

Grace Expectations

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Preacher: Guest: Dale Robertson

[0 : 00] home if I known Jeff wasn't going to be here. And you're probably saying to yourself, you know, what do you mean? I mean, didn't you have Saturday night to prepare Jeff? I mean, couldn't you preach?

That's a testimony to Jeff, right? Because listen, it is labor. It's a labor of love, but it is labor to prepare to share the word of God. Jeff and I were talking last Sunday and he said, you know, this is, it's like preparing for an exam or a formal paper that's going to be read and graded by the creator of the universe, right? So from a worship standpoint, I joined him on that. And I really only have an audience of one. I love you. Y'all look really holy to me.

Uh, it's just a joy to be around everybody. I've loved the men's retreats. I've loved the lunches. I've, uh, every part of this fellowship has been a blessing to me. I just want you to know that I love you with all my heart and it is an extreme honor to be here this morning. And I will tell you, you're not going to hear anything different. Uh, Jeff doesn't preach a different message that Dale will preach. Uh, if he does, if I do, we're in trouble. God's word is God's word and it's our job to get it right. And so we want to be faithful to that. And I want to just say off the bat, how I come this morning, two things. I've spent the last three days, uh, with 15 men who apparently when they get away from their wives, don't shower and will eat anything, literally anything at Lake Gaston with fishing poles in the truck and a boat that kept leaking, uh, men whom I love and God arranged it so that we were together. The places that they thought they would visit at Lake Gaston beyond the lake itself, which was primary were closed. And so we found ourselves in a living room and I was able to, and honored to, uh, lead them in seven, two hour sessions. This will be my eighth, two hour session.

Some are, some are not even smiling at that. Um, but the way that it was approached to them, uh, to get them jumpstarted, we literally jumpstarted that conversations with the terrors of hell so that men would get jumpstarted to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everybody that would give ear beginning with their families.

[2 : 58] And they've got to get beyond, we have to get beyond, well, they're offended or that's a hard conversation because hell is real. It's hot. It has levels of torment and it is forever, forever.

So I thought about that, but not right for today. So how I come to you is in first Corinthians two and in verse one, you don't need to turn there. I'm just giving you, I'm not even to the introduction yet folks. And when I came to you says Paul brethren, I, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom proclaiming to you the testimony of God for I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and in him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. The best thing that I will do for you today is read the scripture. When you hear the scripture, that is the word of God, but it is a privilege to try to provide as Jeff does every Sunday, as Greg does when he fills in to provide some hooks so that you can carry those thoughts forward. And so what I'd like for you to do is go to first Peter. And this is still by way of introduction, go to first Peter, my wife with fear and trembling as I come, she worries about what I'm going to attempt to do this morning, but I want to tie together what's going to be preached with what has been preached. And folks, we're going to take a drive down Route 66, a drive down memory lane. And Jeff may come up after the fact and say, you got the last six months wrong. But I don't think that I did. It was a joy to pull up a website that is done decently and in order. Decent. And I don't know who to give credit to. I don't know if that's a Suzanne thing or a great thing. I don't really know who that is, but it is done decently and in order. You and I have the privilege to go out, click on a PDF, pull it up, look at an outline that we've heard from the sanctuary and then listen to a message. And it was a joy to

go back. No, I didn't listen to all 32 messages in that series. There are 34 total in first Peter, but 32 within that series.

But I did go through the first 15 or 16. And so I think that there's a clicker up here in the podium somewhere. Now here's going to be a new thing.

So we know that this series was the holy living in a hostile land. It was preparing us to live as Christians in a hostile land. And we're in a hostile land, are we not? It's going to get worse, folks. It's going to get worse. So do you remember this? I'm still on introduction. This was a wonderful series. And if I have my grouping right, I would say the first two chapters, not all of chapter two, but certainly up to verse 13, Jeff rightly divided the word of God by showing the grace of God in our lives by way of our salvation, which leads to undiminished joy.

[6 : 58] Now there's a couple of ways to be motivated, right? You can look with undiminished joy, the work that Christ has done for us. And you can just sit back and be amazed.

Are you not overjoyed that you're going to heaven? One of the hymns that we just sang says, we'll be in paradise, Abraham's bosom, heaven as it exists today. But guess what? It only gets better because the heaven and earth is going to be made anew. It doesn't get much better than that. Or if you need a jumpstart, you can do what I did to 15 men, whom I know now, having done this conference for 15 years. Teach them about the terrors of hell. Something will motivate you one way or the other.

