

Let Ours Also Learn

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[0 : 0 0] How many of you in here have ever been to the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina? How many of you know of the place if you've never been to it?

Okay, seems like most of us. I've heard about it on occasion, but a few weeks ago when Stephanie and I were in North Carolina for a wedding, we went to a place that there was a waterfall.

The bride and groom said, you should really do a waterfall. You should go hike to a waterfall. And I thought the last thing that I want to do on the way of a wedding is get lost in the woods. That would be just horrifying to me. They said, well, there's one you can drive to.

So that's the one we chose to go to. And at that waterfall, they said that there was a train track from it where they were taking down lumber to take it all the way to the Biltmore to use because they needed wood from all over the place to make this possible.

This house is 178,000 square feet. That's four acres of floor space. 250 rooms, 35 bedrooms, two and a half bath.

[1 : 0 0] No, I'm just kidding. 43 bathrooms and 65 fireplaces, three kitchens. And it even had an elevator, even though it was built back in 1895.

And a centrally controlled clock, fire alarms, all kinds of things. Now it has 300 Roombas going around cleaning everything, all right? But I don't know much about it.

But that intrigued me. I thought that's incredible. I'm interested. And I know they decorated for Christmas. I heard it's a wonderful place to go. And learning a little bit about the Vanderbilt family. Are any of you experts on the Vanderbilt family in here?

Good. My illustration will be so much better. I'll just make it up as I go, all right? Well, Cornelius Vanderbilt, he gave a million dollars to what's now Vanderbilt Hospital. And back in those days, you gave a million dollars, the hospital would be named after you.

And many stories I read about of different grandchildren building different houses that had different names. And one of the relatives doubled the family's estate.

[2 : 0 1] And then the next one didn't raise it much, but he's very, very generous. And it's just fascinating to see. These were billionaires. They didn't have billions, but equivalent to what we have now, these were billionaire families.

It's just so much money. But in 1973, the Vanderbilts held a big family reunion at the namesake at Vanderbilt University.

And 120 people that were direct descendants attended. And among them, there was not a single millionaire among them. From 1895, when this biggest house, I believe, built in America, to 1973, there's not a single millionaire among them.

I'm certainly not judging a family by not having millionaires. I'm glad God loves all of us, and that's not the point. But the contrast between this family that had enough money that is simply maintaining it ought to have left them with millions and millions of dollars over the time they now get to a place.

I am not a Dave Ramsey certified financial coach, all right? There's a lot of things I don't understand about finances. I did like the word problems a bit in school in math, but that's about as far as my math went.

[3 : 14] But a few things that we probably know are true. You can't ever be grateful for anything that you feel entitled to. I know that to be true. You'll never feel grateful for something that you feel entitled to.

That would have been a struggle for the Vanderbilts. They grew up in homes like that, so they expected that they would have homes like that, even when they couldn't afford it. Spending money will bring a different group of friends than making money will bring, right?

When you're spending money, a lot of people show up. That may not be the best for you, but when you're working hard and earning it, there's a different group. And then thirdly, I would just say there was something about those original group of Vanderbilts that wasn't true 100 years later.

There were some truths, some principles that were not constantly being affirmed that kind of slipped away generation by generation. That's where we ended last week.

Constantly affirm. As one person said, Martin Luther said, beat it over their heads. Constantly come back to the truth of the gospel. Constantly come back to the place where we are grateful for what God has done.

[4 : 19] So a big overview says, the scripture says that the way we behave is determined by what we believe. It's repeated throughout this book. Sound doctrine should lead to sound living.

These people didn't believe correctly. They taught false doctrine. And as a result, they were not profitable. They did not do good works because they believed wrong. And we're told that we are to affirm constantly those that have believed in God that we should be careful to maintain good works.

And those things are profitable. We're told the disciple of the next generation in chapter 2 and then avoid foolish questions. And in doing so, we have this unified goal as God's people of the redeemed.

In Titus 2.10, the main verse, I would say, for the main theme of this book is that we might adorn the doctrines of God, our Savior, and all things. That our life would reflect the clear understanding of God's word.

Now in our reading today in verse number 14, we're reminded as this ends that this is a group project. This is something that we do together. It says in verse 14, and it says, let and let ours also learn to maintain good work.

[5 : 25] That and let ours. Online, if you, the sermons are placed online, the outlines you could follow, and oftentimes there's footnotes or quotes, or if you listen to it online, that's the title for the day.

