

The Church's Message

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[0 : 0 0] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.

We're beginning a series on the building fund, a series for us to think carefully about who we are, what we're called to do, how we're going to try to do it by the grace of God. It's not really a series about money, but we are going to need a little bit of that.

But it's a series about the church. In a very important book on pastoral ministry and leadership, D.A. Carson tells the story of interacting with a Mennonite leader.

So this is Dr. Carson, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity Seminary. He said, I heard a Mennonite leader assess his own movement this way.

One generation of Mennonites cherished the gospel and believed that the gospel entailed certain social and political commitments. The next generation assumed the gospel and emphasized social and political commitments.

[1 : 0 5] The present generation, this is the Mennonite leader assessing his own movement, identifies with social and political commitments, while the gospel is variously confessed or disowned.

It no longer lies at the heart of the belief system of some of who call themselves Mennonite. So he's talking about this breakdown.

The first generation cherishes the gospel and lives in a certain way. Second generation assumes the gospel and emphasizes a certain way of living. The third generation disowns the gospel and continues with a certain way of living.

This means any church is only two generations away from completely fumbling the gospel of Jesus Christ. Very sobering. Dr. Carson says, we have for you, I fear that the cross or the gospel, in a nutshell, without ever being disowned, is constantly in danger of being dismissed from the central place it must enjoy by relatively peripheral insights that take on far too much weight.

So the call of every church is to proclaim the gospel. That's the church's message. But the call is for every church to also continually ensure that the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection, remains in central place.

[2 : 3 2] Nothing along the periphery can, should, be allowed to take on too much weight. So what's the gospel? We know the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, what he did in his life, death and resurrection.

But what exactly does that mean? What exactly must we cherish? What exactly must we guard?

What exactly must we avoid at all cost? And this morning we're open to a very vivid live passage in Galatians 2 to help us see exactly what this means.

I'm going to be reading in verse 11 all the way to 21. Look with me there. But when Cephas, that is Peter, but when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him.

This is possible for all writing. I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

[3 : 35] And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

If you know the book of Acts, Barnabas is his buddy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas, again, that's Peter, before them all, if you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Verse 15, we ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.

Because by works of the law, no one can be justified, will be justified. If in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too are found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin?

[4 : 53] Certainly not. For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law, I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

In a word, where we're going, what this text says is, because of the gospel, you must live boldly free by faith. Because of the gospel, you must live boldly free by faith.

Anything less would begin the fumble. Point one, Peter's mistake. Peter's mistake.

[6 : 04] Now, let me set the context for us briefly. This morning, after Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came down in power on the disciples. They're waiting with power. And they went out to proclaim the gospel to every creature under heaven.

The good news about what Jesus has done. But a man named Paul immediately emerges into this scene in Acts 8 and begins opposing, persecuting, and even killing some of the Christians in those days.

Some of the Christians in Jerusalem, dragging them away from the synagogue. And that's the Paul that's writing this letter. His name was Saul. God, he changed it to Paul.

And while he was still persecuting and killing followers of Christ, he had an encounter with the risen Jesus Christ from heaven. He fell off his animal, and he was blinded, but then God opened his eyes, set him free, and he was called to preach the gospel of free grace.

There's so much we could say here from a background standpoint. But sometime later, he had a confrontation with the apostle Peter about what it means to live in line with the gospel.

[7 : 17] And in these verses, we hear about the confrontation. So this is Acts 15. If you're familiar with Acts, this confrontation, Peter's response gets to the crux, the heart of this letter to the Galatians, as well as the gospel of Jesus Christ itself.

Verses 11 through 14 detail Peter's mistake in this confrontation. When Cephas, that is Peter, that's another name for Peter, comes to Antioch, where Paul is preaching, he ate openly with the Gentiles there.

So Antioch was not a Jewish city. Jerusalem was, but the first church plant was in Antioch. And so Paul's preaching the gospel to Gentiles. He's bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.

When Peter comes to town, who is Jewish, raised Jewish, he comes and eats with the Gentiles who have just gotten saved. You know, they have an anniversary picnic, and he eats with them, and he welcomes them, fellowships with them, breaks bread with them.