If you do any time in Jonathan Edwards, you know that to be true. Jonathan Edwards preached as much on hell as he did on heaven. And certain things reach certain people. But listen, we've got to get over feelings and drive our families to the realization that heaven is great, but hell is real. And you don't have but one of two options. And it's appointed for man to die once and after that judgment occurs, right? So we look down memory lane. Let's do a jet tour review of these lessons. And you've got to stick with me now because we're going to be quick. On November the 28th, 2021, just before the Christmas holidays, a message was preached by Jeff, knowing and going by God's grace.

And he introduced to us God's servant who wrote, we're going to, he wrote, interpreted the messages of Peter. I'm going to go to Paul. And guess what? They're like Jeff and Dale. The message is not different. So he introduced us to God's servant, Peter. And the message was to the servants, the elect.

That's y'all. And how does salvation come? By election, by the sovereign grace of God. And once we are saved, we enter into a time of sanctification by way of the Holy Spirit's work on the elect. So that jump started us. We took joy in that. And then he moved right into a living hope for hopeful living. So if you've got your Bibles open, you may just scan those verses three through five. Jeff said, God has caused us to be born again. He caused us to be born again. It was him who drew us to himself. We didn't just wake up one morning and said, Oh, cerebrally, I get this. And now I'm going to come to God. God caused us to be born again. How? By his great mercy unto a living hope.

[10 : 06] And he said, It's just as real as the resurrection of our Lord, just as sure as our Lord has risen. He has drawn us to himself and brought us to a hope, a hope of eternal reward that is imperishable and guaranteed that is protected by the power of God. Once saved, always saved.

Because if I could lose my salvation, I would lose it. I would lose it. And then he preached a message on your ultimate reason for undiminished joy. And that's kind of the motivation for our talk today. Because we're going to get to it. What should we expect of one another as a church body? What should we expect if we claim the name of Christ? Jeff said that he, and it was wonderful because just before the holidays, he opened up with a hymn, O Holy Night.

The thrill of hope, a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices. And for what reasons should we rejoice? Well, our faith is protected in that it's eternally secure. Our faith is proved out through trials.

Do you know when you're persecuted, when you go through a trial, as a Christian, that's a proof that you are saved? So there's some security there that's given. And our faith is founded on the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

So I asked the men this weekend, what is the gospel? Here it is. It is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

[11 : 59] And then I went back to Genesis 1-1 in the beginning. God's created the heaven and earth, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. And we went all the way through those references to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Because it's God's gospel, says Romans 1. It's not our gospel. Don't mess with it. Don't try to make it more palatable. Just preach the word. When you share the gospel, use the word of God to share it with your family and to share it with your friends.

And what is the result of that? When you look at God's calling and saving and sanctifying and the promise of Him in glory. Is it not undiminished joy?

That motivates some people. It ought to motivate all of us. And then He shared a message on the incomparable value of our salvation.

That it was prophesied and predicted and preached by the Old Testament prophets, by the Holy Spirit, by New Testament prophets. And this message was the same.

[13:08] The Messiah would come and we would be chosen, called, justified, sanctified, and will ultimately be glorified. Glorified. And you can hear the rings over and over again of this undiminished joy.

And then I had to listen to this one because I was not here when it was preached. Go big and go home. Go big and go home.

And Jeff said that this is an opportunity to prepare our minds for action by way of spiritual alertness. He gave us the three E's. The three E's.

We ought to keep in check what entertains us, what distracts us. That sounds like a screw tape letter, doesn't it? What distracts us? What takes us away from our primary purpose and the work of God on our life to sanctify us?

So be careful about what entertains us. What enlightens us? That is, what serves to educate and influence our hearts? And then finally, what entices us?

[14:12] What occupies our mind? We ought to keep alert. Anything that hinders our pursuit of holiness, we ought to cut loose.

Cut loose. We talked about the 1980, which I forgot about, hockey team. That prepared themselves and brought us out of the dismal 1979 gas going from a dollar.

It was going from 49 cents to a dollar overnight. It caused me to sell my 57 Chevrolet, which got 10 miles a gallon if I didn't have my foot in it.

I had my foot in it, so I had to sell it. And then that Latin word that maybe was foreign to a few of us, *summon bonum*.

What is that? That's the Latin expression for supreme good, ultimate good. And what is that? And Jeff declared this, through Peter, if you are saved, if you are saved, if that is a reality in your life, what is the supreme good, the ultimate good?

