

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:10

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[0 : 00] One of the benefits of speaking from the floor on the evenings is that if you sit further back I can still come and be close to you.

So, we ran out of white paper in our house yesterday, but I thought this is appropriate given the new St. Patrick's Day celebration in our city today.

So, we are here continuing a series in 1 Thessalonians. So, if you have a Bible, you can turn there. If you want to pick the one in the pew in front of you, page 986, we're going to be looking at 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 and 2 and 3 actually.

And while you're turning there, just if you've actually looked at our sermon card, which is the little blue thing in the pew in front of you, you will notice that we are preaching on the same passage for the next two weeks. And you may think, well, gosh, why are we doing that?

Well, it's because we feel like there are two great sermons bursting out of this text that we want to preach. And so, I'm going to be teaching this week significantly on the character of Paul's ministry.

[1 : 10] And then Greg's going to pick up next week and talk about the theme of suffering that runs through it. And so, we felt it was worth giving both of these their due.

And so, that's why we're preaching on this text for the next two weeks. And it's why I may not cover everything in the passage tonight that you might see as we read it. Having given that introduction, let's go ahead and read together 1 Thessalonians starting in chapter 2, verse 17.

And we'll read through chapter 3, verse 10. But since we were torn away from you brothers for a short time, in person, not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you, I, Paul, again and again.

But Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.

Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind in Athens alone. And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's co-worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith that no one be moved by these afflictions.

[2 : 27] For you yourselves know that we were destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer afflictions, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know.

For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love, and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you.

For this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live if you are standing fast in the Lord.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God. As we pray most earnestly day and night, that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Let's pray. God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you for the richness of how you have revealed yourself to us.

[3 : 44] God, in it we see who you are, and we see the ways that you work in the world. God, I pray tonight that we would, as we study this passage together, have eyes that are ready to see and hearts that are ready to hear and receive from you all that you have to say to us.

God, give me, by your Holy Spirit, the words that you want me to say tonight, that, Lord, we might be encouraged in our faith. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Elie Wiesel, I probably said that wrong, but Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor, Nobel Peace Prize winning author and speaker, says this, The opposite of love is not hate.

It is indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness. It is indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy. It is indifference. And the opposite of life is not death.

It is indifference. I read this week a story of a girl named Danielle. She lived in Tampa, Florida.

[4 : 59] And her story is one of neglect. In fact, of indifference on such a profound level that it provokes anger and indignation when you read it.

It's a story of a six-year-old girl who was found in the back room of her home. Her mother, her two adult brothers were home. This is where they lived. But she was found in this back room, this back closet, alone, surrounded by a pile four feet high of soiled diapers.

She herself was wearing only a diaper. And as the police and the social workers came and they took her out, they found that, in fact, she was like a baby in every respect.

She could not eat solid food. She did not know how to talk. As she left, her mother cried, Don't take my baby. I love her. Her mother didn't hate her.

Her mother didn't beat her. Her mother didn't act violently towards her. But she was simply indifferent. All she provided was enough food to keep her body alive.

[6 : 22] This poor girl suffered what the social workers called the worst case of neglect that she had ever seen. The doctor said she would be permanently scarred.

Her mother claimed to love her. But the reality was otherwise. In her indifference, she did great damage. It's usually universally recognized that indifference is a bad thing.

Indifference to suffering. Indifference to the trials of others. This is why we cheer on. When people stand up and oppose slavery. This is why we get behind organizations like International Justice Mission.

Or Love 146 here in New Haven. That fight against sex trafficking. And the abuse of children. This is why we so get involved.

With others who suck. Because we know that indifference is not right. It's not good. But you know, if we're honest. At least I know if I look into my own heart.

[7 : 37] If I'm honest. It's not that hard to see how easily I can be indifferent. It's not anything like the story in Tampa. But I know that I can break my little two-year-old girl's heart.

