

True Community

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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.

1 John 1, 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the word of life. The life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you, that you too may have fellowship with us, and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

[1 : 29] If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

May God bless the hearing and preaching of His word. Well, school is back.

[2 : 50] And we're all looking forward to fall. You know, we're looking for a little bit of relief from all this. Over the years, I've enjoyed, when schools come back in session, I've enjoyed reading a list put out to describe this year's freshmen.

For all the students entering high school as freshmen this year, when they see wire-rimmed glasses, they think Harry Potter, not John Lennon.

Pressing pound means nothing to them, only hashtag. Listen, this year's freshmen have never licked a postage stamp.

It's a sad reality. You know, their proud parents did not record their first steps on camcorders mounted on their shoulders like bazookas.

They have always, their parents have always had an iPhone handy to capture every moment. This year's freshmen were born seven years after two planes collided into the World Trade Center.

[4 : 00] 9-11 is something they were taught in school, but never a memory they could personally have. The notorious B.I.G., Kurt Cobain, John Candy, Pope John Paul, and Saddam Hussein were never alive in their lifetime.

They've never seen a new episode of Saved by the Bell. Glad we got these Kleenex up here. I might need one. Never seen a new episode of Fresh Prince of Bel-Air or Full House.

Most tragically, the Tennessee football team has never been good. Most interesting of all, though, since this year's freshmen were born, the world of the Internet has drastically changed the way we do everything.

Most especially the way we relate to one another. This year's freshmen have never known life without the Internet. Thankfully, they've never known life without Dial-Up, or they've never known life with Dial-Up.

They've never known a day when cell phones were not everywhere. More importantly, they've never known a day when smartphones were not everywhere. Google, Facebook, Twitter have

always been around.

[5 : 19] Instagram came out when they were in diapers. And the apps have kept on coming throughout their lifetime. I read an article this week, 21 apps every parent should know.

I only knew about, but did not have on my phone, three of them. So I'm 18 down on these apps. Everyone should know. Well, many of these apps, as everyone knows, are designed to help us connect and communicate, to find friends and find encouragement.

And I must admit, they're incredibly powerful. WhatsApp allows us to communicate with cousins in Vietnam. So they're incredibly powerful, enable us to communicate in ways we never would imagine.

But these apps, designed to help us communicate and connect, are not delivering what they promise. Numerous studies confirm the feelings of loneliness and isolation that are more prevalent than ever.

The number of people Americans discuss important matters with has dropped from three to two over the past 20 years. The number of people who say they don't have a single close friend has quadrupled in 30 years.

[6 : 27] We all know it. We all talk so much about my people, my tribe, my clan, but we're all struggling to fit in in a way that we've never experienced before.

As a culture, and all the feeds and likes and comments and snaps don't take away the feeling of being alone. And what makes it worse is when we're around the family and friends that do love us, we're more distracted and disengaged than ever.

One recent study read this week, the average American touches their phone 2,617 times each day, devoting two hours and 30 minutes. The same study said power users, a.k.a. most teens, touch their phones over 5,000 times a day.

If you want to do a little exposure therapy, sign up on your smartphone to receive a notification on how much time you're devoting each day, and you will be astonished.

So what do we do? Delete our accounts. Throw away our phone. Unplug the internet.

[7 : 45] That may help, but it won't solve anything. All our loneliness, isolation, distraction, and disengagement is alerting us to the reality that we weren't made to live alone.

And the cheap alternative of online friends and on-screen connection will never satisfy. We're made for something more. The Bible astonishingly devotes so much attention to what is more for us, to a new community.

These verses show us how it works. In a word, where we're going, God calls us to honestly share our lives in community. God calls us to honestly share our lives in community.

Community, biblically defined, is sharing honestly our life together in Christ. Our life is not our own. Our life is Jesus Christ, and community is sharing that.

So God is in the light, and He's calling us to walk into the light, honestly sharing our life. So we're going to break this out in three questions. Actually, just three words. The first is why. Why?

[8 : 51] Why? Why? Why? God calls us to honestly share our lives in community. But why? Why does God call us to community? Wouldn't it be better if we watched after ourselves?