And let ours also. That expression from Paul to Titus that led ours, it is the Christians that make up the church. It's that everybody in these churches inside of Crete do this.

It also says also, which was to tell Titus, this isn't just something for everybody in the church. This is something that you should be leading the way in and be the type of person who is looking to meet the pressing or urgent needs of other people.

That's what we have in the scripture here today. Now one of the good works that we are to be about as God's redeemed is meeting the needs of one another. How we will behave will always be determined by what we believe, and what we will believe will be influenced by who we listen to.

Our friendships matter. Who we give our ear to is going to affect our heart. The places we go, the people we see, it affects us. We preach it to our teenagers, but it's not any less true the older that you get.

[6 : 37] And so as we overlap in the last week, we didn't give much time on this, but God's word tells us that in verse number 10, that a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he is such as subverted and sineth, being condemned of himself.

A person who is teaching false doctrine, we go to him and we see that they are self-willed and so they are self-condemned. They are teaching something that is wrong.

Gave an example from 1 Timothy about people that were teaching against a bodily resurrection, something that's very important to us as Christians and the hope that we have. In the Clark commentary, he says this, Labor to convince him of his error, but if he will not receive instruction, if he has shut his heart against conviction, then burn him alive.

No, not really. That's what he said. No, don't do that. It says, Christian people have never been for the killing of people that disagreed with us.

The kindness of God came into this world, that you have a choice. You can disagree with us, but we are going to lovingly share the gospel. And any kind of Christian history where Christians were killing other Christians for disobeying, those are not people that were living in accordance to God's word.

[8 : 17] And so we're told, though, that if a person is divisive, if a person is teaching wrong doctrine and we go to them, not just once, but we go to twice to them, then we realize it isn't a lack of information that they have, but they are now self-willed, then we should leave them to themselves and to move on.

And he goes against the prayer request that Jesus gives in John 17, 21. They that all may be one as I, Father, art in me. The prayer request that Jesus is that we would be one.

And so those that are divisive, that teach wrong doctrine, we go to them in kindness and love, and then we allow them to themselves, and we move on. And this practice has been lost in churches, and it shows no resolve for that we would stand in truth.

And there's three reasons that happens. This is what preaching through the Bible does. Trent Cornwell never chooses this portion of Scripture to talk about on Sunday morning, especially after Christmas music, all right?

But the Bible tells us that the obligation that we have as a church family, in one way it's true, everyone welcome, right? We could put that on our church sign. In one way that's always has to be true.

[9 : 24] But in another way it has to be true that that's not the case for people that would teach false doctrine because false doctrine hurts families. And what is one of the reasons that this has been lost among us?

One of them being that as we've lost our theological nerve, out of fear of offending, we try to find comfort in a false security of silence. I read about an old ordination vow that a pastor was asked to take, and he said that I am willing to die to protect the theological purity of this church.

Well, I never signed that document. I should be willing to, and you should be willing to sign it with me. But it's that important, that doctrine matters that much, because bad theology destroys families.

That there could come a day that people would come in here and they would not hear the gospel. And the reason that happened was because some generation inside of this church became silent, and we did not constantly affirm what really mattered.

And so I ask that you would pray for me, and I hope that you do. Pray that I would be a man of valor. That means that I'd have courage on behalf of other people, and that you would join me. Second, that we churches are often overcome with moral compromise.

[10 : 33] Churches look and act so much like the world that they hardly ever know when we begin where we should ever begin. And then lastly, we're just simply and sadly biblically illiterate.

And I lay this problem at the feet of pastors and at fathers and all those that are responsible to teach God's word. And then we're told practically how to do this. So, friendships matter in your life.

In your beliefs, you're going to be affected by friendship. So people that are teaching false doctrine need to be, we need to go to them, but then after they've been admonished, we must move along.

The foolish questions that they would have, they're unprofitable, it says. Avoid foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the law. We can't get caught up in lesser things. And the reason is, it says that it's unprofitable.

And then 2 Timothy says this will increase unto more ungodliness. The more we focus on the lesser things and the smaller things, the smaller and smaller our view gets. The less and less important the gospel gets.

[11 : 34] And then it confuses the hearers. In 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 4, it says it subverts the hearers. That the world will be confused. That's when people drive by a church.

Some of you, it was not that long ago that you would have driven by a church and it wasn't part of your life. And you wonder what goes on in that church. Churches are known for so many things. And that shouldn't be the case.