By simply being indifferent to her. If I walk into the door at the end of the day. And I just ignore her. If I don't pay attention to her talking to me.

If I make everything else. My own comfort. My own agendas. My own plans. More important. Than looking her in the face. And interacting with her.

It will break her heart. I am not incapable of indifference. And I guess. It's that I'm not alone. Why? Why might we be indifferent? Well, I think there are lots of reasons. One might be self-protection. If I engage myself in caring about other people. I might get hurt. It's going to be really messy.

[8 : 40] It might cost me something. And they might not. They might reject me. They might not think that I'm the greatest thing in the world. When I try to love them. So. So I'm just going to keep my distance.

Because it's a whole lot easier. It might be. That we're indifferent. Because we're preoccupied. That is. I have my mind on other things.

And. We never get around. To actually identifying. And seeing the people who are right in front of us. Because. We have our plans. We have our tasks. We have our.

Our things to do. And we never see the people. Right in front of us. It might be from.

Self-indulgence. I have a limited amount of resources.

And time. And energy. And I'm going to invest them. In the things. That give to me. The most bang for my buck. I'm going to. Invest my time and energy.

[9 : 36] And even my love. In things that. Make me feel good. Help me feel like. I'm making a contribution to the world. That contribute to my success. Or my happiness. Loving people.

It's really messy. Costly. Doesn't always give the return. That we want. And so there are lots of reasons.

Why we. Might be indifferent. Towards others. So we ought not to think. That we are above. Being indifferent. And so we must face.

The words. Of Elie Wiesel again. That indifference. Is the opposite. Of love. And it is a terrible thing. To live a life. Of indifference. The good news is.

That our passage this morning. Portrays. In fact. Just the opposite. Of indifference. This evening. Not this morning. Did I say this morning? I think I did. Yeah. This evening.

[10:35] We're looking at a passage. That has. It is a portrayal. Of what happens. When the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Grips someone's heart. Moves us. Deeply.

To live. A different kind of life. Not of indifference. But one of deep investment. In others. For God's sake. If you've been here. You know that the book of Thessalonians.

Is a letter written. By Paul. He administered there. And then he had to leave quickly. After a short period of time. And he was writing back to them. Because he wanted them to be encouraged.

He wanted them to stand fast. In the gospel. And if you remember. We looked at chapter one. And he reminded them of the gospel. How it worked in them. And the gospel. How it was at work. In the apostles.

As they came. And proclaimed Christ to them. And how the gospel. Then rang forth. As it took root. In this city. And in the hearts. And lives of these people. And it went forth.

[11:30] Further and further. Is this good news. That Jesus Christ. Came. To die. For sinners. To redeem. A world. For God. And it rang forth.

And then chapters two and three. What we see. What we see. Is Paul. Honing in on. On the nature. Of his ministry. Of how he. And his friends. Worked.

As they were doing. What they were doing. Among the Thessalonians. Is at. And as we read earlier. You might have picked this up. He's doing it. Because he's so afraid. We are so afraid.

That you. Might lose heart. Because we knew. You were suffering. Because of your faith. And it would be easy. To turn back. It would be easy. To say. It's not worth it.

So Paul says. I want to remind you. I want to remind you. Of what kind of ministry. You had among you. Because that ministry. Reflects the message. Of the good news. Of the gospel. That we preached.

[12:24] Among you. And that message. Points to a savior. Who is worth. Holding on to. No matter what. And so we ask the question.

And what our passage. Looks at tonight. What we're going to look at. Is what was the nature. Of Paul's gospel ministry. And what does it have to teach us. About life. What we see.

Is that instead of indifference. It is a picture. Of surprising investment. In the spiritual flourishing. Of others. So we're going to look at. Three things. Three characteristics.

Or three aspects. Of Paul's ministry. I even got it alliterated. So that we're going to look at. The feel. Of gospel ministry. We're going to look at. The focus. Of gospel ministry. And we're going to look at. The fellowship. Of gospel ministry. So the feel. The focus. And the fellowship. Of gospel ministry. So first. Let's look at the feel.