But when men come from James, or from the Jerusalem church, Peter stops. Look at verse 12. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles, but when they came, he drew back, separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

[8 : 27] So these guys are not guys that James sent. These guys are what are familiar, are called throughout this letter, the Judaizers. Guys who said, you've got to be circumcised.

You've got to do certain things in order to be saved. And so Paul tells us he confronted him because he stopped eating with the Gentiles. Now, to a first century Jew, and I know there's a little bit of background, but we've got to get through it to get to what we need to hear.

The surprise would not have been that he stopped eating. The surprise would have been that he started eating in the first place. As you know from our study of Mark, the Jews kept laws of cleanness, could not draw near to God if they were unclean or have been associating with people who were unclean, folks like these Gentiles.

But Peter was different. Acts tells us, Peter's an apostle of Jesus Christ. He knew the teaching about how these laws had passed away. He saw the vision of the meats.

He heard the words, rise, kill, and eat. He saw firsthand the gospel breaking into the Gentiles. So Peter stops eating meat.

[9 : 30] I mean, stops keeping these laws. He starts eating meat, and he starts eating with the Gentiles. But then in Antioch, when these guys come to town, Peter stops.

Peter draws back and separates himself. Paul confronts him, says, I opposed him, look at verse 11, to his face because he stood condemned.

Now that seems a little bit strong. In our culture, I think the 11th commandment is thou shalt be nice. We're quick to condemn and cancel anyone who's not nice in the way that we define niceness.

But condemnation seems a little bit extreme here. All he did was step back. Take six feet. Paul continues, though, and tells us why.

Look in verse 14. Verse 11, when Cephas came, I opposed him. Why did he oppose him? Verse 14, when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel.

[10 : 43] I said to Cephas before them all, if you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile, not a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews? Not in line literally means it's referred to straight walking.

It's the same word that we get orthodontists. Straighten up that grill, you know, straighten those teeth. Peter was not walking straight.

Paul's question reveals how he was not walking straight. Peter was a Jew but lives like a Gentile now. What he means by that, he no longer believes that certain meats and associating with certain people makes you unclean or unacceptable to God.

But Paul says, by drawing back and separating, Peter's teaching Gentiles that they must become like Jews. So you see the crux. Peter is a Jew and lives like a Gentile now but through his teaching and example, he's saying these Gentiles must begin to live like Jews.

That's the crux. Peter is a Jew, lives like a Gentile now but he's teaching these guys they're Gentiles, they must begin to live like Jews in order to be clean and acceptable to God. Do you see the problem? Peter's out of line with what he knows to be true.

[12 : 01] He's not walking straight in the gospel by teaching them that they must only eat certain meats and associate with certain people in order to be clean and acceptable to God. Peter is adding to the gospel and so Paul confronts him, Paul confronts him because the gospel is at stake.

Now, this is Peter. They should blow our hair back. This is the apostle, Pentecost preacher, scripture writer, witness of the Christ suffering and he blew it.

But notice also, Peter's mistake was not what he believed but how he behaved. Paul doesn't confront him for believing the wrong thing but for behaving in the wrong way.

Most often, the gospel is displaced and disowned not by what we believe but by how we behave. Now, if you say anyone can come to Jesus Christ, which anyone can come to Jesus Christ, but if we will not associate with them if they've had a divorce or a drug addiction or unruly children or go to the wrong school or dress in the wrong way or any number of things, we say something different.

We may believe anyone can come to Christ but we say to them anyone cannot come to Christ. And what's striking is that Paul doesn't just adjust them like be more kind.

[13 : 46] He says the very gospel is at stake. One writer says that a gospel doctrine produces a gospel culture but a gospel doctrine without a gospel culture is not a church with a gospel doctrine.

Both of them are required. It's so easy and so subtle. There's like five messages right here for churches to fumble the gospel because of the way they behave and because of the way they say others must behave.

And Paul cares deeply about it. Not because Peter was being unkind but because he wants, Peter wants us to live boldly free by faith.

So Paul rebukes him. Point two, Paul's reproof. Paul's rebuke. Paul responds to Peter in the following verses. You see the quotation marks in verse 14.