We should be known as people that have a clear and singular message about the gospel. And we must be careful to not get caught up in lesser things and contentions and the things that are mentioned.

Last Sunday evening, we have a monthly meeting and we ask that all those that work with teenagers and children to be at it. So that we can encourage them. What we encouraged them in last week was this. That we build everything upon God's word.

That everything is built upon God's word. Not what's on the news. Not what's our opinion. But just building upon God's word. Today for the first time we have Ms. Charlotte Sykes with us.

[12 : 34] Alright. Jonathan Sykes has been here many times. But Charlotte Sykes, this is her first Sunday. And they were married last weekend. And at their wedding, I told them to pay close attention to where they build their home.

They should build their home upon Jesus Christ. Upon the rock. Not upon other things. Not upon some subculture Christianity. Not upon some contentious type of religion. But the grace of God given to us by Jesus Christ.

And so if the way we behave is affected by what we believe. And who we spend time with is going to affect the way that we believe. Then we need to embrace fellow believers. And that's what we have here in chapter number 3.

He told us, remember to live obedient and kind lives. Our God is kind. We should be kind people. And we should be obedient to Him. Remember who you used to be in verse number 3.

Don't ever be lifted up. When people don't know the gospel. When people are living according to their own desires and not pleasing unto the Lord. That's who we were. But by the grace of God, we have been delivered.

[13 : 32] And we have been redeemed. Verses 4 through 8 spoke about remember how great is salvation. Remember what He has done. That washing of regeneration. It speaks about it in past tense.

It speaks about it in present tense. And it speaks about what's to come. That we are fellow heirs with Christ. We looked at the gospel in all three of those dimensions. And then in verses 9 through 11 it says, keep the course.

Stay about the gospel. Preach the gospel. Preach sound doctrine. Don't get off on these other things that people want to distract you with. But stay focused. And then lastly here it says, remember people.

People matter. They matter to God. They matter to us. They matter in your life. They matter in your ministry. See you next Sunday, Christianity.

Is not New Testament Christianity. Let me say that again. See you next Sunday, Christianity. Is not New Testament Christianity. We've come to believe that Jesus and me form a Christianity.

[14 : 31] And that would be foreign to the New Testament. While your Christian life is personal. That you put your faith and trust in God. That you have a place prepared for you. That your name is written in the book.

In the Lamb book of life. That's something between that you know. And that God knows. And I can't know that about you. But that does not mean that your Christian life is private. It's supposed to be lived together in unity.

The New Testament calls on us to know the joy of both receiving from. And giving to brothers and sisters in Christ. David Dubois likes to play volleyball in his backyard.

I know some of y'all go over there. Have you ever heard of Beat Bob. The one man champion volleyball team. Anybody ever heard of this guy? You ever. Travis you ever played against him? Are you just really excited about my story about. About this guy.

You've heard about him. All right. And so Beat Bob. He'll play people. But he gets the. He'll be on the one side of the net. And he can play an entire volleyball team. And he's like. Was like undefeated for like a long time.

[15 : 29] But the only problem is. That's not how volleyball works. You don't get to hit the ball three times. So he's disqualified every time he plays the game. Because that is not how volleyball is made to work. And so it may be entertaining.

And it may look good. It may be impressive. But that's not the game of volleyball. The scriptures give us a hundred and fifty one another commands. Which means that you cannot play.

You cannot live your Christian life the way that Bob plays volleyball. It is made to be done with gospel centered friendship. And that's what I mean. I'll say it to you.

I'll see you next Sunday. There's nothing wrong with that expression. But what we're saying is that. We are supposed to be part of each other's lives. Daily. And throughout the week. We're supposed to be meeting together. There's wonderful fun ways we meet together.

We watch a parade together last night. Or some ladies took Grace White out for some food. Because she was missing home. And being in Bolivia. And that encouragement that they gave her.

[16 : 25] Is now a blessing to my family. Because an encouraged Grace White is teaching. A children's church. And my daughter's in there. And there's just a lot of wonderful ways that we get together as a church.

But then there's also responsibilities that we have to one another. And I'll show that to you. But look at a bunch of people in relationships. We have Artemis. If you're looking at the passage. And Tychicus. And Zenos. The warrior princess.

No the lawyer. And Apollos. And let ours. And all that are with me. Greet them. And grace be with you all. Them. And you all. And all these expressions.