[13:20] Of the gospel ministry. What I want you to see. Is that as Paul. Was ministering. He. The feel of it. Was. That of parental. Or familial. Love.

Throughout this book. So far. Paul has said. Paul has pictured. In different ways. My love for you. Is like a parent. Or like a sibling. He uses this word.

In verse 7. Of chapter 2. He says. I was like a mother. A nursing mother. Caring for his baby.

Among you. As I delighted to share. Not only the gospel. But our very.

Lives with you. He says. In chapter 2. Verse 11. We are like a father. Exhorting. And encourage you. And urging you. Live a life. Worthy of God. Who has called you. Into his kingdom. And throughout.

The first three chapters. Six times. He has called them. Brothers. Or if you look at your footnotes. In the pew bibles. Brothers and sisters. He's saying. You are.

[14:17] He's not just lording it. Over them. But he's saying. We together. Are siblings. In this new family. Of God. And we have an intense. Love. For you.

Because of that. What did that love look like? Well. One is that it was intense. The language of this passage. Drips with intensity. Look in verse 17.

When we were torn away from you. The word there actually means. We were orphaned. And it kind of. In the way we think about orphan. It's turned upside down. But what is. We were. We were separated from you.

Who we ought to be. Connected with. We were separated. So. And he says. Because of that. We. Endeavored. The more eagerly.

And with great desire. To see you. He could have just said. We wanted to see you. But he. He heaps upon it. All these adverbs. And these verbs. So that you would know. How. Deeply.
[15:13] In verse 18. He says. Hey. We wanted to come see you. In fact. I. Paul. Wanted to see you. It's not. It wasn't good enough. For me to write a letter. Or to send a proxy. I wanted to see you.

Verses 1 and 5. Of chapter 3. Start with this amazing phrase. But when we could bear it no longer. This. The apostle Paul. Who believes so much. In the sovereignty of God. That everything happens. Under his good control. That nothing happens. Apart from him. And that God is going to work out. His plans in the world. And yet. Paul couldn't stand it.

That he didn't know. What was going on. With these people. I couldn't stand it. Any longer. Verse 6 says. We long to see you.

In verse 10. It says. We prayed most earnestly. For you. Paul's love for them. Was not. A stoic. Love. It was not. A detached.

[16:10] Professorial. I'm going to impart. To you. Information. It was the love. Of a brother. A sister. A mother. A father. Was intense.

And it was personal. Do you see as well. In both in verse 17. And in verse 10. Of chapter 3. He said. We wanted to see you. Face to face. It wasn't good enough.

To write that letter. It wasn't good enough. That Timothy came. And encouraged. And exhorted you. I wanted to see you. That's how deeply. I am committed to you.

Paul wanted so much. To be able to be with them again. Friends. We live in a technological age. It's easy for all of our communication. To be. With little handheld devices. We text. We Facebook. We Twitter. We chat.

[17:11] And we never see. Each other face to face. Now you can use FaceTime. That's kind of cool. But. But. But we're not with each other. Most of the time.

And we need to be careful. That our culture. Doesn't rob us. Of the gospel character. Of being face to face. With people. This.

Familial love. Is intense. It's personal. And finally. It's costly. In verse 1. Of chapter 3. Paul said. When we couldn't stand it any longer.

We were willing to be left alone. I sent Timothy. My companion. My right hand man. The one who is helping me get through it. I sent him away. To be with you.

Even though it left me alone. Because I cared so much. About you. And I wanted desperately to know. How you were doing. It refers in verse 7 as well.

[18:13] To the distress. And the afflictions. That Paul was suffering. And it might have been the suffering. In his present context. As he's writing this letter. But. Elsewhere in Corinthians. Paul writes about.

The burden that he carries. Of his care. For all of the churches. For all the people. That he administered to. And what a. What a. What a weight.