Wouldn't it be better if we minded our own business? Sometimes you say that to your friends. Just mind your own business, man. Wouldn't it be better if we watched after ourselves? Isn't that the way the world would be a better place, if everyone just minded their own business and stayed in their own lane?

God says no. God calls us to share our lives in community because the gospel restores fellowship with Him and with one another. Now, this passage, the first four verses is just one, I was going to say tangled sentence, but it's kind of a mangled sentence, you know?

This one long tangled sentence with six relative pronouns, who, which, whatever, relative pronouns, which, which, you see it there in the beginning, that which, I mean, it begins with a pronoun.

You'd probably get a mark on that in your English. That which was from the Magundi, which we have heard, which we have seen, which we looked upon and have touched. That which, verse three, we have seen and heard, we proclaim.

[10 : 05] All these pronouns refer back to and point to the noun. They refer back to and point to the life that was made manifest.

Verse two, the life was made manifest. We've seen it and testify to it. So John's trying to point us out something. He's that which we have heard, seen, looked upon, and touched with our hands.

John is saying, I'm not talking about a legend. I'm not talking about a fantasy. I'm not talking about a dream. I'm talking about someone that I have heard, that I have touched, that I have seen. He's talking about the eternal life manifest, and that's a John way of saying it. He's talking about Jesus Christ. John is saying, all these relative pronouns are saying, I was an eyewitness. I heard, saw, touched Jesus Christ. Now Christianity is inseparately tied to history. It's either historically true or completely bogus. Historians tell us that John lived into his 90s in Ephesus. [11:26] I think he was the oldest apostle. He lived into his 90s in Ephesus telling stories. Telling stories like this about being with Jesus. Now I love stories from old men, but can you imagine rocking next to, rocking in the rocking chair, next to the apostle John to hear?

The sentence continues in verse 3 when we get the subject and verb.

So all these, that which, the life that he's talking about, we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you. We proclaim to you that which we have seen, heard, and touched, the eternal life made manifest.

We proclaim to you. Now John is getting at what he's trying to get at. We proclaim to you so that you might have fellowship, verse 3, with us, and indeed our fellowship, is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now I just love this. Most people tell their best stories so that you ooh and ah at them and realize how different you are than them. But not John. John's saying, I'm telling you all about this one that I've seen and touched and heard so that you might be drawn in, so that you might share, that you might be a part of this.

[12:46] And indeed he says, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Now fellowship is one of those words that we use a lot in the church. It just means to share at its base.

It means to give and take and share, you know, play time. I don't know. Well, sharing time, it's what that means. It leads to the giving and taking that are necessary for every relationship.

What John is saying, before we talk about the giving and taking that you must do in your relationships in order to prosper, John is saying that at the center of God is fellowship. The center of who God is, is this giving and taking and fellowship.

God has existed in fellowship, sharing joy, delight, and love as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for eternity. You know, they say familiarity breeds contempt, but not so with God.

God has always existed as three persons without the least bit of irritation, annoyance, and frustration, delighting perfectly in himself. He's content.

[13:50] He's happy. He's overjoyed all the time. That is who God is. You know, there are different parts of Scripture where we suddenly see what it's really like, and we see that at Jesus' baptism.

Jesus goes down into the water. John the Baptist baptizes him so that he might be obedient and fulfill all righteousness. And he rises up out of the water, and the dove comes down. That was the, or the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove.

And immediately the Father said, This is my Son with whom I'm well pleased. It's almost like the veil is ripped open for a second. We get a peek into heaven.

That's what's been going on forever and ever and ever. You are my Son with whom I am well pleased. I delight in you. So contrary to what we may have heard, God did not create us and Jesus did not die for us because he needed us.

He didn't create us. Jesus didn't die for us because he was lonely. He wasn't looking for the right free agent.

[14:58] Wasn't looking for somebody to advance his causes. And yet John is telling us, the reason he's proclaiming this to us, is he did create us and did die for us so that he might have fellowship with us.