And this few verses. There is packed in so many names. And that's how this letter ends. It's a list. The letter ends with Paul communicating. That reminds you. He's a real person.

In a real world. With real friends. That he had regular contact with. And the last words about false teachers. Was to shun them. And the last word about divisive people. Were to reject them.

- [17 : 19] But the last word about fellow servants. Is to diligently help them. You see there's friendships in our lives. That are profitable. And that are helpful. First of all.
- I want you to see that gospel friendships. Were understood as a vital part of ministry. In the New Testament. Be diligent. That you come to me. Titus. Or do your diligence.
- To help these people. Along the way. Or Timothy. Be diligent to come. To me. It matters. That they come. I don't make a practice. Of reading the diaries.
- Of the presidents. Of Ivy League College's diaries. But I have a quote here from you. From Sarah Burr. The wife of Aaron Burr. Written in 1750. She said. I esteem religious conversation.
- One of the best helps. To keep up religion in the soul. Accepting secret devotion. I don't know. But the very best. That a lamentable thing that it is. To neglect. Be neglected.
- [18 : 14] By God's own children. That outside of devotion to the Lord. And personal Bible study. One of the greatest things in my life. Is Christian conversation. Is talking to other people.
- About the things of God. It is a wonderful gift. It is profitable. And in the New Testament. They understood. That it was a vital part. Of their ministry. Paul needed time with Titus.
- And Timothy. He wanted that. He went out of his ways. To be around certain people. That he said it was refreshing. And if you. If you came to me today. And you said. I want to get involved. In some ministry next week.
- I would probably give you. Some practical things. That are going on. And I would tell you that. But if you came to me. And say. I want to give my entire life. The serving the Lord. And I want to do this. The rest of my life.
- Then my conversation. Would be about friendships. That would be the first thing. That I would want to talk to you about. Because friendships. Are profitable. Are necessary. For us in serving. The gathering ministry.
- [19 : 12] It's necessary. They have friends. Number two. Have a necessary role. In our lives. I think it's neat. That it says either Artemis. Or Tychicus. Paul's like. I'm not sure yet. It's going to be one of these two guys.
- They can come in there. And when they come Titus. Then you're going to be free. To meet me at Nicopolis. Tychicus is the one. That bears the letter. To Ephesians. He also takes the letter. To Colossians. And later. He'll be sent to Ephesus.
- To relieve Timothy. So it seems. That it may be Artemis. That goes. Or there's so much. That needs to be done there. And that when this person comes. And takes on that role. From Titus.
- And he takes on the burden. And the ministry. That Titus is holding. Then Titus is going to be free. To move on. To the next thing. Friendships are necessary roles. In our lives.
- In ministry. The next step forward. For Paul and Titus. Require that a friend. Would step up. And fill an important role. There in Crete. In the ministry. That's where we look.
- [20 : 07] If you're serving in ministry. And you say. We want to do more in this area. We want to reach out. And do this. And a better. We want to do more. In our community. Or I want to do a better job at this. Where do you look?
- You look around to your friends. And you tell them. And you say. Friends. Can you help me? And then your friends step up. And they help you. And then you move forward. Friendships grow and change.
- Through different seasons. But the mission remains the same. In 2 Timothy 4.11. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark. And bring him with thee. For he is profitable to me. For the ministry.

You may remember. That there's a time. Where Paul and Barnabas disagreed. About John Mark. That John Mark was at a. He wasn't living in such a way. That Paul thought he was very helpful. That this isn't a project.

That we want to have John. We want to have Mark in. John Mark in. He hasn't been shown himself. To be reliable. Hasn't been shown himself. To be faithful. But over time. Things change. And Paul said. I'm now ready for Mark to come.

[21 : 02] John Mark to come. And to join us. You and I might be surprised. That a book. That is so much about sound doctrine. And about evangelism. Contains so much teaching. About friendship.

Because they're vital. And they need to be evaluated. By scripture. And be biblically defined. As profitable. Number four. How we care for one another. Matter the Paul.

Because it matters the God. How we care for one another. Matter the Paul. He said. Zenith the lawyer. And Apollos. Would you. As they journey diligently. Would you make sure there's nothing.

That would be wanting of them. They've been sent on a mission. This is a powerful team. We know about Apollos. Apollos is the one. That in the book of Acts. He goes through. And he's a. He's a young man.