What a burden. What a. What a cost it was. For him to care about. So many people. People. So this familial love. Has all of these.

Characteristics. But what I want you to see. Is that. That. The most important thing. Is it's. It's a feel. The best way. I could illustrate this is.

And you guys may have been on one or other. The other end. Maybe both. Of this scenario. It's a Friday night. And you have curfew at 1030. And your mom's sitting at home. And you don't get home.

[19:10] It's. It's 1030. Nope. How about 11? Nope. 1130. Mom wakes up dad. Who's already gone to bed. You're not home yet.

Right. At 1230. They pick up the phone. And they call the state police. At 130. They're out in their minivan. Cruising the strip. Finding all the 24 hours. Fast food joints.

Wondering where you might be hanging out. And wondering what in the world has happened to you. For Paul. The feeling that welled up in his heart. Was like the feeling of that parent.

I just want to know that you're doing okay. I just want to know. That you're standing firm. That's the feel.

That Paul had. It's a deeply relational picture. Of gospel ministry. And it challenges.

[20 : 05] I think our culture. And our heart. It challenges. The way that we. Often. Prefer. Vicarious relationships. Or. Distance relationships. Relationships at arm's length.

With other people. The picture that Paul gives. Of gospel ministry. Is one. That's in close. That's intense.

That's face to face. It challenges. Our busyness. Where we prioritize. Our tasks. Our objectives. And our outcomes.

More than we value. The people. That we're interacting with. On a day to day basis. And it challenges. The inherent. Selfishness. Of our own hearts.

How easy it is. For us. To do the calculus. Of. Is it worth my time? What am I going to get. Out of interacting. With this person. Is this my.

[20 : 59] Is this valuable? Am I going to get something. Out of it. And for Paul. His gospel. Shaped ministry. Blew through.

Those things. Those patterns. That we so easily. Fall into. You. And even though. It cost him. So much. He invested. This deeply.

In them. That's the feel. Of gospel ministry. In Paul's life. So. Having had that feel. Then.

What's the focus. Of Paul's ministry. What is it? Look with me. In chapter three. There's a word.

That's in there. Five times. And it's at the center.

Of what he cared about. For them. He says. I wanted. To know. How your faith. Was doing. And by that. He's not saying.

[21 : 54] I want to know. That you believe. The gospel. Once. That you made. A decision somewhere. Or that you. You checked a box. But what he's saying is. I want to know.

That you are persevering. That you are continuing. That you are holding fast. Or as it says. In verse eight. That you're standing. Being firm. In this faith.

That you professed. When I was with you. In the face. Of the suffering. And affliction. That you're.

That you're looking at. They had already. Professed belief. And Paul was saying.

I want to make sure. That you haven't lost it. Because it's so precious. Because it's so important. Now. One caveat.

That. It's not. That Paul didn't care. About the other parts. Of their life. It's not. That Paul. Wouldn't be interested. In knowing about. How their kids are doing.

[22 : 49] Or what's going on. In the job. Or you know. How your school. Is progressing. But what Paul is saying. Is that. Though I cared about. Those things. Remember he said. Back in. In chapter two.

Verse eight. We. We shared. Not only gospel. But our lives with you. Right. Paul is saying. We care about those things. But we have a particular concern. And we have a concern. That we're not willing.

To exclude. From our relationship with you. In fact. We want to make it central. My desire. Is for you. To spiritually flourish. That your faith.

Would be growing. And doesn't that make sense. Because for Paul. The gospel is about. This faith. This. This incredible truth.

That God. Has come. And done this amazing. Thing for us. Sending his son. To die on the cross.

For our sins. Rising from the dead. So that all. Who believe in him. Might not perish.

[23 : 44] Under God's wrath. But might instead. Experience the newness of life. In relationship with God. And Paul says. If that. Is what God has done for us.