That's the translators trying to show that this is the question that he asked Peter. And while those quotations capture the very question, the rest of this chapter summarizes Paul's response.

[15 : 13] Verse 15 to 16 includes a one long seemingly redundant sentence but it's vitally important. Martin Luther says this passage, this passage contains the sum of all Christian doctrine.

You want to know about the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ? This passage has it all. So let's see what it says. First thing it says, and I'll explain it from the text, no one is more acceptable before God because of who they are.

No one is more acceptable to God because of who they are. Now notice Paul begins with this general statement. Look in verse 15. We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentiles, sinners.

We know that a person generally out there, a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now like Peter, let me explain a little bit in verse 15 real quick. Like Peter, Paul is a Jew by birth and therefore not a Gentile sinner. Now Paul, when he's saying Gentile sinner there, there probably should be quotation marks around that because he's using the parlance of the day that Gentiles are sinners, Jews are not.

[16 : 20] And he doesn't mean that a Jew is not a sinner in the main sense. What he means is that a Jew is one who's learned the scriptures and obeys the law of God so he's unlike Gentiles who do not know God and do not know what pleases God.

He's not a Gentile sinner. Does that make sense? So he's just drawing out this distinction between Jew and Gentiles and then yet he says, yet we know that a person is not justified by worship of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.

What he's saying is that, and hang with me for a second, even though there is this difference between Jew and Gentile, we know that very clearly in the New Testament, even though there's this difference between Jew and Gentile, very clear in the way they're raised and what they're taught and what they do on their Saturdays, this difference makes no difference in being accepted by God.

Even though we're not like them, yet we know that it makes no difference. We know Jews and Gentiles are different but we know that a person is not accepted before God because of these differences.

This is hugely important. If you read your Bible, if you've got a Bible reading fan, you just read through your Bible, you might believe that God loves the people of Israel because of who they are, because they were born in the right family, because they had the right father and mother and it was passed down like the family, because they were raised in the right way but this verse teaches us no one is exceptional.

[17 : 44] Now let me explain. God has created a world of endless diversity and differences, different races, different social and wealth statuses, different talents, gifts, body types and opportunities.

All these differences make a more beautiful and more diverse place. Now when I married my Vietnamese wife, a whole world opened up to me firstly of food but also so much diversity.

I love it. I'm not going back to meat and potatoes for anything in the world. If you've had pho, you know what I'm talking about. There's so much diversity in the world.

Don't be the fool that thinks your way of doing life is the only way or the best way. God's made it so wonderfully diverse that we'd stop saying things like that.

But all that diversity, all those differences, they may make a world more diverse and beautiful but none of them ultimately matter before God in this sense.

[18 : 52] God does not have a special love for religious people. I've said it before, I think church, kids, it's more of a liability in some ways.

God does not have a special love for successful or powerful or popular people. God does not have a special regard for a certain race or ethnicity. No one is exceptional before God.

No one stands out because of who they are. God regards no one according to the flesh. So if it doesn't matter who we are, then it must matter what we do.

He says, no one is more acceptable to God because of what they've done or what they do. Look in verse 16b. So this is part of that one long sentence.

We know that no one is justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.

[19 : 53] So we've got to take apart this phrase. Now notice the difference. He says generally, we know a person out there is not justified. That's why he said generally, a general statement.

Then he said, we also have believed in Christ in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. There's this wonderful change. We know that no one is exceptional because of who they are.

So we also have believed in Christ. Not only who you are doesn't matter, what you do doesn't matter. Now you have to catch what's going on here. You know, he's saying the Gentiles are sinners.

They're out of the race before it starts. They're unclean, unholy, and unwelcome. They cannot be made right with God. But then Paul says, we too, speaking about himself and Peter, we too have believed in him in order to be justified by faith.

So Paul says, even the Jews who know the scriptures, who know the right things to do, who memorize the Pentateuch, who knew the laws of God, cannot be made right with God by doing those things.

[21 : 00] What Paul is saying, what you do does not make all the difference. Listen, all the bad things you do cannot disqualify you from being accepted by God like a Gentile sinner.

all the good things you do cannot qualify you to be accepted by God like a Jew. All the things you do, whether good or bad, have nothing to do with it at all.