[15:30] And then he told us. The fear of God, keeping His commandments. Knowing God and worshiping Him forever is the greatest endeavor here and in the life to come.

It's the greatest thing. He's revealed that to us. And then that seventh message, and he did part ones and part twos on some of these things. And again, we see this thing.

If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord by way of salvation and God's kindness to you in Christ, fervently love our church family.

In other words, we ought to invest with each other with zeal. Now he's stealing Paul's thunder. Paul's thunder.

How should we interact with one another? We ought to put off and mortify sin as a body. Put away malice, that is wicked ill will and deceit and hypocrisy and the falsehood that comes from hypocrisy.

[16:37] And backbiting. All those things we ought to put away as a church body. And then he preached the message on God's kindness to you in Christ. He's brought us near and He's bringing us home.

And then a people for God's own possession. The logical outflow of God's kindness to you and me in Christ necessitates that we conduct ourselves as the people of God.

Do you follow that? That ought to be the outflow. And so what happens? Well, after that ninth message, the people of God's own possession, where the logical conclusion is we ought to act like Christians.

That's a strange thing, isn't it? We ought to not be false Philemon. Philemon was saved by Paul.

Onesimus, his slave, ran away, ran into Paul. Go figure. Got saved. Paul packaged up a letter, sent him back to his owner with a paper and the confidence that Philemon was, in fact, a Christian.

[18:02] And Onesimus trusted that because he had a death tag on his head for leaving home.

But he trusted. But he trusted. He trusted. He trusted Paul. He trusted the fact that they claimed the name of Christ in their lives. We're different. The tenth message launched us then to the very thing that we don't want to hear and we don't like to do.

So that launched into the second section of 1 Peter. The grace of God on our lives on display. And there's this nasty word, submission. We don't like to submit, do we? I like to be first. If there's a change in our lives, if we have undiminished joy, if we want to carry on his name, there ought to be a difference in our life.

Would you say amen to that? Well, Peter declared that. Jeff preached that. And he is joined because God's word is the same.

[19 : 17] It's never going to pass away. It is truth. And in studying the scriptures, you and I ought to be able to confirm scripture with scripture.

Right? I ought to say the same thing. Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Now, once you're turning there, I want to listen to some Baptist air conditioning.

Romans chapter 12. We've moved on from Peter and we've moved on to Paul.

Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. So there are a couple of phrases from Peter which are applicable here. And they serve to weigh out our own hearts.

And I've been in many congregations. I have had many friends who claim the name of Christ. And I've paid from the penalty of them not being saved and not being able to display and show and model and commune within a body.

[20 : 45] Because they weren't saved to begin with. Because they weren't saved to begin with. Because they eventually went out from us. Because they were never of us. But not after dropping a lot of landmines.

There ought to be a difference in our lives. Jeff and Greg, as the leaders of our church, ought to be able to trust us to react a certain way and function a certain way within the body.

That ought to be an expectation. So the title of my message today, using that as a backdrop, are called Grace Expectations. Why did I choose that?

Well, one, it's all by the grace of God, right? And Jeff said that over and over and over again through 1 Peter. Why? Because it's true. It's all by God's grace. And of course it happens to be the first name of the church, right?

Grace Expectations. What should we expect of one another as we live with one another? As a family. If you address as Father the one who impartially judges according to each one's work.

[21 : 56] Conduct yourselves in fear during your stay on earth. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Paraphrase. If you are saved. The sad thing is, is you might enjoy the fellowship.

You might enjoy the occasional, the great desserts that we have on Wednesday night when we're doing the fruit tape letters. Or the gatherings that we have. But listen, if that's all you want, you can go to the Elks Lodge.

Or if you're a Fred Flintstone playing, the water buffalo, I think that's what it was. The hat with the horn. You can just go to another club. But at church, there ought to be a difference.

And so, in Romans chapter 12, the same thing has happened whereby Paul goes back in Romans 8 and 9 and declares, you have been predestined.

Your names have been recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. And then God calls you. He elects you. He draws you to himself. He gives you the faith to believe.

[23 : 07] You believe on it. Then he begins to sanctify you. That is, to conform you into the image and likeness of the Son. And by the way, your promised glory, which is a glorified body, which we all want, right?

And you all look all right to me, but you're going to look better. And no one can take that away from you.

Neither height nor depth, nor principalities, nor things seen, nor things unseen. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Do you believe it? Now, that ought to get you motivated.