Then that should be. The center of our lives. And therefore. Shouldn't it be. Isn't it right. That it would be the center. Of our ministry. To you. I care about all these other things. But I care the most. That your faith. Would flourish. And grow. This is what the end of verse 10 says. We long to be with you. So that we can supply with you.

To you. What is lacking in your faith. Now he's not saying. Oh you have a. An insufficient faith. And we're going to come. And get it right. But what he's saying is. You're a young church.

You're young believers. And we want to come along. And help. Round out. And enrich. And deepen. Your understanding. Of the faith that you profess. We want to make sure.

[24 : 40] That you know it well enough. That you can stand firm. Even when it gets hard. That you can stand firm. That you can stand firm. That you can stand firm. That you can stand firm.

So. What does that look like. In our relationships? Do we love one another? Do we love others well enough. To care about their spiritual.

Well being. I have the privilege. Of having some great friends. I actually became a Christian. In high school. And Bill. And Becky and Kim. Are friends that have.

Walked with me. Since before. I came to faith. And even now. When I get a chance. To see them. I love being with them. Because no matter. What we're talking about.

And this has been true. Throughout our whole life. We're talking about. What are you majoring in college? What are you going to do. When you graduate? How are you. Continuing to live. As a single man. Into your 30s.

[25 : 38] What are you going to do. With your life? What are you going to do. With this job transition? What are you going to. How are you going to raise your kids? What do you think about. Buying a house?

What you know. All these life questions. That are just normal things. But every time. I talk with them. About any of these things. We talk about it. In light of. What is God doing.

In your life? How does God. And his kingdom. Intersect. With these different things? What is it. About the gospel. That you're learning.

In the middle. Of this hard thing. That you're going through. What is it about Jesus. As a precious savior. That's becoming more real to you. In this season of life.

So I love having friends like that. And I'm so thankful. That not only do I have friends. From way back then. But even here. Now. And I'm seeing it in this church. And I just want to fan it into flame.

[26 : 35] That we have more and more. Of these relationships. That we would be sharing. With one another. What God is teaching us. As we read our bible. We would be.

Asking one another. How God fits into our plans. What God is teaching us. About ourselves. How God is growing us.

In our. In our. In our understanding. Of what a precious savior Jesus is. In the midst of the trials. That we're facing. My prayer is that we would be praying.

For one another. If you're feeling totally overwhelmed. And think. I don't know how to do this. That's one of the easiest ways to start. Is just to. As you're talking about things. Stop and say.

Hey. Can we pray about this? Whether it's a great thing. That you want to give thanks for. Or something that's really hard. And confusing. That you need guidance. And wisdom for.

[27 : 32] That's one of the easiest ways. To make it a spiritual conversation. Is simply to stop. And ask God to be a part of it. Paul.

Cared so deeply. About the Thessalonians. That their spiritual lives. Would flourish. And I pray that would be true. For us. As well. And I pray that it would not.

Simply be true. In the little. One-on-one relationships. That we have. With one another. Although certainly there. But. I was reminded. As I was thinking about this.

Hudson Taylor. Is one of my. Heroes of the faith. Hudson Taylor. In the 19th century. Was a missionary to China. He went over. He actually came back to England. And as he was walking. The sands. On the beach. In Brighton. England. God gave him a vision. He had just been. With thousands of believers. In Britain. Worshiping. But his soul.

[28 : 29] Was. Was. Disquieted. And as he walked the beach. God reminded him. Of. Not the. Tens of thousands. Or hundreds of thousands. But the millions. In China.

Who had never heard of Jesus. Who knew nothing of the gospel. And so he started a mission. To reach. The inland. Parts. Of China.

With the gospel. And God used him. In an amazing way. And I pray. That that would be. Us. That would we. I don't know.

If you've ever done this. But drive to the. Top of East Rock. And stand. Where the little viewfinder. Things stand next to it. Because they don't work. And. And just look over the city. And ask God.

To give you a vision. Of how he looks. At the city. How he thinks. About the people. Here. Here. Pray that God.