All the good things, all the things you do, whether good or bad, have nothing to do with it. Nothing. Now, this runs counter to all of our instincts and the culture we live in.

culture says if you do well in school, you'll get good grades. If you do well at work, you'll get promoted. If you do well in sports, you might play varsity or get a scholarship.

If you do well in life, you'll settle down with a good spouse and have 3.14 kids. We're taught, be good and you get good things. And the sound of music with Captain Von Trapp, I've never watched a movie actually.

[22 : 06] Or the book. I don't know if it's a book too. Sorry. It may be an unpardonable sin for some of you. When he finds the love of his life accordingly, he sings, nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could.

Listen. So somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good. Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could. So somewhere, I must have done something good.

Living in this culture with our hearts, we assume this is the way God works. A good God, we assume, is looking for good people who do good things to welcome into his good heaven.

So we can just do enough good things, maybe enough good things to outweigh the bad. We've done, we'll get there. We all know bad people do not go to heaven. Hitler's not going to heaven unless he repented in that bunker.

But this verse says good people don't go to heaven either. Good people do not go to heaven.

[23 : 24] B.B. Warfield says, there is nothing in us or done by us at any stage of our earthly development because of which we are acceptable to God.

What's up with this? No one is more acceptable to God because of who they are. No one is more acceptable to God because of what they've done because no one is good before holy God.

I mean, that's what Paul's helping us see. All humankind are sinners and guilty before holy God to try to gain acceptance before God because of who we are. What we do is to build a house on sinking sand.

So we should be like that Philippian jailer who says, what must I do to be saved? Who can deliver me from this body of death? How can we be accepted by God? And running through this passage is the wonderful news of justification by faith alone.

Paul moves, finally, in this last little clause of this verse, from the general to the personal to the universal. Because, by works of the law, no one will be justified.

[24 : 37] This point is stated densely, negatively, to chase away anything else we might lean on and to unveil the only way to be accepted by God. No one's more acceptable because of who they are.

No one's more acceptable because of what they've done. we're only acceptable to God through faith in Jesus Christ. There's only one way to heaven and that's running away from all our bad things and all our good things to Jesus.

David Dixon says it very well. I think we have it for you. I have taken all my good deeds and all my bad deeds and cast them in a heap before the Lord and fled from both and betaken myself to the Lord Jesus Christ and in Him I have sweet peace.

Both are a dead end because faith alone justifies us. Look, four times in this little passage is the word justified.

It's this wonderful, massively important word for the Christian life. Justification refers to God declaring sinners righteous before Him and acceptable to Him by faith alone. It's the unspeakable truth that if we trusted in Christ, God declares us righteous and views us as righteous and treats us as if, just as if, we have never sinned.

[26 : 08] It's the truth that nothing we do today or tomorrow or the remainder of our days can alter our righteous standing before God. But the emphasis of this passage is it must be received by faith.

It must be received by the empty hands of faith or it cannot be received at all. You can't smuggle in, nothing bad can keep you away, but you can't smuggle in anything good.

It must be received by faith. This morning, we, is Reformation Sunday. As Taylor reminded us, it marks the anniversary of the day. Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses on the cathedral door in Wittenberg in 1517.

I mean, 1517. It's an act that started the Reformation. At the heart of the Reformation was preserving this truth.

Now, in those days, the Catholic leaders were selling indulgences. You've probably heard about this. The idea is you would make a payment, you make a donation into the building fund, and I'm just kidding, but you would make a donation, and it would lessen the punishment that your ancestors, the people that have gone before you, would face.

[27 : 19] So it may spring them from purgatory, and one priest taught, when the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs. I mean, doesn't that make you want to give?

We can't make a similar promise. Even better, place your penny on the drum. The pearly gates open, in comes mom. Just like that.

Isn't that great? It would be wonderful if it was true. But the Reformation recovered the biblical truth Paul is talking about here. The only way sinners can be made righteous before God is through faith in Christ alone.

