, God, that where there is conviction, that you would protect us from condemnation, but that you would lead us to a life where we continually choose humility.

[ 40 : 20 ] Father, we need your help. We need your strength. And we thank you that we have your promise that you'll provide all we need.

We trust you. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com). Thank you. Thank you.