And he's able to teach. And. But there's things that are lacking. So. A couple named Aquila and Priscilla. They bring him home one day. After he's meeting there. In the synagogue. And he explains. And they provide lunch for him.

[21 : 56] And they. They give some teaching to him. And then they. Write letters of commendation for him. And then they get the joy of following him. And he's a mighty teacher. Remember there's fights that. Evolve around the fact that.

We're of Apollos. We're of Paul. And all that. And he was used. And then he has a lawyer. This is a name that would be either Greek. Or. Or Roman. So I don't know if this is a lawyer of. Of the word of God.

Which is often taught. People that. That taught the Bible. Or if it was a lawyer. In the. In the sense in which we were. That we would use it today. And for our lawyers in here. God can use you. And he does you.

Use you. All right. And I'll make no jokes about lawyers. All right. Because they were used in this story. But they were a powerful team. That came together. And Paul said. Hey these people are on assignment. They're on a mission from God.

Would you help them. Along their way. Make it so that there's nothing. That is wanting. As I read that. I paused. And I just became over. Come with emotion. I'm just grateful.

[22 : 50] You know. 20 years ago. This month. I received. I took my first. Position. In vocational ministry. Which means for 20 years of my life. People like you.

Have met my needs. And the needs of my family. And at no point have I ever wanted. Or have ever lacked for anything. That I truly need. That your expression to God.

Met my needs. And that's wonderful. I felt that. And I experienced it. And I'm just so very grateful for it. And it also makes me go back to that story. Of the Vanderbilts.

And I wonder. About the misplaced priorities. And I wonder what 100 years from now. A meeting of the Cornwells will meet. Probably not at a university. Alright. But they will probably meet someday. And what will be true about them.

And I pray that it's a group of people. Who never feel themselves entitled. But they're always grateful. That God has met their needs. And that God's done something. I pray it's a group of people. That love the church.

[23 : 47] They love the friendships. They're a group of people. That when they move into a new area. Like many of you have. They immediately look for God's people. Because it's among the church. And God's people. That they're going to find the people.

That they want to spend their lives with. And then lastly here. A commitment to following Jesus. Should be evidently shown. In our care for one another. The way that we care for one another.

Should show that we are his disciples. John 13.35. But this shall all men know. That you are my disciples. If you have love. One to another.

And our love one to another. Can be demonstrated. And it should be. Love is not just a feeling. But it's an action on behalf of other people. And so the last word on relationships.

Between all of you. Is that we would learn to do good deeds. To meet pressing or necessary needs. Titus 3.14. And let ours also learn to maintain good works.

[24 : 42] For necessary uses. That they be not unfruitful. One of the ways that we meet one another's needs. Is necessary. Or pressing. Or urgent needs.

Is that we know that we have a responsibility. One to another. That we're part of the same body. We saw Steve and Maria at the ballet for Lorelei. On the other night. And Steve told us that he was at his desk.

And Maria came by and said. Steve we gotta go. And he said he jumped up. And he was going. And said. But where are we going? You know. He just trusted that she knew. Where they were supposed to be. And he got up. And he was moving.

Because there's a relationship there. There's a responsibility. He could trust her. And a relationship. Because they know that they are one. Inside of this room. You should know that we have a responsibility.

One to another. That the burdens that you carry. Are a responsibility that I have. And the burdens that I carry. Are the ones that are a responsibility. That you have. I told you at the beginning.

[25 : 39] That if we didn't preach through the Bible. That you would hear some kind of message like this. About every third sermon from me. Because I think it's the most remarkable thing. In all of the world. My childhood growing up.

Was a stark contrast. Between the effects of the world. And how much it disappointed me. And how painful and harsh it seemed. And the wonderful warmth I felt among God's people.

And how well they took care of me. And my single mom. And my siblings. And I just think it's the most wonderful thing. In all of the world. I just love the church. I love the way that it's designed.

I love God's wisdom being demonstrated in it. And then so first of all. You've got to take a sense of responsibility. One to another. So see you next Sunday. It's just a starting point.

But see you on Wednesday morning. When we get together to pray. See you on Thursday afternoon. When we get over and help so and so. See you on Saturday. As we do. We celebrate something together. As God's people.

[26 : 34] We need to be more than to see you next Sunday. We should be responsible for one to another. Sharing our lives. Final word in friends is love. People will engage in good deeds. To meet pressing needs. When they faithfully love each other.