He came to be friends. Check this out. On the night Jesus was betrayed, he prays these breathtaking words for you and me. Look in verse John 17. He says, I do not ask for these only. So he's talking about his disciples that are with him on the night he was betrayed. But also for those who will believe in me through their word. That's you.

That's you. That they, the ones who believe in me, through their word, through the apostles' word, they may be one. Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you.

That they also may be in us. So that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me, I have given to them.

[16:01] That they may be one even as we are one. Now, those are heady words. Just leave that up there for a moment. Those are heady words. All be one.

You in me. I in us. They in us. It's almost like John is tripping out. You know, what is going on? You know, it's pushing the limits of language. That's what's going on. He's pushing the limits of language to capture the scandal of what is happening.

God didn't die so that you could wait in the lobby. God died so that you might be brought into the inner Trinitarian delight and fellowship and joy forever and ever and ever.

So that's what, that they may be in us. That they, that all those who believe in me may be in us. God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit brought into fellowship to share as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have for all eternity.

So here's what it is. Jesus did not come to save you. Jesus did not come to rescue you from hell. And Jesus definitely did not come to make sure you give him a few hours of the week and mind your P's and Q's.

[17:10] Jesus came to become friends with you. Jesus came to have fellowship with you. Jesus came to change your life from the bottom up. So it begs the question, why are we here?

It's just a silly thing to do if Jesus is not real. Why come to church? It's the right thing to do. It makes us feel good, you know, at the start of the week.

You know, it makes mom happy. It makes mom happy. Why do we read? Why do we pray? What if everything we did for God was driven by the unfathomable realization that God wants to be friends with us?

That's what this is all about. J.I. Packer in his wonderful book, *Knowing God*, he says, there is great incentive. Now this is classic Packer understatement. There is great incentive to worship and love God in the thought that for some unfathomable reason, he wants me as his friend and desires me to be his friend and has given his son to die for me in order to realize that purpose, in order that we could be friends.

So all the Bible, all of what God has done in Jesus Christ is the Lord saying, I want you to know about me. I want you to know me. I want to be your friend.

[18:39] The great glory of the gospel is not fire insurance or forgiveness. It's not a good marriage or well-behaved kids. The great glory of the gospel is God and fellowship with him.

This is why God calls our life. This is why the screens don't satisfy because God has designed us to find fellowship that everything in this world is a terrible alternative, one that falls short of what he has.

So why? Point to how. How? How? How? God calls us to honestly share our lives in community, but how? How does he make it happen?

Well, John continues and tells us that he makes it happen by eliminating every obstacle to real fellowship. Look at verse 5. He continues. It's a little less tangled here too, which is nice.

He continues, verse 5. This is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. This is the message.

[19:42] God is light. In him, there's no darkness at all. Are you sure, John? This is the word Jesus and his disciples declare?

I shouldn't be God is love and in him is nothing but love at all. or God is holy and in him is nothing but holiness at all.

Or God is joy. That's what Dr. Piper would say. God is joy and in him is nothing but joy at all. Right? Those are the right answers, John. It's not God is light and in him is no darkness at all, but John is telling us something to help underline what he's trying to communicate.

God has no darkness or shadows. God has no hiddenness or secrecy or surprises. God has no imperfections or blemishes.

God has nothing to cover up or be ashamed of. Positively, God is pure, perfect, excellent in every way. God is light. He is radiant and beautiful in every way and more importantly for our purposes, because God is light, God gives light.

[20:59] That's what John is getting at because God is light. God gives light. The most amazing thing about light is light shines. Light pierces into the darkness.

Now, light doesn't shine for itself. You don't turn on a lamp so that it can have a few hours of light every day. We got to turn on the lamp, you know, it's got to be on from 10 to 2.

You know, whatever it is, you don't turn on the lamp. No, you turn on the lamp so that you can see. So too with a lighthouse, you know, they're so tall and impressive and whitewashed and you turn on the lamp, but they don't shine to show how tall and impressive they are even though we take pictures underneath them to look at how impressive they are.