And then in Romans 9, just in case you missed the fact that God saved us, then go read Romans 9. Jacob I love, eats all I hated.

And if you pose an argument, well, Paul predicts that and said, will you, the thing created, argue with the very one that created you?

[24 : 07] And then in chapters 10 and 11, the fall of Israel, but the heart of Paul, to say, listen, I would be accursed if my brothers would just come to the very one they have crucified.

And in reality, of those first 11 chapters of Romans, what should be the outflow? Well, Jeff would say, undiminished joy. Well, that's not unlike what Paul is going to say in Romans 12 and verse 9 and following.

Let's look at it together. Let us love without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Give preference to one another in honor. Not lagging behind in diligence. Fervent in spirit. Serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope. Persevering in tribulation. Devoted to prayer. Contributing to the needs of the saints. Practicing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you.

[25 : 21] Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind towards one another. Don't be haughty in mind. But associate with the lowly.

Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Never take your own revenge for love. But leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

But if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Can you not hear the voice of Jeff preach the word that was given under inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the Apostle Peter? Say these very things.

[26 : 26] Make a transition, if you will. Start with the first two chapters with the grace of God in our lives by way of salvation leading to undiminished joy.

What is that in preparation for? Remember, the reality that we need the grace of God in our lives to put on full display that we hold the name of Christ, beginning with submission.

Not repaying evil for evil. Submitting to the governing authority. And Paul does the exact same thing here.

So, what are we to expect? What I want to try to do today is say a few words about Roman numerals 1. Expound on Roman numeral 2, because there ought to be expectations of each other within this body, which is the focal point.

And then you'll have to call me back for Roman numeral 3 and 4, unless you want a two-hour session, because I can get the other two in. I can get the other two in.

[27 : 41] So, let's look together at Roman numeral 1. What should we expect to see of ourselves?

Of ourselves. When we do an inward look at ourselves, we're sitting here. Now, let me tell you who's evaluating you. You're looking at me going, well, Jeff has hair.

He doesn't have hair. Jeff's better looking. He has a face for radio. He's a little loud. Jeff, I like his tone better. And that's fine. You can make those grades. But guess who's grading you?

The same person that's grading me this morning. And that's God. He's looking at your heart and my heart, and he's evaluating whether or not we're worshipping this morning in spirit and truth.

That's what's happening. So, focus on the word. And this first Roman numeral are expectations of personal conduct and character. Take an inward look at yourself.

[28 : 43] And I will take an inward look at myself to see what I look like. And so, these points are very, this is very easy to outline.

It is, it's not easy to preach, but it is easy to outline. So, if we take an internal look at ourselves, what do we look like as a Christian?

Well, first of all, it says, let love be without hypocrisy. What does that mean? When we come in the sanctuary, when we gather with one another, take your mask off.

Take your mask off. Let us see. Let us see you. I want you to see me, warts and all. Warts and all. No pretending. Don't be, again, a false Philemon. Let us love each other without hypocrisy. Examine our heart.

[29 : 46] Let us have a genuine break with evil. That's the way John Phillips put it. The scripture says, abhor what is evil. That's a pretty powerful term. Let us have a genuine break with evil.

Before we come to church, let us be mortifying our sin and pursuing holiness.

Daily. Daily. Mortify sin. Pursue holiness. The only time that I am ultimately convinced that that happened is during the taking of the Lord's Supper.

It's, Jeff or Greg would make note of, examine yourself before you take the symbol of the broken body of Christ and the shed blood of Christ, lest you take judgment onto yourself.

Have you wronged a brother or sister? Is there some unconfessed sin in your life? The grand and glorious thing about the scripture is we can go to 1 John chapter 1 verse 8 and following that we, if we say that we don't have any sin, then we're hypocrites, right?

[31 : 06] We're liars. We've got a mask on. That's between you and God. I won't know that. Before we take the Lord's Supper, though, confess that because he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, right?

That's the word of God. That's not Dale. You can pray that out. I was telling Greg the other day, I'm so appreciative of the elders when they pray to pray out scripture.

That's a prayer that can't go wrong, right? My words and my thoughts might go everywhere. But if you pray scripture out, you can't go wrong praying to God what he's already written.

And that's a truth. And why do we examine ourselves? Well, that's the reason if you do so in an unworthy manner, it's the reason many of you are sick and some of you die, sleep.