The only way sinners can be made righteous before God is through faith in Christ alone. God does not want your money. God does not want your good works. He does not want your good background, your good Bible reading.

God does not want your help. God does not want to pay the bills so that you can pay the tip. God pays it all. He doesn't want anything from you, just faith and faith to give.

[28 : 20] So give it up for God. God, you know, the point is God saves sinners by faith alone because God must save sinners by himself alone. God saves sinners by faith alone because God must save sinners by himself alone.

This is what the Reformation recovered and it turned the world upside down. Robert Kappen says it well, the Reformation was a time when people went blind, staggering, drunk.

That may not be a metaphor you like to enjoy but go with me. Because they had discovered in a dusty basement of late medievalism a whole cellar full of 1500 year old 200 proof grace.

Bottle after bottle of pure distillate of scripture that would convince anyone that God saves us single handedly. Drunk's not the best way to say it but the idea, it just overtook them.

It blew them away. It blew their hair back. It blew them away that this God, this God would draw them near in spite of all that they've done in spite of all they've tried to do to make it acceptable to Him that He accepts them freely and fully in Jesus Christ.

[29 : 30] So much so their life was ruined because of the gospel. You must live boldly free by faith.

Thirdly, the gospel's solution. Peter's mistake, Paul's rebuke and the gospel's solution. Now the question we should all be asking is how do we live now? If indeed God accepts me fully and completely in Jesus Christ once for all because of believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, how do I live now?

We should live forgiven and free. We are completely forgiven. That's some of what Paul's saying in verses 17 to 19.

He's kind of saying, well, if we, he is saying, if we trust in Christ and then we sin after that, doesn't that, I mean, that's what he's saying, doesn't that make Jesus a sinner because he's associated with us and we're trusting to him and then we become a sinner?

He says, by no means. And he explains why and unpacks what it means to be forgiven. Look at verse 19. He says, for through the law I died to the law that I might live to God.

[30 : 52] Notice that word live in life. I have been crucified with Christ no longer I who live. Christ lives in me. Life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul's saying something radical, amazing, happened in the death of Christ for us. The word died refers not to our death but to the death of Jesus on our behalf. What he's saying is that in being united to Jesus Christ and being crucified with him all the demands of the law against us are satisfied.

Now just go through the Ten Commandments. There's a lot of demand. All those demands, all those fingers pointing at you for all the ways you stray from them, all of them are satisfied. All the accusations of the law are against us against us are silenced.

all the condemnations of the law against us are exhausted. All our guilt before the law is atoned for.

What that means, he's telling you what forgiveness really means. There's nothing else you will ever need to do to make God happy with you. There's nothing else you will ever need to do to make God happy with you.

[32 : 06] That's what that means. I remember one preacher talking about I read about it preaching in a church and he said right before he got up I've told the story before so indulge it one more time right before he got up they had an anthem you know in a church they might have an anthem maybe as they collect the offering or something like that and the anthem the chorus of the anthem said is he satisfied with me?

I don't know I actually know where it goes so I'm not going to see that. I am satisfied with Jesus is he satisfied with me? is he satisfied with me? I am satisfied with Jesus I'm just waiting is he satisfied with me?

Donald Gray Barnhouse got into the pulpit and said yes he is! The gospel means that or nothing he is completely satisfied with you if you put your faith in Jesus Christ there's nothing you can do will do you could possibly think about doing that would make him more satisfied with you that's the truth of the gospel is he satisfied?

yes! I'm not saying it's not hard to believe but it's true one old preacher talks about many Christians are miserable because they don't understand this truth they don't understand justification they're probably people who have grown up in church and are really interested in being a good Christian and doing all the right things checking all the right boxes you know I have a reading plan you want to check those boxes feel good they get quite down on themselves when they see others succeeding and seem to only see their failures and that's just the devil's point he wants you to become focused on your sanctification before you properly understand your justification that's what this verse is talking about he wants you to become focused on what you must do before you understand what Jesus has done and we swing in to help these miserable people and say things like you're not that bad you're beautiful you're worthy you're enough you're just easy on yourself but that's all wrong you are that bad but Jesus took all your badness into the grave and did away with it once for all you will only learn what he did with all your badness when you stopped looking at it and stopped looking at others this passage is a wonderful way to draw a hard line between our justification and our sanctification there's things we got to get in order