They shine into the ocean to say, hey, you in the darkness, there's land here. There's safe harbor here. There's safety here.

And so too, the light of the gospel is like this. Light invades and invites. Light chases away darkness. Turn on the light and the darkness is chased away. Light provides safety, security, and sanity from the darkness.

[22 : 05] This is what John is after. The message of the gospel is God is light and gives light. Once we walked in darkness, now we walk in the light of light. Light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

Light shines into our dark hearts so that we might see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So yes, John, God is light and in Him there's no darkness at all.

And yet, John continues with this light and darkness theme to remind us how Jesus calls in the darkness and eliminates every obstacle in the darkness for those who will come to Him.

Look at verse 6, he says, if we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He's in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

The blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. What does it mean to walk in darkness?

Now, John was writing to people who walked everywhere, the most common form of transportation in the first century was walking.

[23 : 21] So walking here, other parts of Scripture too, Galatians 5, other places, is a metaphor for life. To walk is to live.

So John's saying those who walk in darkness live in darkness. darkness. You know, those who walk in darkness are not merely on the sidewalk of darkness, but under the sway and the dominion of darkness.

Regardless of what they may say, those who walk in darkness are those who have made friends with darkness. Those who night after night do not reject the one-too-many beers.

Those who have a secret life. Those who have a Sunday face and a whitewashed outside that doesn't line up with how they spend their time, their money, and their weekends.

I mean, not Mark, John is saying you cannot say you're friends with Jesus if you're presently walking in darkness. You cannot say you're friends with Jesus if you're living in darkness.

[24 : 45] If you think you have both, you lie. Your relationship with Jesus is a sham. It's completely empty.

But the back and forth there, the indictment of those who walk in darkness. And then the following, verse 7, is a promise for those who will come out.

So the promise is powerful. What John is saying, you can have Jesus. Your hidden sins and all the shame that comes with them cannot keep you from Jesus and His cleansing blood.

So while John is definitely indicting those who are walking in darkness who have a double life, John is saying that the offer for Jesus Christ stands wide open.

And you can have Him right now where you are. You can have Jesus. You can come clean. Verse 8, he continues. He doesn't seem to change the subject, but he actually does.

[25 : 55] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and truth is not in us. Confess our sins, He is faithful and just. Forgive us our sins, cleanses us of all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

What John is saying now is you cannot say you're friends with Jesus if you say you're not a sinner and if you say you do not continue to sin. Now, we don't need to take a show of hands, but I doubt many of us would raise our hand to say we're not actively still a sinner.

We don't actively still stray from God. If we do say that, we should stop saying that according to 1 John. But would we say that our sin is still our main problem?

Every religion asks the question, what are people's biggest, most abiding problem? would we say it's our sin or would we say it's the bad hand we've been dealt? Or the wrongs done to us?

Or our parents, our spouse, our personality, our genetics? Well, the Bible is trying to say our main problem is sin. And when we fail to see sin as our greatest problem, we hide behind fig trees and

make God a liar.

[27 : 22] A liar? We make God a liar because God says sin is our greatest problem.

That's what Jesus came to rescue us from. And so we make His solution seem ridiculous. But there's a promise.

you don't have to stop sinning to have a relationship with God. Your continuous tendency to sin, all the discouragement that come with it, cannot keep you from Jesus' justifying and welcoming blood. That's what John is trying to help us see. Look in chapter 2, 1. He says, I'm writing to you these things so that you may not sin, but if anyone does, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous, He's the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

So John is saying, what he's trying to say is sin will always disrupt and deserve the community. But God's solution is enough. God is in the light.

[28 : 28] He calls us to come to the light. All the sin that makes us sick and leaves us wallowing in darkness is cleansed through Jesus Christ. In the light, we find a community unlike any other. A group of people with Jesus at the center.

That's what a church is supposed to be. A group of people whom Jesus binds together. Who is the one in whom we share? Who is the center of our fellowship? In just a few months, we'll celebrate four years in the life of our young church.

In these days, I guess in every day, but in these days, it seems especially important. We must not be a community who are together because of a common race.