That's in verse 15. And that all men that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. So he's writing and he says.

Hey I want you to greet all the people. In that church. And how did he describe it? I want you to greet all those people that love me. Because I love them as well. That was a description of those people.

It was people that loved us in the faith. That the gospel had created a relationship between us. That was defining of them. And then another way that this is going to happen. So there must be a love that you have for fellow believers.

Which isn't something that you make on your own. It's the grace of God that he's done in our lives. But there has to be an awareness of the needs of others. This is why seeing you next week is not sufficient. We have to know the burdens that one another carry.

[27 : 33] And at the end Pastor Bo will give a practical step. So you can be more involved in knowing those. And then we all carry. And another way that we're able to meet pressing or necessary needs.

Is that we all carry our own burdens as we are able. So we can identify when others have need. We carry our own burdens. That's also taught in the Bible right? We carry the needs of the others.

But we carry our burdens. We do what's given to us. But there's times when there's a pressing need. Or an urgent need. Or the ox is in a ditch. And we need help. And we need somebody to come and to help us.

And as God's people we should respond. So I have a slide. Let me just go through these five with you real quick. First of all, gospel friendships were understood as a vital in ministry in the New Testament.

Young people in here. Some of you training at the training center. Some of you just young and want to give your life to serving in the Lord. Take note of your friendships. They're going to influence you. They're going to affect so much the way that not only you behave, but the way you believe.

[28 : 37] So understand that. If you're trying to go this alone throughout the week and you say, Well, I'm trying to read my Bible, but I'm struggling. Well, ladies, we saw just a couple weeks ago there's a group of ladies that are going to be reading the Bible together.

Get a friend that is reading the Bible with you and do that. That gospel friendship is part of our strategy for living out our Christian life. Secondly, see that it's necessary.

They have necessary roles in our lives. There's certain things that you're trying to accomplish that God has placed in your heart that you're not going to be able to do unless your friends gather up around you and help you.

And then also know that, that God may have played something in the heart of somebody on here. Some kind of cause, something that they really care about. And you, as their friend in the gospel, have a responsibility to step up and help them.

Number three, friendships grow and change through different seasons, but the mission remains the same. It's the mission that ought to be bringing together. It's the occasion that brings us together. It's not the differences we have.

[29 : 36] It's not the commonalities that we have. It's not the college football teams that we like. Nothing is greater and more unifying to us than the mission in which God has given us. And then we care for one another because God says people matter, and so they matter to us.

If a person's in need and they have a pressing need, we should want to be there. And then our commitment to following Jesus should be shown in the way that we care for one another. So Titus said, has primarily said that the church has the privilege and responsibility of adorning the doctrines of God before this world.

And our gospel-centered, truth-pursuing, generation-to-generation discipling, day-by-day, urgent need-meeting friendships, say to the world that the gospel is something to behold.

That it is. In evangelism, the whole issue of credibility is built on the character of our lives, which should be demonstrated in the way that we care for one another. Matthew 5, 16.

Let your light so shine before men that you may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven. And so how do we care for one another? How do people see that we do that?

[30 : 50] By meeting the urgent needs. And what an incredible thought is that meeting the necessary needs of one another can have an eternal effect on the lives of other people.

That's sobering, isn't it? Paul tells Titus that the key to evangelism is right relationships. This involves shunning false teachers, rejecting those that teach wrong things.

It involves helping fellow servants and loving faithful friends. But none of this is possible if it wasn't for the grace of God. And so I end the day the same way that the apostle Paul ends his letter.

That's verse number 15. All that are with me, salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. If it was for the grace of God, those things that were described would not be possible to us.

Because we in our own natural state, we do not care for one another. We do not have enough for ourselves. There's enough problems in our own lives. How are we ever going to care for the pressing needs of anybody else around us?

[31 : 54] But it's the grace of God that has liberated us, that allows us to love one another. And it's important. The relationships we have in here are important to the community that we live in, that God would be glorified as they would watch us.

So we come to a time of response. It's a simple one here. Let me be a friend to you today, all right? I won't be Mr. Rogers. I can't be your neighbor. Let me be your friend here today, all right? Let me be your friend in here today.

If you have never put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, today is the best day and right now is the best moment to do that. You may have seen different forms of religion growing up and you're not interested in them because they only took from you and they only took from your family and other people.

And I can tell you that was not New Testament Christianity that you saw. That the Jesus that we have met has changed our lives and that we want you to know him.