And so we examine ourselves, don't we? We ought to mortify your sin. And then finally, we take an internal look and cling to what is good.

[32 : 12] What is that? Well, Philippians says, whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Now, folks, that's just an inward look at preparing ourselves to gather together. That's personal conduct. That's personal conduct. So once you've done that, then we can look at the Roman numeral two.

What should we expect? What should we expect? Trust would be the interactions with one another while we're in the fellowship. And sometimes, folks, I think we all ought to do that.

We ought to take folks at face value. But I am thankful that the elders, before you can join in this body, will place a book in your hand so that we can read through it and we can confirm whether or not this is a fellowship that we believe in or we don't believe in because this is Christ's church of Williamsburg.

And then they care enough to ask some questions. I hope that I hope are theological to make sure we're of the same mind frame because the world can come in the door with a smile on their face, with a mask on, not having examined themselves, having an imitation of Christian love, having no break with sin at all, no devotion to holiness, no devotion to good, and they can turn our world upside down and not for the better.

[34 : 00] So what are the expectations within the family of God? Let's look at verse 10. Let's look at verse 10. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, giving preference to one another in honor.

So if we look, and I've taken, Dr. MacArthur considers these affections, these responsibilities, as supernatural responsibilities.

In fact, several commentators have served up messages on this text in different ways. John Phillips calls this the exercise of grace.

Stifler calls it a look at our religious duties to one another. And Dr. MacArthur simply calls this supernatural living.

Supernatural living. I like the word. My favorite title is, of course, grace expectations. The first two items on Paul's list that we ought to expect from one another relate to our bond.

[35 : 24] Relate to our bond. We have been adopted into the same family. We are in the same family. That's the tie that binds, right?

And it is supernatural. It is supernatural. And to be humble is a supernatural experience.

It does not come naturally. What do we want to do naturally? You're in my seat. You need to move. That actually happened.

That actually happened to me. At another church I went to preach at, a young boy was sitting on the front. Well, I was sitting on the front getting ready to speak, and the kids rolled in. And I was sitting there, and they snuggled all around me, and I'm feeling warm and welcome, right?

And I said, this is really good. And a boy came up, and he's standing. I said, hey, how you doing? I'm Dale. And he says, hey, I'm so-and-so. And everything was lovely, you know? And so I made some small talk with him, and then boom, it hit 11 o'clock, and it was time to preach.

[36 : 28] And I said, buddy, I said, can I help you? And he said, you're sitting in my seat. At any rate, I got up and moved before I got up and preached. But I've actually had that comment come

back to me by someone in the congregation.

You don't understand. My family donated that pew. You're going to need to move. I wasn't in their family.

In verse 10, it says, be devoted to one another in brotherly love. John Phillips says, the believers within the brethren has the responsibility to show grace and to show an extension of brotherly love. We ought to really have a kindly affection for one another in grace. And then one beloved author said, well, it might be better said that it's rarely done in church.

Grace extended to another individual. Taking a back seat to another church member. As the poem goes, to dwell above with the saints in love, that will indeed be glory.

[37 : 56] To dwell below with the saints that we know, well, that's another story. And sometimes we act like that. You know, it gives a testimony to other folks, right?

The brotherly love that's being admonished here is a hallmark. It is a witness that we have come to know the Lord. In 1 John, if you don't love the brethren, you have failed the test.

Is there a genuine love for one another? I see it here. Now, y'all may have a mask on. Y'all may not be prayed up. You may not be pursuing holiness.

You may not be mortifying sin. But you're smiling at one another. And you're talking to one another. And you're extending grace to one another. And it's a great thing to see.

Charles Hodge, the Presbyterian theologian, back in the late 1700s, early 1800s, and he was the principal of Princeton Theological Seminary at one time, said that this love that's being advocated here by Paul is the strong, natural affection between parents and their children.

[39 : 08] Did you hear that? That's how we're to love one another, like they're related to us, like they're your own child, like they're your own child. We're one in the family of God.

And then John MacArthur says this love is not optional for believers. It's not only required, but it's inescapable. Why? Because whoever loves the Father loves the child born of him.

John 13 and 35. You're looking up there at the pictures, and maybe you've got the little tie that binds there, the thing that binds us together as a family.

But what about these characters that are sitting over here? These are my grandkids. These are my grandkids. And on any given day, they are trying to murder each other.

On any given day. I mean, it is something. And the smallest one there, Brian, in the little orange shirt right there, I will tell you, he goes at the oldest and all the rest of them with all he can.