Social status, life stage, political party, way of schooling or something else. If we're just a group of people gathered around a bunch of commonalities, no one in Athens will be surprised.

No one's jaw will drop. Just another civic program will fail. We must be a community of people gathered together because of Jesus Christ.

[29 : 38] all other allegiances move way down the list. D.A. Carson says, the church is not made of natural friends.

It's made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not a common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort.

Christians come together because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe Him a common allegiance. So thirdly, what?

What? Jesus calls us to share our lives in community, but what do we do? What? Like, He breaks down every obstacle, the fellowship, but what do we do?

In a word, be honest. It's a remarkably simple application point to John's message here.

[30 : 58] Verse 6 and 7, you see the contrast. We say we have fellowship while we walk in darkness, so in dishonesty, we lie. Verse 7, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship.

So to walk in the light is to turn from deceit, half-truths, and withdrawing. To walk in light means we put on honesty, we're sincere, we're truthful, we're candid, we confess our sins to one another and struggles to one another.

We refuse to stay in the shadows. We admit we need help. I recently read Bruce Springsteen's biography. He was telling this story.

He's a Jersey boy. I'm from South Carolina, so it was very fascinating to read about a Jersey boy growing up, though, with a hard dad that wasn't around when he needed him, who drank too much, who beat him and basically everyone else in the household.

And Bruce rebelled hard. He dodged the draft, Vietnam War, chased the lights. He ran from everyone and everything, including his dad.

[32 : 09] Goes through life. this relationship, meant to be one of the most powerful and influential relationships in his life, was completely broken beyond repair.

It was a Grand Canyon-like ravine between the both of them of anger, resentment, bitterness, and despair. But one morning, in the days before Bruce was about to become a father, let me continue. I'll just quote him. He says, my dad showed up at my bungalow doorstep in L.A. He had driven six hours from where he lived and, quote, just wanted to stay high.

I love that. He drove six hours and said he's just stopping in to say hi. Bruce says, I invited him in and at 11 o'clock in a small, sun-drenched dining area, we sat at the table together.

My father, in his normal state, had little talent for small talk, so I did the best I could. Suddenly he said, Bruce, you've been very good to us.

[33 : 28] Talking about the things, a house he bought him after he sold a bunch of records. Bruce said, I acknowledge I had. There was a pause.

His eyes drifted out of the Los Angeles haze and he continued, and I wasn't very good to you. Small silence caught us.

Bruce. Did the best you could, I said. That was it. Bruce continues. It was all I needed.

All that was necessary. Some of you need to get as real as Bruce Springsteen's father this morning. There may be great problems in your life because you won't step out of the darkness. You won't own up to what you're struggling with. You won't open up to how bad things are.

[34 : 36] You won't share how bitter you've become. For some of you, your darkness is a double life. You're trying to love God and love money. Trying to love God and love praise.

Trying to love God and love porn. It's a dead end. For some of you, your darkness is a secret sin, something no one knows about. I'll never forget years ago watching the Vietnam War documentary. And my wife's from Vietnam. So we're watching it, not just for educational purposes, but to learn more about our home country. And watching this documentary and they're interviewing a guy from the My Lai Massacre.

If you know about the war, it's just a completely despicable period in American history, American war history. And this guy was there. He said, it was lots of killing, lots of raping.

And this man with the video camera right in his face, he said, I was there. I did it. I raped that girl.

[35 : 42] It was me. I just broke down in tears. You never see that type of lack of evasion in our culture.

And it just blew me away. Well, that's what God wants you to do. On the other side is not the judgment finger. On the other side is light. That's what he's calling you into. You can hide with your secret sin.

You can have a skeleton in the closet or you can have life. He came that we might have life and life abundantly. For some of you, your darkness is a pit of bitterness.

Whatever it is, it may look like there's no way out. But John is telling us the light is out there. God is in the light. God is calling out into the light.

Come. Today is a day of salvation. If you would come, just admit who you are. Admit what you need and I will bless you. I will say, you are my son. Come enter into my presence and receive full forgiveness of your sins through Jesus Christ.