I can rest assuredly tell you this, that if you would truly behold the grace of God, you would never be the same. It is incredible. It is wonderful. When you recognize that you're undeserving, that the God of heaven came here, and that's what we'll celebrate at Christmas, that knowing what the world was like and knowing who was down here and what we were up to, that Jesus left the majesty of heaven, was born in a manger.

[33 : 16] They demonstrate kindness and love and grace and mercy to you and I. And we desire in our lives to reflect the goodness of God. We Christians often fall short, but God remains faithful and good.

And so there's a wonderful gift that we can extend to you today. And believers in here, first of all, would you do as I have done, just rejoice. Your life has just been filled with wonderful friendships.

Some of you moved in this area completely as strangers, and now we get to celebrate as family together. What a wonderful blessing, isn't that, that God has given us. We get to watch each other's kids grow up.

We get help when needed. I get to borrow David DuBois tools and return them about half the time to him, all right? And we're still friends, all right? There are pressing needs that we have that are being met.

And that's not just because the person in here is good. It's because God is good and that God loves you, and he demonstrates that love through the fellow believers among us in here.

[34 : 15] And so here's a good moment for reevaluation. Titus 2.10. It says that we might adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things, all right?

Verse number 10 there, that in all things that the doctrine would be shown. And so consider that, would you, in all things, in your life is the doctrine of God.

So reevaluate everything in your life. How is your life being used to show the doctrine of God? And God has offered you so much more than just saying, I'll see you next Sunday from this church family.

And so as you meet in four years today or on different days and you go to leave, and it always seems that the men want to leave quicker than the men, and the men are out there waiting in the parking lot for their lives, could I encourage you during that time to have a conversation with somebody?

And don't say, I'll see you next Sunday. Say, hey, why don't we get together this week? Or what are you working on? How can I help you? I went to a pastor fellowship one time, and I loved what the guy said at the beginning.

[35 : 16] He says, every time you guys get together, you always say, hey, how many of you are running? And so they talk about churches like they're cattle or livestock, right? How many people do you have over there? And he said, don't be saying that, say this.

Say, don't say, how many are you running? Say, where are you running, and how can I help you? I really love that, right? What is it your church is involved in, and how can our church get involved in what you're doing?

How can we help you? That would be a good question to ask people in here. Not just ask, how are you doing, in a shallow sense, but say, what is going on in your life? God of heaven has placed us in the same church for a purpose, and you and I have a responsibility one to another, and you can and should be involved in the daily lives of one another, not just enjoying life and serving together, but also in the messy work of meeting one another's pressing and necessary needs.

I love God's word, as I know that you do, and I love God's church and his design for it, that as we enjoy this wonderful life that he's given us living in obedience, that it testifies of his goodness and his wisdom.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this last few verses of the book of Titus and the meaningful friendships that are put upon display. Father, I thank you about all the people in my life that you have used to meet my needs and that I have never wanted because of the kindness of your people.

[36 : 43] And Father, I pray now because I believe that there be people among us in here that have pressing needs. And Father, as I speak to them, Lord, I pray that they would respond today in obedience to you.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, I know this is something that every believer would want me to take time to do, which is this, they extend an invitation to you in here who do not know of salvation, that do not know if your sins have been forgiven.

The answer to that is called good news. The answer to that is the gospel. And I would like to be a friend to you today. I would like to take God's word and show you how that you could know.

And if that's where you're at today, I want to encourage you. Stop by the next steps table. You can go to visionbaptist.com, and force us coffee, schedule a time, see me in a foyer, or better yet, right now in this moment, as you've been hearing the gospel, either today or as you've been coming, that Jesus Christ died in your place, he died for your sins, that today you would turn from your sins and put your faith and trust in him.

I would encourage you to do that. And to the believer in here, I pray that your heart is filled with rejoicing. God's plan is wonderful. gospel-centered friendships are wonderful.

[37 : 59] And so the day is a day of rejoicing, but it's also a day of renewing our commitment one to another. It's a day of saying, I want to do more than to see these people next Sunday. I want to be involved in their life, and I want them to be involved in my life as well, as New Testament Christianity calls for.

Heavenly Father, Father, thank you for your design and your purpose for your church. We love you, and we say thank you. Father, I thank you for the grace of God extended to our lives so we can live this life in which you've called us to live as your redeemed and peculiar people.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.