[40 : 16] And the young lady, that's Caitlin. She's got the button of every brother. She knows how to push it. I took this picture because at this picture, the oldest, who's Austin, had just won the state tournament and was on his way to the national tournament, and they won that.

And he could have done anything. He could have rejoiced with his family. There was many, many things he could have done because when the whistle blew and they were champions, he immediately ran off the field and gathered up his siblings.

And that's the outflow of his heart. And when we come through that door, it does my heart good to see you hug on one another.

To see you hug on one another. Because that's what it reminds me of. And when you're part of a family, you don't mind extending the hug.

But Paul goes on, and you're worried because my wife is back there going, I told you not to do the long thing at the beginning. We ought to also give preference to one another in honor.

[41 : 34] Preference to one another in honor. It is a supernatural humility. It does not come again natural.

So the story is told of Martin Lloyd-Jones. He's the Welsh Protestant minister. We call him the doctor.

He was called the doctor. He was a medical doctor, gave up his medical practice, and became a pastor and shared the gospel for years and years. And he was asked to speak at this large gathering of men and other pastors.

And before he walked out on stage with a number of other men that would do not only an exposition but some Q&A; he reached the curtain.

And he heard an applause breakout of literally thousands gathered. And his reaction was to step back and begin to applaud for the man that they were recognizing, unknowing that it was him that they were honoring.

[42 : 40] That is a great visual of giving preference to one another. What is the virtue?

Humility. Humility. And you remember what Screwtape said to Wormwood? He instructed Wormwood in the Screwtape letters to move all virtue out to the mental realm of fantasy and forbid that it become a habit in the Christian's life.

You have to practice it because it's not natural to give preference to the other person. But let's move on. Let's move on.

Let's look at our behavior. Our behavior. What does Paul say here? He says that we are not to be lagging behind and diligent.

We are to, two, be fervent in spirit. And three, we ought to be about serving the Lord. That's the expectation we ought to have of one another. We ought to be able to look across the aisle and say we ought to expect someone that's not lagging behind in diligence.

[43 : 55] What does that mean? We ought to be able to see a congregation that never flags in zeal. That's what the Revised Standard says. What does that mean?

It means they ought to, with regard to serving the Lord, it ought to be with haste. It ought to be, they ought to be active. They ought to be zealous in their activity.

What does it mean? They ought to not be lazy. They ought to not be lazy. We have a right of ourselves to expect it and to deliver that within the congregation.

Jeremiah 48.10 takes another approach. A curse on him who is slack in doing the Lord's work. That's another approach. But we are not to be lagging behind in diligence.

In other words, not lazy in zeal and intensity. We ought to hurry up. We ought to move our spirit fast.

[44 : 56] Or, and this is in dedication to Suzanne from the land state of the Lone Star, tumbleweeds, armadillos, and rattlesnakes. We ought to get after it.

We ought to get, isn't that what they say in Texas? Just get after it. And folks, we ought to do that. In serving the Lord and serving one another, get after it. There ought to not be the time where the elders have got to say, I beg with you, please come and help clean the church.

Let's get after it. Whatever our hand finds to do, do with all our might. Ecclesiastes 9.10, and that was what Solomon penned out.

Redeem the time. Why? Because the days are evil. I have to keep myself taxed. I will say yes to any engagement, virtually any time, because I like to keep myself taxed and busy.

And I've got to, Kristen's got to remind me, you've got to do this and this and this. Okay, okay, okay. Why? Because I'll get lazy. I'll just get lazy. I don't want to, but I do.

[46 : 10] And then, how should you serve? He says, well, that's an obligation thing. Well, he says, fervent in spirit, fervent in spirit. Donald Gray Barnhouse quotes the Revised Standard Version.

Our service ought to be aglow in the spirit. We ought to want to serve. If Jesus said to Jeff or to Greg or to Fred Robertson or whomever and said, I'd like you to do something, wouldn't you approach it with a glow in the spirit?

Wouldn't you get after it and do it no matter what it was? I asked a lady in a congregation that I was helping to serve as an intentional interim, and I showed up early. It was on Wednesday night, and I asked her.

I just said, you know, hey, we're the first two here. You know, I've got to bring some chairs in and get things set up. Is there any way you can put on coffee? And she said, evidently, it wasn't from Jesus.

Evidently, she was not aglow when she heard it. And she simply said to me, I don't do coffee. A lot of things went through my head.