[36 : 45] That is right. That's what it says. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. So what waits on the other side of that dark closet that you found yourself in is light.

The light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ for all those who deserve wrath alone. So why do we need to be honest?

to be honest? It's the only way to true fellowship. I just want you to read this one more time. Verse 7.

Hear this. If we walk in the light, if we stop the stupid charade as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

Honesty is the only way to fellowship with God. But also, honesty is the only way to fellowship with one another.

[38 : 12] To let us walk in the light by living honestly and openly before God and one another. You know, in fellowship, we find help.

We find real help. You know, one pastor says, in the church, you can either be impressive or known. Only an idiot would choose to be impressive.

but by being honest, you can be known. You can find help.

You can find people who help you. You can try to get through life on your own or you can admit that you need help as well. And I just want to give you one application. I encourage you to break the script.

I was talking with a friend this morning about breaking the script. You know, when we walk through the lobby of our church, our Sunday building that we call a church building, walk through the lobby, there's a script.

[39 : 13] How you doing? There's a script. I'm doing fine. You know, whatever it is. Yeah, I'm doing great. You know, whatever your typical is, better than I deserve, you know, whatever. What do they say? Never mind. But you know, Chick-fil-A has a script too.

And so, let's don't fall into the Chick-fil-A like script. We don't need to fall into a script at church. You may say, I'm doing well. You know, I'm struggling with debilitating fears right now.

Actually, I don't know how I'm doing. Let's break the script. And that's where we find help. You know, Ed Welch says, a good rule of thumb is that when you're stuck in hardships or sins, you keep enlarging the circle of those who know until you're no longer stuck.

Just tell people. We find help. We find protection. Peter tells us, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Lions don't devour lambs in flocks.

Lions devour lambs that they pulled off by themselves. You have an enemy that is trying to isolate you to move you as far away from truthful, committed relationships as possible.

[40 : 21] If he isolates you, he will devour you. People who drift from the community of faith before they drift, people drift from the community of faith before they drift from the faith. Another way of saying it, everyone who drifts from the community of faith ends up drifting from the faith.

But in the community we find help, we also find the protection we most desperately need. So God calls us to honestly share our lives together in community.

So in application, I want to encourage you to go to community group. There's no context more carefully and deliberately focused on building these types relationships than that.

Community groups are definitely where the church gets smaller, groups where true lasting relationships are formed, they provide opportunities for prayer, encouragement, and relationship building, but there are also places where we can and should be honest.

You're welcome to attend Sunday morning, thanks for coming. But you will not prosper here without a community group. I want to urge you to make it a priority.

[41 : 32] Make it deliberate. Focus on it. Make it, you know, several weeks ago I was pulled over. This time I wasn't speeding.

I wasn't yelling anything out the window or whatever. I don't know what else he'd pull you over for. I was driving with an open bag of concrete in the back of my van.

So I was driving very slow. I got the open bag of concrete for like 20 cents, you know, so it was better than paying for the whole thing. I didn't need the whole bag and so I carried it but I was driving very slow with this open bag of concrete making every turn slow.

So of course he saw all this going on and thought I was driving slow because I was intoxicated or something like that. He pulled me over and said, Sir, are you okay? Yes, sir, I'm okay. Are you sure you're okay?

I said, yes, sir, I'm okay. I just have an open bag of concrete in the back of my van. He goes, okay, I totally understand. Drive slow and drive safe all the way home.

[42 : 42] Well, our lives are like that. we can just rush bumbling through them or we can live like we've got an open bag of concrete in the back seat.

We need help. We need others. So find a community group. One thing Taylor was mentioning, all those details will be on the blog so they'll begin this Wednesday night, next Sunday night.

so find a group where you can find life. Make it not an option for your time, but as an immovable appointment in your time, helping you walk in the light and have fellowship with one another.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we thank you and praise you that you are in the light and yet you and your mysterious mercy call those who are in the darkness into the light.

More than that, God, you invade the lives of us who are in the darkness with the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So we rest in you.

[44 : 01] We boast in you. We rejoice in 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.

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