[29 : 25] Would give you. Paul's gospel. Shaped heart. To see. The people here. And their spiritual lives. As the most important thing. About them.

So we've talked about the feel. It's a familial love. The focus. Is people's spiritual flourishing. And finally. The fellowship. And the fellowship. Might not be the right word.

I just want to confess it. I like the F. If it worked well. Give me a little break. If it doesn't. But what I want you to see. Is what Paul did. What Paul expresses here. What is so striking. About this passage.

Is Paul's not just saying. Yeah. Okay. We love other people. We're really invested in this. Yeah. Like our focus is spiritual. Paul's actually bound up. With the Thessalonian.

Spiritual. Well-being. Paul. Verses 19 and 20. Of chapter 2. Is where we begin to see this. Look at it with me again. He asks this rhetorical question.

[30 : 23] He's saying. We really want to come see you. But we couldn't do it. Why? He just sort of bursts out with this. For what is our hope. Or our joy. Or our crown of boasting.

Before Christ. When he comes. Is it not you? And the picture he has. Is it's like in the Olympics. When you stand forth. To receive your crown. Your reward.

It would be a laurel wreath. And Paul is saying. You. Your success. Is a part of the. The laurel wreath. That I will have.

From the Lord. And then be able to give back to him. Because it's what he's done. In the first place. But this. It's a part of me coming. And worshiping Christ.

At the end. Is that. You would be. Standing firm. With me. And it's not. In case you're wondering.

[31 : 18] Paul isn't saying. Yeah. I got another notch in my belt. Woo. You know. Watch me. You know. Rack up my points. You know. It's not a video game for Paul. Where he's trying to get high his score.

Paul is so captured. By his love for people. Because he's so captured. By the glory. Of this Christ. Before he will. Whom he will stand.

And he's saying. To the Thessalonians. If you. Don't stand firm. Where will my glory. And joy. Be. And this is kind of. What he says. Again. In verse. In verse 8. Of chapter 3. Right. Verse 8. Of chapter 3. Look at me.

He says. For now. We live. If you. Are standing fast. In the Lord. And that if. Isn't meant to be conditional. Because he's just heard. The report back.

[32 : 14] From Timothy. That they are. So it's better translated. Maybe. For now. We stand. Because we have heard. Because we know. Because you are standing firm. Now we live.

We get life from this. And this life. Is characterized. Look at verse 9. With me. By joy. For what. Thanksgiving. He bursts out again. In another rhetorical question.

What Thanksgiving. Can we give. To God. For all the joy. That we have. Because of you. And because of your faith. And the answer to that.

Rhetorical question is. Nothing. There is not enough. Thanks. That we can give to God. We can thank God. From now to eternity. And there will not be enough.

Thanks. To express. How deeply. Grateful. We are. And how joy filled. We are. Because you.

[33 : 08] Are standing firm. This is the picture. That Paul says. He says. Our present joy. And our future joy. Are wrapped up.

In you. And your spiritual flourishing. And your well being. So what do we do with this?

What do we do with this? This picture. The feel. The focus. The fellowship. Is a call.

It is a call from God. For us. To. To. To step into this pattern. This pattern that Paul has got. It is a call for us.

To engage with other people. To love them. Like family. To focus on their.

[34 : 04] Spiritual. Well being. To the extent. That we are bound up with them. That we actually get. That our joy. Is tied.

To seeing God work. In other people. How do we do this? What does that look like?

Well. First we need to pray. We need to pray for eyes. To see. What. The author. C.S. Lewis. Saw so clearly. Long ago.

This is a longish quote. But it's worth listening to carefully. He said. It may be possible. For each to think. Too much. Of his own potential glory. Hereafter. It is hardly possible.

For him to think. Too often. Or too deeply. About that. Of his neighbor. The load. Or weight. Or burden. Of my neighbor's glory. Should be laid on my back. A load.