[47 : 27] Before I took the Lord's Supper, I had to confess. I had to think through. Dr. MacArthur says this word diligence pertains mainly to action.

Being fervent in spirit pertains to your attitude. One is getting after it. The other is how you get after it. What should we expect of one another? A smile. Be glad to.

Ready to. No matter how menial the task is, I'm ready to get after it. Have a fervency of spirit.

And then serving the Lord. Serving the Lord. This is diligence pertains mainly to action, right? And then the fervent in spirit is our attitude in doing it.

And what should we be doing it? Well, the final thing is we ought to be doing everything as in service to the Lord, which pertains to perspective and our priority.

[48 : 27] Perspective and priority. Now, here's a simple little thing to remember in setting priorities. Dr. Tom Murray, going to be with the Lord, one of my professors in the New Testament, said this.

When you think about doing anything to set your zeal, to get after it, ask yourself, is what I'm getting ready to do God-honoring?

God-honoring. Okay? Because that'll set the tone, right? That'll get your attitude right. If it's God-honoring, ask yourself, is it others' blessing?

That's the humility piece. Is it God-honoring and is it others' blessing? Because if it's God-honoring and or others' blessing, it will be self-fulfilling.

We always like to start down here at the bottom, don't we? Will this benefit me? I didn't get much from the sermon that was preached today. You might be saying that right now. It's not about you.

[49 : 27] It's not about you. Is what we're doing to get after, with all zeal, God-honoring, does it bless others, and then by default, you will be self-fulfilled at performing the task, performing the task.

Well, let's look with haste to point number four. We're going to make it. We're going to make it. Our bearing. Our bearing. Jeff talked a lot about going out into the world.

The world is going to hate these activities. We are going to bear one another's burdens. We're going to bear our own burdens. And Paul is calling us to supernatural endurance.

Supernatural endurance. The three items he has there, we ought to rejoice in hope, persevering in tribulation, be devoted in prayer.

They can be summed up in three words. Praise, patience, and prayer. Praise, patience, and prayer.

What should we expect of one another as we help one another go through a trial, or we ourselves are going through a trial, or we as a church go through a trial?

[50 : 40] We're under attack. Praise, patience, and prayer. John Phillips says the Christian has an anchor for the future.

We have a hope. We have a hope. Not just a vague sentimental optimism, but hope as bright as the promise of God. What do we have? We have the hope of heaven before us.

We're going to heaven. This is why Paul had the most excellent dilemma. Paul walked around and said, Hmm, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. It was good on both avenues.

I'm going to mentor. I'm going to preach the word of God. I'm going to save. I'm going to be sanctified myself. That's a good thing while I'm here. But if in the trial of the tribulation they take my life, I go to be with the Lord.

There's no downside to that. None. Undiminished joy is what it creates. We can rejoice in hope, persevering through tribulation.

[51 : 43] William McDonald says, We are exhorted to be patient in tribulation. It's tough, folks. That is to bear up under that burden.

Such all-conquering endurance, he says, is the one thing which can turn misery into glory. Into glory. I say sometimes with regard to pain, You know, time will work through.

Eventually it will go away. I have the same philosophy of money. Money is like pain. Eventually it will go away. John Phillips says, Nowhere in the New Testament is the church promised freedom from tribulation.

Tribulation. On the contrary, we're far from being free. That's not the norm. John 16, 33 says, These things I have spoken to you so that in me you may have peace.

In the world you've got tribulation, but take courage. I've overcome the world. I've overcome the world. And the supernatural endurance, the bearing that we ought to expect from one another ought to be bathed in prayer.

[53 : 01] Bathed in prayer. Jeff, I really appreciate the men's breakfast, the message that you brought to us. I bought that piece of paper with me. Men, you probably took notes.

And I just want to tell you that we ought to expect this of one another. If you'll hold your finger in Romans and turn over, turn forward to Philippians chapter 1.

I just want you to see something that spoke to my heart. Jeff brought this message so the men could deal with how could we demonstrate kind-heartedness, compassion for men.

And I would submit to you it's true for women as well. It's for the church. It's compassion. How can we do that? And he gave us three words. He gave us three words. He said, man, there's sympathy that we can show, there's empathy that we can show, and there's compassion that we can show.

He defined it this way. Sympathy is about coming alongside someone in their pain and suffering. You follow me? Come alongside of them in their pain and their suffering. That's sympathy.