I was convicted while we were singing of things well not always often happens when we're gathering and singing I'm like Lord why did I say that yesterday holy God how long but he's satisfied with me he's satisfied with you you are just as righteous before God and just as acceptable to God by faith in Jesus Christ right now as you will be on the final day that will not change so stop asking is he happy he crushed his son for you we're free what he's saying if we die to the law we don't live by it anymore I mean dead men don't obey you know they don't respond

[35 : 56] I mean if you died to it let me just run its course that's what he's saying we live now to God I've been crucified with Christ it's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me one of the sweetest verses in the Bible I don't nullify the grace of God for righteousness through the law then Christ died for no purpose I no longer live I don't know how many times I've recited that to my heart Christ lives in me I live by faith in the son of God we're set free because we're born again we're set free because we become new creation we're set free because we're brought into a brand new world yeah I'm nearsighted by birth I guess but it took me a long time to figure out so I was you might think I'm just slow on the uptake a little more than that in school

I was last name Alexander so I was always in the front row my mom liked that you know closer to the teacher to warn me and stuff but you know I never knew I needed the glasses because I always sat in the front row and things were always close and being nearsighted means you can't see far well and I went to the doctor when I was in 11th grade because I guess I got shifted around and couldn't see what she was writing on the board anymore and so I went to the optometrist or something and I got some glasses and the whole world opened up I remember one day I was with a friend of mine sitting there looking at a bird a robin you know those things there's like gazillions of them all over the place I said what kind of bird is that he goes a robin you idiot I don't know what I used to shoot when I went bird hunting just anything but it wasn't just robins I saw he was all sorts of stuff so many things became clear that were unclear so many things became sharp that were fuzzy whole world opens up that's what happens when God makes a new person everything changes whole world

I was talking with somebody the other day talking about the rush of excitement for so many things that they were never excited about before because they've been born again because they found out that Jesus is better than anything else he doesn't just want you to come to him to be forgiven he wants to make you brand new he wants to give you something so much better he wants to give you himself I've been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me the life I now live I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me that's all this church has to offer but it's enough broke the back of hell to bring it to you

God broke the back of hell to bring it to you so we're starting a building fund and you may ask why now well past three years our attendance has is continuing to grow making it harder and harder to find a place to gather each Sunday for worship the YMCA may be our last possible place in this town trust me I've visited every single one of them if you think about it pray for me no I'm just kidding second our membership has continued to mature and that is reflected in steady and generous giving to our little church thirdly we've been entrusted with a lot too much is given much is required scripture says specifically a whole bunch of children I like what Devin said there's our future that's what I remember see some kid punching another kid there's our future it may be grim but you know pull the plane up among our 82 adult members we have 80 children not to mention the children of others who attend in case you're wondering that's a lot all of them in Devin's church much less we believe a building will help us better serve all those in this church and train up the next generation to shoot out like arrows for the calls of Christ fourthly a building will facilitate many more opportunities to serve one another and to serve our community but fifthly and most importantly a building will provide a more permanent location for us to proclaim the gospel of free grace in this community for years to come that's all we want either God saves sinners or there's no hope this is all true and God saves sinners by the proclamation of the gospel through the failing lips of human people like me and you and John Webster says if we understand the teaching of scripture the church will not attempt to say everything but to speak one word and to speak it well and the one word will be the word of the gospel of Jesus Christ we're not serious about ourselves but we're serious about God the gospel and our call to proclaim it may God help us

Father in heaven we offer ourselves to you seriously we do not play games with these truths God we want to live in the good of them we want to live this week with the awareness we want to live under the smile of God the Father above who for our sake made him who knew no sin to be sin so that in him for all time and for all eternity we might become the righteousness of God God sent him the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God that we who were just strangers and aliens fellow citizens with the saints have been brought in to this family to know him to walk with him to commune with him

[43 : 27] Lord help us we pray as we press forward in faith as we peer into the future and as we commit to trust you in all things we praise you in Jesus name Amen Amen You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com B