[34 : 59] So heavy. That only humility. Can carry it. And the backs of the proud. Will be broken. It is a serious thing. To live in a society. Of possible gods. And goddesses.

To remember. That the dullest. Most uninteresting person. You can talk to. May one day. Be a creature. Which if you saw it now. You would be strongly tempted. To worship.

Or else a horror. And a corruption. Such as you now meet. If at all. Only in a nightmare. All day long. We are in some degree. Helping each other.

To one or the other. Of these destinations. It is in the light. Of these overwhelming. Possibilities. It is with the all. And the circumspection. Proper to them.

We should conduct. All of our dealings. With one another. All our friendships. All our loves. All play. All politics. There are no ordinary people.

[35 : 53] You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations. Cultures. Arts. Civilizations. These are mortal. And their life is to. To ours. As the life of a gnat.

But it is with immortals. That we joke with. Work with. Marry. Snub. And exploit. Immortal horrors. Or everlasting splendors.

We need to pray for this vision. We need to pray that God would give us his eyes. To see the people around us. And then as we see them.

With this spiritual lens. That these people will be immortal. And the question is. What is our engagement with them going to be like?

Will it be indifference? Or will it be following in the model of Paul? To encourage them to know. And to stand firm. In Christ. Christ. Once we pray for these eyes.

[36 : 57] Then we need to engage with people. We need to talk to them. We need to be face to face with them. We need to slow down enough. We need to make room in our lives. For the people around us.

That God puts into our lives. We need to come here to church. Looking to engage with one another. Not just on a superficial level. But on this deep spiritual level. Where we can talk about.

God. And what he's doing. We need to get involved. In a community. We need to overcome the indifference that comes from separation.

Sometimes that means a step of getting involved. With a small group. With a group of friends to pray with. Somehow. To connect with others. If you don't know how to do that.

Come talk to me. Or Nick. Or Greg. We want to help you. Put yourself in a position. Where you can begin to engage. With others in the church. But also beyond it.

[37 : 56] In this. So this is what we do. We pray. We engage. We get involved. And this is my message today.

That a true gospel ministry calls us to invest our lives. In the spiritual good of others. This is what God calls his church to. now some of you may be here tonight thinking okay that's nice but i'm still figuring this out i hope you will see that for paul to know christ was so precious and so central and so important that he for him it was worth spending his life helping other people know it and maybe that will help you to consider the priceless treasure of what it means to know christ but for those of you who are here and you are in the church and one way or another you profess faith in christ hear this call and be reminded be reminded that what other call would it be what other life would it look like to follow jesus for isn't it jesus himself who is the greatest example for not only did he come to us as a redeemer but he came to live his life as an example for us to follow jesus who is heart involved in those around him the passage i read at the beginning of the service jesus looked on the crowds with compassion he was moved in the depths of his being because of the people around him and he engaged and he engaged with people face to face he walked the dusty roads with us jesus who was spiritually focused he said i didn't come to be served even though that would be right but i came to serve and to give my life a ransom for many that i would die for them so that they might know god so that they might not be spiritually dead but be spiritually alive and he did this with joy it says for the joy set before him he endured the cross despising the shame and so jesus and paul invites us into this joy into this joy of investing for others i want to close just by reading a passage from the book of hebrews about christ says this since therefore the children that is us share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery for surely it is not angels that he helps but he helps the offspring of abraham therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of god to make propitiation for the sins of the people for because he himself has suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted jesus came and entered in to life as a human being so that he might identify with us so that he might be able to die in our place but so that he might also suffer temptation just as we do so that he might be a faithful and compassionate high priest jesus did this for us this is the savior

that we serve this is why this life is worth living it is not a life of indifference it is christ our savior and our example let's pray god we thank you we thank you for this word to us we thank you for christ and god we pray that you might give us lord by your spirit a heart like his to pour out our lives for others to invest deeply for your glory and for your namesake we pray in jesus name amen