[54 : 10] Empathy is about coming alongside someone and experiencing their pain. I call that when you can put their pain in your heart, you can display empathy.

And finally, he said, then we can get to a level of compassion and take these matters to the Lord. Look at what the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians chapter 1, verse 3.

Paul says, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. What is that? Where does he have that congregation in Philippi?

In his what? All my remembrance of you. He is displaying sympathy because he's got them in their mind. He's got that congregation in his mind.

We know one another. Some by name, at least for me, some not. But he's got them in his mind. He says, always offering prayer with joy, my every prayer with you all in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

[55 : 19] For I'm confident in this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all because I have you in my heart.

He has moved them from his head to his heart. What does that mean? He has empathy for them, right? And then it says, Since both in my imprisonment and defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. Look at verse 9. And this I pray. He took that congregation from his mind, sympathy, to his heart, that's empathy.

And he cared enough about them to drop to his knees in prayer. And folks, that's compassion.

That's compassion. We ought to expect that of one another.

That someone knows me by name. Knows my issue. Has sympathy for me. And moves me from their head to their heart where they experience my pain in their heart.

[56 : 32] And that drives them to the primary thing. It's not doing something. It is dropping to our knees and asking God to help that person in that time in that trial.

That's compassion. That's compassion. Back to Romans. And I hasten to close. And all of God's people said, Amen.

Amen. Amen. Our benevolence. Our benevolence.

Real quickly. He says, We ought to contribute to the needs of the saints. And we ought to practice hospitality. That's supernatural contribution.

Supernatural contribution. Okay? There's a better phrase. Supernatural sharing. I like that better. That was a few minutes before I came to church today.

[57 : 31] It's supernatural sharing. And it's a two-way street. The pictures are not by accident. Because it's a sharing of not only your resources, but your time.

And your experience. You follow me? The picture of an older woman spending time in the Word of God, mentoring a younger woman is scriptural, right?

Take the time to mentor that younger person. It's also part of our time, part of our benevolence, part of the supernatural contribution, a supernatural sharing with one another, is showing hospitality in some way.

By someone younger, maybe that's older. And men, the same is true. We can learn so much from gray hair.

And it's not because that's the color of mine. I usually refer to myself as no hair. But there's wisdom in gray hair. And there's wisdom in a multitude of counselors.

[58 : 40] And if you don't have someone in the church body that you're mentoring, shame on us. Shame on us. Because that's part of contributing to the needs of the saints.

From a materialistic standpoint, I like what the farmer says and how he shares his resources. He says this. He said, and this farmer was prosperous. And he just said this back to a pastor that asked him, you know, about his prosperity.

And he said, Pastor, it's like this. I keep shoveling into God's bin. And he keeps shoveling back to me. And God's shovel is bigger. It's bigger.

And you'll be blessed by doing that. And I close with this. Practicing hospitality is implied in the end. And I think I've covered that without quotes so you get it. So what happens? What happens here?

Well, Charles Hodge says this.

[59 : 43] Christians should never forget that faith without works is dead. It's not more important to believe what God has revealed than to do what he has commanded.

A faith, therefore, which does not produce love and kindness and sympathy and humility, the forgiveness of injuries, et cetera, can do us little good.

And that which we expect, we probably will not see if we're not displaying it ourselves. But there's a warning. And this is where Jeff took us in 1 Peter.

If you live that way, if we live that way within the body, here's the warning. The world will hate you. Will hate you. They hated our Lord.

They will hate us. It should not prohibit us from expecting it of one another. Donald Gray Barnow says, Now, such a life that we should expect must inevitably arouse the hatred of those who do not experience it.

[60 : 51] To live supernaturally in the midst of a natural world is a silent rebuke that becomes intolerably galling to those who are not trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus this. This next section that he covers in Romans, like Peter covered, like Jeff covered, from 1 Peter 2 and verse 13 on.

We need to prepare ourselves for battle because we're in a war. Let's pray together.

Father, as a body of baptized believers, Lord, we pray that with undiminished joy as our motivation, that we would meet your expectations in this church.

And that we would not forsake the assembling together of ourselves, as is a matter of some, but come together and all the more as we see the day drawing near.

[62 : 07] Prepare us for battle, but while we're in battle, may we love on one another. And may we see in each other the Christ whom we love, who gave himself for us, who bled and suffered and died, that we could be ushered into your presence.

So, Father, as a congregation, we just want to say this day, we love you. And all of God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen.