

Lives in Harmony with Heaven

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[0 : 00] So the title of my message this morning is lives. Let me see if it's going to work. I have to have my wand of power. Is it doing anything?

Switch it for me, brother, and see if it'll. There you go. Now let me see if I can do it. Nope, Greg will fix it. He fixes everything.

Otherwise, I'll be cuing you. Lives in harmony with heaven. And we'll be in Colossians. So we'll turn there. Colossians chapter 3. And I want to go ahead and read the passage.

I'll read a part of the context as well. So that you can see what we're jumping into. Since it's our habit to preach verse by verse through books of the Bible. It's kind of different for us to just jump into the middle of a book somewhere.

So chapter 3 beginning in verse 12. So as those who have been chosen of God. Holy and beloved.

[1 : 04] Put on a heart of compassion. Kindness. Humility. Gentleness. And patience. Bearing with one another.

And forgiving. Each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone. That would be against anyone within the church. This is all couched within the church family.

Just as the Lord forgave you. So also should you. That is forgive. Beyond all these things. Put on love. Which is.

The perfect bond. Of unity. And now our verses for this morning. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

To which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.

[2 : 04] With all wisdom. Teaching and admonishing one another. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with thankfulness.

In your hearts. To God. Whatever you do. In word or deed. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks.

Through him. To God the Father. The section of scripture that we're dealing with this morning. Puts us in the context. Of what it means for you and I.

To experience unity. And the bond of love. As a spiritual family. This is all done. For us to think about. How all these individuals.

Come together. And share in a common salvation. So that Jesus Christ is glorified. That's. That's the highest priority. Of our time of worship. And as.

[2 : 58] As we gather as God's people. And live together. Doing the one another's. It is to do it all. To the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we know. Well what does that look like?

What does that involve? How do we even go about accomplishing that? Well read the New Testament. Because that's what the New Testament tells us. How to know this God. Who calls us to common fellowship.

In his son. Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Savior. Now those aren't just preacher words. That's just. That's not just something that. Seminary students need to study.

This is your heritage. This is who you are as a people. You are defined. By this call. To love God. And to love one another.

And in doing so. To glorify Jesus. In the highest way possible. As a human being. So that the world looks in. And sees the love that we have. For one another. And for the Lord.

[3 : 54] Whom we have come to know. Through his son. To see that love that we share. And see that we are bringing. The highest glory possible. To God himself. That's a great privilege.

And a great honor for us. And you know. The only. The only places. That ever happens. Is when God's people. Gather together. To worship him. And demonstrate that.

Koinonia love. Across the aisles. As it were. Through the week. As you reach out to each other. That's how the world. Gets the view. Of God's love. Working in the hearts. Of God's people. In his commentary. On Colossians. British theologian. Reginald White. Sagely remarked.

The surest sign. That you are carrying. A full bucket. Is. Wet feet. It's true.

[4 : 51] And it's sage. The surest sign. That you're carrying. A full bucket. Is. Wet feet. Now. I used to have to water. Everything by hand. On our farm.

When I was a little boy. We had a well. I know. I'm not that old. But we had a well. And I would drop the bucket. Down into the well. And pull the bucket up.

And I'd take the bucket. And I'd walk around. All the animals. And I'd have. I don't even know. How long it took me. To do that. But I remember. Thinking. I want to fill. This bucket up.

As full. As I can make it. And make as few trips. As possible. Because I wanted to go. Hunt. Or whatever. Do other things. I didn't want to be doing that. So I'd fill that thing up. And I remember. As I walked with that bucket.

What would it do? It would slosh all over. And I'd be soaking wet. From my knees down. The surest sign. That you're carrying. A full bucket. Is wet feet. Now. He went on to say this.

[5 : 45] Let's see if I can. I'm still not clicking. You may have to advance. Some for me. Nolan. Can you do that? If I cue you. Or did it do it? Ah. Thank you brother. The wand of power.

Is very necessary up here. Amen. Look at this quote. He went on to say. A vessel. Is only. Really full. When it begins. To overflow.

So the proof. Of a Christ filled life. The value. Of a Christ filled life. And ultimately. The purpose. Of a Christ filled life. Lie in the outflow. Into other lives.

Of. The riches. We ourselves. Enjoy. The outflow. Proves. The inflow. And demonstrates. The fullness. Very wise.

So the question. For us. This morning. As we look into. Our passage. Is this. Are we a church. With wet feet. Are we a.

[6 : 42] Congregation. With wet. Feet. From our passage. In Colossians 3. Notice. The apostle. It's still not. Advancing for me brother.

You're going to have to click it. The apostle Paul. His concern. Is for a Christ. Centered.

Community. Of faith. That's the main thing. That you want to corral.

As we move through. This passage. A Christ. Centered. Community. Of faith. Where our spiritual. Buckets. Overflow. In the fullness. Of what? Living for the.

Greater glory. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. To that end. Paul expounds. On three commands. Or three exhortations. Which unify us. In Christ.

Centered. Family living. As the body. Of Christ. That's what we're going to deal with. This spiritual unity. That we share.

[7 : 34] As a congregation. Based in a Christ. Focused. Christ. Exalting. Christ. Centered. Family life. As his body.

With him being. Our head. Christ. So we're going to move right in. To the first verses here. And deal with verse. Fifteen. See if I can. No.

Advance it for. Will you. Will you work on that for me bro. It may. This thing may needs to be. You know. I need my wand. Did you.

All right. There you go. Christ. Peace. And our purpose. That's what we'll start. In verse fifteen. He says. In an injunction. In a command. Let the peace. Of Christ.

Rule. Rule. You may have a slightly different word there. The new American standard says. Rule. In your hearts. Let that peace. Rule. In your hearts. To which indeed.

[8 : 30] You were. Called. Notice now. In one body. This is a corporate. Calling. When I say corporate. I'm not talking about business industry.

I'm talking about collectively. The corporate body. Is just that. It's not you as an individual. It's us. As a family.

That's what we're talking about. You and I have been called. In this one body. This unified experience. Of being at peace.

With Jesus. And allowing that peace. To rule. Our hearts. My goodness. If there's anything. That we're going to be ruled by.

It's the rule of love. With the peace of Jesus. Umpiring our hearts. And we'll get into that. In the context of Colossians. What exactly. Is this peace.

[9 : 25] Which Jesus gives. To govern. Our hearts. As the body of Christ. Now think about this with me. As we launch into this. How do you get.

I don't know how many people. Are in here. This morning. But you know. How do you get. All these different. Christians. From different backgrounds. Different families. Different ideas. To come together.

And have one mind. On what it means. To be Grace Church Williamsburg. And to move forward together. In ministry. To our community. How do you put all those people. On the same page. To do that. When we all have opinions. And ideas. And thoughts. And all that kind of stuff. That we bring. How do we. How do we come together. Well. One of the ways. That Paul is telling us. This happens. As a spiritual unity. A spiritual body. Is that each of us. Are striving. To allow the peace. Of Jesus. To rule our hearts. In how we serve.

[10 : 19] One another. It's that straightforward. Well. What does that look like. In the context. Of the book of Colossians. If you'll go back. To chapter one. Let's put this piece.

In context. So that you can allow. The Bible. To define for you. What Paul is demonstrating here. In chapter one. Beginning in verse 13. For he rescued us.

From the domain. Of darkness. And transferred us. To the kingdom. Of his beloved son. So the he there. Is God. God rescued us.

From the domain. Of darkness. And transferred us. To the kingdom. Of his beloved son. In whom. We. We. Have. Redemption. The forgiveness.

Of sins. If you jump over. To chapter two. And look at verse. Eighteen. Let no one. Keep defrauding you.

[11 : 15] Of your prize. That is the prize. Of your salvation. And relationship. In Jesus Christ. By delighting. In self abasement. And the worship.

Of the angels. Taking his stand. On visions. He's seen. Inflated without. Cause. By his fleshly mind. Not holding fast. To the head. From whom.

The entire body. Being supplied. And held together. By the joints. And ligaments. Grows with a growth. Which is from God. In verse 19. He's talking about. That body life. That is sustained.

By us. Knowing. Worshiping. Serving. And loving Jesus. Verse 20. If you have died. With Christ. That is. If you've been saved.

If you have now. Found your life. To be hid with Christ. If you've died with him. To the elementary principles. Of this world. Why. As if you were.

[12 : 08] Living in the world. Do you submit yourself. To decrees. These are man-made decrees. Man's wisdom. Such as. Do not handle this. Do not taste that.

Do not touch this. Because all that will make you. Spiritually unclean. They all refer to things. Destined to perish. With use. In accordance with the commandments. And teachings of whom. Men. These are men's rules. Men's wisdom. No. These are matters. Which have to be sure. The appearance of wisdom. See. There's the deception. They have the appearance of wisdom. In self-made religion. And self-abasement. And severe treatment. Of the body. But. Here's the sticker. But.

They are of no value. Against. Fleshly indulgence. So you and I. Have to be willing. To check our flesh. At the door. As it were.

[13 : 03] And Paul is giving us. The prescription. For that happening. As the peace of Christ. Rules our hearts. Those verses. Help you and I. See. That the peace of Jesus.

Can be understood. As nothing short of. His recognition. Inconciling favor. On your life. That God. Has taken a sinner. And brought that sinner. Near to himself.

Through the Lord. Jesus Christ. It is God. Bringing you. Near to himself. It is the salvation. And grace of God.

Ministering God's peace. In your heart. That is the peace. If we look at. John. John. 14. 27. I will just put it up. Nolan. If you will.

Throw that up there. On the screen. For me. John. 14. 27. There you go. Peace. I leave with you.

[13 : 58] My peace. I give to you. Not as the world. Gives. Do I give to you. Do not let your heart. Be troubled. Nor let it be fearful. So we're not talking about. A worldly peace here.

We're not talking about. The ideas of man. To help you cope with life. That is not what we're talking about. We're not talking about. The corporate ideas.

The business and marketing ideas. Of the world. That will help us be. A more efficient. Church body. We're not talking about that. This has nothing to do.

With what man would prescribe. For us being unified. As a church body. This is a spiritual unity. That only comes. Through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it comes through his peace. At work in our hearts. God's peace. With us. And God's peace. In us. Is very. Very precious.

[14:54] It steadies. And it readies. Our hearts. In a society. That is torn apart. By division. Hatred.

And fear. Are we not seeing that? Once again. You know. I could just take this sermon. And God gives me life. Breath for life. And a year from now. I could probably stand in this pulpit.

Preach this very sermon again. Say the same thing I just said. And we would find the world. In the same condition. Would we not? Year by year by year. What we see. Is this constant cycle.

Of turmoil. Hatred. Fear. On display. Way before us. Around the world. Now I want to be very careful. To define for you.

And help us understand. The peace that I'm talking about. While it is not a peace. Of man. Or a peace of the world. We are not talking about. The peace that. Fixes the world. Nope.

[15:48] I'm not preaching a sermon up here. We just need more peace. Peace and love. And it'll fix the world. That is not what I'm saying. What we are talking about. Is the fear of the Lord.

Not fixing the world. But fearing the Lord. That's where it starts. You and I. Having a high and holy reverence. For Jesus Christ. So that we approach our daily lives.

Mortifying or killing the desires. That fight against the greatest desire. Of bringing him honor.

Whatever it is in your life. That fights against bringing Jesus honor. Moment by moment.

As your highest priority. That's what you need to kill. You need to slay that. Because it's fighting against. What you are all about. In Ecclesiastes 12.13.

Nolan if you'll flip that one for me. Ecclesiastes 12.13. The conclusion. When all has been heard. Is fear God.

[16:49] And keep his commandments. Because this applies. To every person. That is how. The wisest man apart from Jesus. Summed up.

Life. Life lived before the Lord. Fear the Lord. And keep his truth. Live in his truth. Friends.

In this world. There is no. True. Peace. You and I both know. That if we were able to live. 15 lifetimes. There will never be. An enduring peace.

In the Middle East. As long as we are human beings. Living on this planet. It won't happen. I'm not saying. That we shouldn't strive toward it. We would all love to see. The murderous stuff.

Happening in the Middle East. Come to an end. Wouldn't we? We should pray for it. To that end.

We should do all that we can do. To bring that about. To support that. But we understand.

[17:44] That scripture tells us. That's never going to happen. Long ago in the Old Testament. The Lord told us. That the people. The Arab people. Will always be at enmity.

With Israel. Didn't he? You can see that in Genesis chapter 16. And following. There will never be peace.

In this world. We live in a world. At war with God. And with itself. And that's why. That's why. The world will never know. The kind of peace.

We're talking about right now. It won't. People sense. This reality. Friends. You know it. You're among them. People sense.

This reality. It makes them fearful. It makes them anxious. And it makes them. Continually. Uneasy. About life. Pharmaceutical companies.

[18:36] Around the world. Are gaining billions. And billions. Of dollars. As they try to medicate. People out of this reality. But nothing's going to change. That reality. And yet you and I.

Are called to live in this peace. As God's people. To know this peace. As God's people. And to minister. This peace. To others. What a great privilege.

For us. A world. Upside down. With hatred. And violence. And fear. And people. Look into our lives. And say. How is it. That you're able. To live the steadiness.

And readiness. That you live. With all this going on. Around you. And the things that I know. Are happening in your life. How can you do that? And you can tell them. One word. Defines it all.

Jesus. Jesus. It's not a formula. It's not a coping strategy. It's not psychology.

[19 : 31] It's not medication. It's a relationship. With God. With God. The God who owns all this. And sustains all this.

And has all this in his hand. Is sovereign. And that steadies my heart. And readies my heart. Oh. That may not change my circumstances.

My circumstances might even grow. More difficult. And more challenging. But here's what I know in all of that. That all of that is within the hand of my God. And he will always do what is best for me. And highest for him. Always. Every time. Unfailing. Now you can sink your feet into that. You can live there. That isn't the way the world lives.

You know that. And I know that. Paul is speaking to a reality. That only the church can know. And is privileged to share in. As we approach the seasons.

[20 : 28] That the world knows. As Thanksgiving and Christmas. We hear themes of thankfulness and peace. Don't we? Millions of people. In fact. Are going to hear. Words like this.

In some form. Glory to God in the highest. And on earth. Peace among men. With whom he is well pleased. Well that peace comes at a cost. That peace among men.

Comes at a cost. And the symbol of that cost. Is right behind my head. God purchased that peace for us.

We didn't earn it. And we didn't deserve it. But God purchased it. And gave it to us. By grace through faith. And that's how the church lives.

What a privilege. True thankfulness and peace. Will always evade the world. Why? Because it's not a true inner spiritual thankfulness.

[21 : 29] And peace. Wrought by the Lord in the heart. And where there is no peace with God. There cannot be true peace among men. Amen. Now think about it.

Where you are not at peace with God. You cannot be at peace with men. You're not even at peace with yourself. Unless you come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

You cannot know this peace. Any sense of worldly peace. Is false, fickle, and fleeting. Now. Nolan if you'll advance to the next one for me. This is the spiritual emphasis.

Spiritual emphasis. Paul is making by saying. Notice in the text. To which indeed you were called. You were called in one body. In other words.

As Christians. You are now one spiritual family. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. To which you indeed were called in one body.

[22 : 31] And be thankful. God did this by calling. And putting you. Into the body of Christ.

This is one of the reasons. That we put such a high priority. On church membership. You have been put into the body of Christ. By salvation. By the spiritual union.

With the Lord Jesus Christ. So we ask you to come forward. And identify with us. As a local assembly. And say. Now I am joining with this local body of believers.

To proclaim myself. Part of who they are. What they are. What they're doing. I'm going to be accountable to them. I'm going to invest in them. This is where I choose.

To live out my spiritual life. That membership starts with your membership. In Jesus. Spiritually wrought by the grace of almighty God. Folks.

[23 : 25] This is all about a spiritual. A greater spiritual reality. We share in the same reconciliation. Which put each of us.

At peace with the Lord. And therefore at peace then. With one another. As the body of Christ. As the family of God. I'll continue to hammer that. Because I want you to understand.

The peace that he's talking about here. And the other elements that he gives us. Is all couched within this unified body life. We're going to do some of that. When we conclude our service.

And we put some tables out here. And we sit down to a meal together. There's probably 50 other things. That you could be doing after the service. And I understand that.

But the fact that you've elected. To push the world out. And say no. I'm going to be here with my spiritual family. I'm going to take a meal with my spiritual family. I'm going to stop long enough. To look into their eyes.

[24 : 22] And talk to them. And love them. And edify them. And share my life with them. Isn't that wonderful? That's an opportunity. That's a privilege.

It's also a responsibility. It's just one of the many ways. That you are afforded an opportunity. To invest. In each other. And encourage each other. And build each other up.

We are called. To be the family of God. In Colossians 3. Verse 11. Will you notice? Paul is now speaking about.

A spiritual renewal. In Jesus Christ. In which there is. No distinction. Between Greek. And Jew. Boy that was a big battle. Circumcised. And uncircumcised. Barbarian. Scythian. Slave. Free man.

[25 : 18] But notice how he finishes it. But Christ. Is all. And in all. It's not about your cultural heritages. And all of this kind of. It's about Jesus. And Jesus bringing you into a blood kinship.

That is by his blood. You have been made brother and sister. A family member. Sharing in. What all the other family members share in. As this spiritual community.

Folks. What he's describing here. Are divergent groups of people. Who really disliked each other. These class. And heritage. And cultural.

And religious distinctions. They were serving then. And they serve now. To separate us. Because of sin. Sin in our hearts. Towards each other. But these have been.

Nullified. By God's grace. As barriers. To our love. And peace. And service to one another. Here's what I'm saying to you. That Paul is telling us. It is only by the power.

[26 : 15] Of the peace of Jesus. At work in the human heart. That these kind of distinctions. About us as human beings. Fade away. And become unimportant to us.

For the greater scheme. Of ministering peace to each other. And loving one another. So that you're deliberately. Putting yourself in a place. Where you can reach across the aisle. And encourage each other. In the Lord.

You're setting aside. Those differences. In order to put yourself forward. To serve. And to minister. Now do you see. What that would do. If Arabs. And Israelis.

And whomever else. Came to know Jesus Christ. Would we experience peace then? Could you imagine. Those divergent groups of people. Who are killing each other.

By the hundreds right now. Could come to know. The peace of Jesus. That rule in their heart. And find themselves. Throwing those weapons down. And actually embracing. Because they've come to realize.

[27 : 11] That the same God. Who forgave me for my sins. Forgave you. The same blood. That purchased me to heaven. And made me part of. A greater spiritual family. Was the blood shed for you too.

We're blood relatives in Christ. That's powerful. That is the power. Of the peace of Jesus. Folks. That is our heritage. As God's people.

That is a powerful. Powerful. Powerful. Antidote. To the hatred of this world. For them to see. The peace of God. At work in your heart. That puts a smile on your face.

In difficult circumstances. That helps you move through. Your anxieties. Your fears. Your worries. They're there. And they're real. Well. Well. What difference. Does Jesus make in your life.

In those everyday realities. What difference. Is he making. Is he. Is knowing him. Making the difference. In how you face.

[28 : 06] These trials. In circumstances. Of life. He can be. The difference. He can be. And I know that he wants to be.

Christ is. Our all. And he lives. In each one of us. That is a miracle. God lives.

In each one of us. God the father. Sent Christ the son. To put us. In a right. Spiritual relationship. With himself. And with each other. Listen to what.

Nolan. If you'll put up. Romans for me here. Romans 5. 1. Therefore. Having been justified. By faith. We have peace. With God. Through. Our Lord.

Jesus Christ. We have peace. With God. Then. In Ephesians 2. 13 and 14. We have this. But now. In Christ Jesus. You who were formerly.

[29 : 00] Far off. Have been brought near. That's reconciliation. You who formerly. Were spiritually. Far off. Have been brought near. By what? The blood. Of Christ.

For he. Himself. Is our peace. Is that up here? Let's put that one up there. Nolan. Ephesians. For he himself. Look at the end. He himself.

Is our peace. You know. Paul is fond. Of helping us. Understand. That not only. Does Jesus. Minister. These wonderful. Realities. Of our relationship. With him.

Like. He ministers. Gentleness. To us. He ministers. Peace. To us. He ministers. Wisdom. To us. But. Paul says. He is. The peace. He is.

He is. The treasure. He is. The wisdom. So when you get Jesus. You get it all. You get the whole. [29 : 54] Full. Bucket. And so you want to have wet feet. That's the thing. This is Paul. This is where we are in our text right now.

We should all be coming in here with wet feet. Even if we're mourning. Grieving. Even if we're facing things in our life that are uncertain. We sing about a sovereign God who knows all of our ways.

Even when I say I see that the road is very unclear. You know. God knows. Look at what Paul says in chapter 3 in verse 12. Look how verse 12 begins.

So. Now he's going to take everything he said from verse 1 down to verse 11. And he's going to sum up. So. As those who have been what? Of God. Now. Chosen of God.

You. You got a full plate of that last Sunday. Praise the Lord. Why did he choose you? Why you? Who are you? Who am I?

[30 : 55] Just the very reality that that took place. And that that had to take place for me to get saved. Astounds me. It awes me and draws my heart to God. And say man.

Thank you Lord for your choosing grace. Amen. Amen. It's just a marvelous truth that God ministers peace to us. So we're talking about a supernatural gift of God's own peace at work in our hearts. And all of that to bring about this unnatural, unearthly, holy calm to our lives. This godly calm is in major contrast to the turbulent and vitriolic nature of our society and our country and our world. Just consider the spiritually radical nature of what Paul tells us in Philippians 4. I think that's the next one, Nolan.

Philippians 4. Beginning in verse 4. Beginning in verse 4. Look at this. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Let your gentle spirit be known to all men.

[32 : 08] The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing. But in everything. But in everything. By prayer and supplication. See, you offer prayer and supplication and thanksgiving because you believe in a sovereign God.

Let your requests be made known to God. And what will happen, friends, and the peace of God, which surpasses all human comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Friends, you want the guardianship of God on your heart. And God's peace will set up gates that will help guard your heart against fear, anxiety, worry.

Because what do we do when we worry? Now, I'm not going psychological on you. I'm staying Bible here. What do we do when we worry? We forecast. We what-if ourselves into a mess.

We run out there and try to seize. Have you ever heard the saying, yeah, I got ahead of God? Now, stop saying that. Why? I got ahead of God.

[33 : 19] Yeah, I just ran out there and got ahead of God and got myself in a mess. Well, goodness me, aren't you a big old person? Because you cannot get ahead of Almighty God.

You cannot. Now, you should say amen to that. You should be thankful you cannot get ahead of God. You cannot do it. God knows you're coming and you're going.

He knows that your frame is but dust. He knows that about you. He knows the number of the hairs on your head. You don't. God knows you, friend, and he loves you.

He purchased you in his son, and there's no way you can get ahead of him. You can grieve the Holy Spirit. You can quench the Holy Spirit, but you can't run out ahead of your God.

You're not omnipotent, and you're not omniscient, but he is. If you consider the radical nature of Philippians 4 as it attaches to what we're doing in our passage, this is real.

[34 : 18] This is livable. This is genuine inner man peace. Christ's peace has made us heavenly distinct. Listen now. Christ's peace has made you and I heavenly distinct from the world, and our purpose is to live that distinction in the world.

Did you hear me now? Now, how do we do this? How is it that we are heavenly distinct from the world because of our salvation and the peace ministered in our heart, and yet we are to live that distinction in our world?

How do we do that? How do we show Jesus's peace in our daily lives? Well, a good start for you is to see what Jesus means by saying that we are not of this world.

Jesus has saved us, forgiven us, and delivered us from this world so that he can send us back into it.

We are no longer products of this world because we are now God's blood-bought children. But, friends, because we are God's children, we are commissioned to live in this world by his power and

peace.

[35 : 36] Didn't he say, go into the world? Go into it and baptize and teach in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're all about living as God's disciples. I do want to take you to John 17 for just a moment. Hold your finger there in Colossians, John 17. And I want to read an extended passage to you that speaks very much to this same idea that Paul is giving us here.

I believe this idea is foundational, so I'm going to take a little bit more time on this one. John 17, beginning in verse 13. But now, Jesus says, but now, and he's praying.

He's praying for his disciples that are in front of him right now. But now I come to you, you being the Father, and these things I speak in the world so that they may have my joy made full in themselves. I have given them, your disciples, your word, and the world has hated them. Why? Because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

[36 : 49] I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Now, he says this in 17, 17, 17. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. That is, make them holy. Set them apart to your use.

And do that through your truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. You see how we're following Jesus in this?

For their sakes, I set myself apart. I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be set apart or sanctified in truth. Now, notice verse 20.

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, that is, the disciples standing around Jesus, but for those also who believe in me through their word. That's us. That's all the other disciples that are coming after the original disciples.

[37 : 51] That they may all be one. Even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

There is the purpose clause for you and I cultivating this piece of us, our togetherness. So that the world may believe that you sent me.

So that they may believe on Jesus for who he is. Because the only explanation for the peace and unity in our church family is Jesus lives and Jesus saves.

That's what they see. Let's go a little further. Verse 22. The glory which you have given me, I have given to them. Wow. That they may be, here it is again, one.

Just as we are one. You see what Jesus is concerned with here as he prays? I in them and you in me. That they may be perfected in unity.

[38 : 57] So that the world, here it is again in the purpose. So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am so that they may see my glory, which you have given me.

For you loved me before the foundation of the world. Oh, righteous father, although the world has not known you, yet I have known you. And these have known that you sent me.

And I have made your name known to them and will make it known. So that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.

Then if you look over at chapter 15. In just one verse. Verse 19, Jesus says to his disciples, if you were of the world, the world would love its own.

But because you were not of the world, but I chose you out of the world because of this, the world hates you.

[40 : 09] So we shouldn't be shocked when we love Jesus and love others and they return it with hate. That's exactly what the world did to Jesus.

He loved them perfectly. That's something you and I can't accomplish. Consistently, but he did. And they hated him for it. Folks, the point of all of this is that you and I are saved from our sins and sent back into the lostness of this world, aren't we?

Ambassadors for Christ. The world needs to see this peace difference that Jesus makes in our lives. We live this difference of heavenly peace by allowing it to rule our hearts as we face situations where strife and conflict are swirling around us and seeking to define the moment.

You understand that we've been given the privilege of being those people who speak the truth in love into context and situations where lies and deception and hate are all swirling around, where fear is swirling around.

We walk into that mix and speak the truth in love to bring clarity and God's perspective into that situation. We don't do it as know-it-alls. We don't puff ourselves up and say, well, we walk in very humbly, very graciously, very gently, and we offer the truth in love.

[41 : 34] People will either receive it or reject it. That's not up to us, is it? What is up to us? We have to be willing to step into the mess and speak. We have to do that.

If you don't do it, who will? If you don't bring God's mind and perspective to the trouble of the world and the trouble of the people around you in your life, who will?

Are you saying, well, we'll just leave it to this guy. He's more religious. He speaks better. Now you sound like Moses and Aaron. Well, now, Lord, you know that I have a lisp or whatever it was, and I don't speak well.

Send Aaron in my place. And the Lord's like, I'm sending you. I want you to do it. Now he finally relented and let him do it. But come on. I don't know of any reason why any of us can't speak the name of the Lord Jesus in love in these contexts.

Do you? Unless we're just flat out unwilling to do it. That's not good. Especially when we're with each other. Here's what the text says.

[42 : 33] Nolan, let's throw the next one up there for me. The text says this. Let the peace of Christ rule. Rule in your heart. It's not a suggestion.

That's a command, beloved. You give way to. You submit to the peace of Jesus acting as. Here's the. It's a sports analogy in the Greek.

Umpire your inner man. That is your heart. To referee your heart. You know. Out. Safe. Whatever. And what the umpire says.

You know, there's no replay. There's no call the booth on this stuff. You don't. He's the booth. And the booth is spoken. That's it. You get me.

That's what's going on here. Now, this goes two ways. This whole idea of the of the peace of God ruling in your heart. You submitting to that. Allowing it to umpire your heart goes goes one of two ways here.

[43 : 33] One aspect of this concerns you seeking. Seeking the high road of remaining at peace with the Lord. By choosing to think and behave in ways which keep your conscience clear with God.

So you're not violating your conscience and whatever's going on in front of you. You're letting the peace of Jesus umpire your heart. Referee your heart. You're looking to the peace of the Lord to help you be wise and discerning about how you move forward.

What you say and what you do. And as you do that, the thing that is most in your mind, paramount in your mind is this. I don't want to sin against the Lord. I don't want to sin against my conscience in the Lord.

I don't want to walk away from this situation feeling guilty and shameful about something I said and did. That's violating my conscience. I don't want to do that. Okay. That's one aspect of what we're talking about in here.

So you're keeping your conscience clear. You're not hiding sin. You're not harboring sin. You're not dishonoring the Lord through some willful disobedience or willful neglect or apathy or laziness.

[44 : 46] No. Here's what you ask. Here's what you and I would ask in this. Will this help me protect and promote peace in my walk with God?

Is what is what I'm thinking right now in the way of this difficult situation? Is this going is is what I'm thinking about saying and doing going to help me nurture and cultivate and continue peace with the Lord?

Because I don't want to sin against my conscience. Or if I don't speak and act in this way, will that violate my conscience? You see what I'm doing here? But what is the highest the pinnacle of that measurement?

The Lord. Will this help me stay at peace with Christ in my heart? Or is this going to put me at odds with Jesus because I'm not living by the truth?

I'm not allowing the truth. I'm going to do some more with this. Our purpose, our purpose. Now, please hear me carefully, friends. I'm trying to give you something practical here.

[45 : 47] Our purpose concerns holiness, personal holiness and holiness always takes the high road. Which is very often the harder road.

Amen. The high road is is very often the harder road. The second aspect of this peace umpiring your heart.

Listen. It helps you choose the high road of being at peace with others. Now, this one's more tricky. With others. Let me take you to one other place here.

Romans 12. Romans 12. 17 and 18. And I think I have a slide for that, brother. Romans.

Back one. Yep. There it is. That's the passage we want to look at now. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

[46 : 45] If possible. Now, that's a key element. If possible. So far as it depends on you. Be at peace with all men. That is the peace of Christ that you are ministering to others.

This isn't some superficial peace. Pseudo peace. Shallow peace. This is the peace of Jesus you're seeking to minister in the lives of other people.

The peace of Jesus is ruling your heart and you're trying to minister that same peace toward another human being. In some context that you're in. So you're not interested in paying back evil for evil.

You're respecting what's right. And as far as it depends on you, you're seeking to be at peace with all men. So you're asking yourself, will this decision, will this choice, direction or action, help me promote and protect peace with other people?

Now, think about that. And while you do, let me offer you one quick caution, because it is it is right at this juncture of these difficulties within our relationships where Satan can come in and work a grand deception on us because our hearts are already grieving.

[47 : 59] We might be, you know, your stomach is kind of in an uproar. Your gut is. Oh, man, this thing is killing me or whatever. Something like that. We're we're vulnerable in those times.

And so I need to give you a careful caution here, folks. This is not peace at any price. That is not sacrificial and that is not humility.

Peace at any price is a deception. You with me? What am I talking about? This is not peace at the expense of truth.

It is not peace at the expense of what is God honoring. Compromising truth does not bring peace.

You with me on that compromising truth doesn't bring peace.

That's a lie. That's a deception. If you compromise on the truth, you're setting yourself up for failure and you're setting up that relationship for failure.

[49 : 06] It's just a ticking time bomb. If you start compromising in little things in under the auspices of, yeah, well, I know, but this will help me.

And boy, we can just justify that thing. No. No. You do not compromise truth. In any way, for any reason, you cannot do that.

It is the way of listen now. It is the way of speaking the truth in love. That cultivates and nurtures and lays the groundwork for peace.

Speaking the truth in love. You say, well, Jeff, I can try to say it as loving and as kind and as gentle as I can. And I remember I did that. And this is what I got back.

And once again, I'll say to you, not everybody puts a premium on peace and truth. Do they? What happened when Jesus spoke the truth in love? What did they ultimately do to him?

[50 : 07] But he spoke the truth in love perfectly, perfectly without any aspect of sinful self involved. You and I have to guard that. This is why Matthew 7 is going to talk to us about the log in our eye before we approach the brother with the speck or the splinter in his.

We're constantly checking that humble thing. We're constantly checking that conscience and weighing it against the truth. We're going to believers that we trust in their walk with the Lord. And we're saying, this is what I'm facing.

This is what I'm thinking about doing. Does that sound to you like I'm approaching this with humility and with truth being paramount because I'm concerned in this person?

The lack of truth here in their life is going to bring them. And so you're moving into the mess. You see what I'm saying? Not sticky. That's messy.

That's why you need other believers to help you with this. Don't Lone Ranger this kind of stuff. Boy, that's dangerous. This is why Paul is saying, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

[51 : 11] Plural. He's bringing us together in this effort. Oh, wonderful. Poor Nolan. Josiah goes out of town and poor Nolan.

It's not you, brother. It's not you. Did we just lose a... Hey, now that's a first. Where I'm preaching so hard, I blow a circuit.

Come on. I'm working up here. Let me... No, no. I'm going to still go a little bit more. All right. Now, look. We're talking about this compromise thing.

I'm taking a little more time than even I thought. Let me say it this way to close it up. There was no compromise in the cross. God took the highest road and he won peace for us at the highest and greatest price possible.

The cross... Hear me, friends. The cross was the highest display of compassion at the greatest cost to God. Now, that's our standard.

[52 : 23] That's what's held up for us as we deny ourselves and what? Take up our cross and follow him. So we're all on that same page? God gave the highest price to purchase our salvation.

He did not take the low road. It cost him everything. That's the way of true peace. All right. Real quickly, then, the second point I want to make to you here is in verse 16.

Let the word of Christ... Now, you know, this is why we tape these things and you take notes. I know you can't digest all of this in one sitting here on Sunday, but you'll have plenty to feed on through the week, hopefully.

Verse 16. Let the word of Christ... The same formula as let the peace of Christ. Now it's let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another.

And notice how that's done with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. When that comes back up, we'll catch up.

[53 : 32] Okay? We'll catch up. No worries, brother. So the second point we're giving you here in verse 16 is this. Roman numeral 2. Christ's word and our worship. Christ's word and our worship.

That's what we're concerned with now. Is how does this all translate into worship as we gather?

That's what you're doing right now. That's why you came this morning.

Is worship. Corporate, congregational, spiritual family worship. Why didn't you just stay at home and worship?

Because it's not the same as gathering with your brothers and sisters in the Lord and hearing them sing and you joining in the singing and you reaching across the aisle and giving hugs and words of spiritual encouragement, right?

That's why we gather. This, look, this is like a little microcosm of heaven. This is as close as you're going to get to heaven on earth, right here.

[54 : 30] It should be. If you come here and you go, well, you know what? Well, come here and help us get it on then. Come on. Come here and worship. Don't come here and make it about you.

Come here and make it about him. And join all these other people that are laboring to make it about him. And we'll all gather together and say, well, we're just going to make, we're going to blow the roof off this place, making it about you, Lord, because you are worthy.

You are worthy. That's that's life transforming, folks. That's life defining. That will that will build you up and edify you and get you ready for what's coming this week.

And then you just go out there and you spend and be expended for the sake of Jesus. You come back in here next Sunday. We'll fill you back up again, as it were, and we'll back out. You go. We'll build each other up, get you ready for the next one until God calls you home.

It's just not that hard. You know, verse 16 is where Paul tells you how to grow in, how to safeguard and how to progress in your spiritual life of love in peace with God and others.

[55 : 41] Now, what is this word of Christ? What are we talking about when he says, let the word of Christ richly dwell within you? Well, the context will define it for you. If you go back to Colossians 1, verse 5, he's already defined it within the book itself.

Colossians 1, 5. What is this word of Christ? Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth.

What's that? The gospel. This word of truth, this gospel of God is the word of Christ. That's the context that he's talking from even now.

The word of Christ is the teaching of scripture in specific terms, this gospel message. The word of God is the word of Christ. The wonderful truth that Jesus Christ saves.

It is the product of God's wisdom, not of man's wisdom. Jesus taught the truth of God, and the entire Bible is God's truth.

[56 : 48] And this is what we need to speak in love to each other as we join together, to speak, as it were, the oracles of God, according to Peter, to each other. It's fine for us to talk about our favorite sports teams and our favorite hobbies and things that are going on in our lives.

That's all part of us just loving each other and getting to know and talking and sharing, but we've got to come to the place where now we're speaking that truth into each other's lives. We're talking about spiritual matters so that we can encourage each other in what really matters.

Loving Jesus well in the very issues of daily life. We've got to be willing to do that. The first time that ever happened to me, we were out at Grace Community Church, John MacArthur's church, and we had just gotten there.

And I've told a couple of you this before, I think. And we're standing there in the pews waiting for everything to get started, and we're standing there, and this guy turns around to me, and he says to me, Hey, my name is so-and-so.

What you been reading this week that the Lord's used in your life? And I went, What? No one's ever asked me that. No one's ever let out in a conversation.

[58 : 08] I just met you. That's kind of personal, don't you think? No. That should be the very natural way that you and I go about knowing each other and speaking to each other.

But this brother was interested in me. He was asking me, Share with me how God has been using something you've been reading this week to minister to your soul. Share that with me, brother.

Do you know what I had? Nothing. As long as I had nothing. But do you know what I'd done all week long? I'd sat in seminary classes all week long.

Now, it doesn't mean they didn't give me something. I was just so stunned, I couldn't think of a thing. And I just stood there looking at him. And I think I said, Well, what did you read? I don't remember, but I'll never forget that.

I will never forget the effect that that had on me. It's like, Jeff, this is why we're gathering. It's for that very thing to happen as we worship the Lord together. To minister to each other.

[59 : 14] Wow. Let Christ's wise word. Is it back up? Oh, yes. Okay. We need to go to where it says, Richly dwell within you, Nolan. Can we get there?

Oh, man, dude. Come on. You're on it. Let Christ's wise word richly dwell within you. In other words, let it be abundantly at home in your heart.

Abundantly at home in your heart. That's good. God's home for the word of Christ is your spiritually renewed heart. So let the truth of Jesus have an abundant influence on the design and the desires of your heart.

God's word should adorn the home of your heart with the beautiful riches of Christ's character, wisdom and ways. What do you do? You get a home. You're excited about it. What do you do? You start going around and hanging stuff and putting pictures up and putting things on the shelves and all and beautifying it.

Look, God's word and the riches and blessings of Jesus ought to adorn the home of your heart. Your heart ought to have stuff hanging all over that says Jesus saves. Jesus is beautiful.

[60 : 24] Jesus is kind and gentle and ministers to me the love of his heart. And provides for me and blesses me. It's a beautiful picture, isn't it?

And then notice Nolan put the next one up. With all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. With all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another.

The wisdom there is the wisdom of God. It's not your wisdom. It's God's wisdom in scripture. And you're using that wisdom to teach and admonish.

That's two sides of the same coin. Teaching helps you and I come to each other and say, here's what God's will is by what God says. So we're ministering the scripture to each other.

Here's what the word says. Admonishing, you flip the coin over and the word, we're still using the wisdom. This is the wisdom of teaching, God's wisdom. This is the wisdom of admonishing, God's admonishments.

[61 : 22] We use the word to say, hey brother. So in that one right there, you're going to want to be careful with that one or sister. Because that one right there, according to the word of the Lord, that one's going to lead to this. And that's going to mean this.

And you don't want to be there. So just let me offer that warning to you. And let's pray together right now. Is there some way I can help you with that or support you in that?

So on one side, you're giving like the positive element of the Lord says to do this. On the other side of that coin, the Lord says not to do this. You see what I'm saying? That's teaching and admonishing.

So you're covering the whole spectrum. You're doing that as you sit knee to knee, as you call each other through the week, as you show up and walk with each other in life. You're constantly talking about what the Lord would have us do and what the Lord would have us avoid.

Why? Because of the greater glory of Jesus. That's why. You're not doing that as a legalist. You're not doing that because you want to puff yourself up and be all holier than thou and you've turned yourself into the God squad.

[62 : 21] Now you're going to show up and make everybody. No. No. This is something you're doing because you love the Lord and you love your brothers and sisters. You're willing to sacrifice and give of who you are because you love Jesus.

And you know this is what Jesus has called us to as a church. It's revolutionary. With all wisdom, you share from the beautiful treasures of the truth of the person of Jesus and you speak in accord with that truth.

His words of life are at home in your heart. Your words, your words and your very life teach the way of Christ's love and peace for truthful living.

It's dynamic. It's powerful. And it's in us to be ministered. The powerful truth of the Lord Jesus at work in your heart is what makes your life so dynamic.

It's a dynamic testimony of Jesus. It's the same truth that works within our shared life as a church family. Friends, the word of Christ works in and defines you individually, even as it works also in and defines us congregationally.

[63 : 32] We are people of the word. All right. Now, question. Let's throw the question up there, Nolan. Why is it so important for us to safeguard and practice the centrality, supremacy and sufficiency of the word of Christ, preach, taught, read, prayed, sung in our times of worship?

Why do we here at Grace put so much emphasis on God's word when we gather? Well, one of the reasons is Hebrews chapter four. Hebrews four.

Verse 12 for the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

See, there's no other thing we can use to help you judge the thoughts and intentions of your heart than the word of the Lord. That's what you need to hear. The word of the Lord, not Jeff's opinions. The word of the Lord will search out your heart and reveal to you what's going on so that you can repent and replace and honor the Lord.

Straightforward, isn't it? That's what it says. And then in first Timothy one, five. First Timothy one, five. We also have that on a slide, Nolan.

[64 : 45] Paul says the goal of our instruction, the goal of our commanding, the goal of our teaching and admonishing is love from a pure heart and a good conscience. And a sincere faith.

That's what we want to do. The product of our teaching is helping us with love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

That's the goal of all Christian teaching. Is it promoting those things in your life, in our life as a congregation? I want to read one other for you.

Do we have the quote from Sam Storm's brother? Yeah. Look at this quote. I want to share this with you. At the core of our individual and corporate experience as God's people must be the person and work of Jesus.

All right. That's straightforward. The importance of this for today is easily seen with a quick, quick glance at the predominant themes in our pulpits and on our platforms. Christ is largely absent.

[65 : 42] Now, that's not an overstatement, he says. Obsessive preoccupation with self has usurped the place of Jesus in the life and ministry of countless churches. All right.

If you listen closely to what is being proclaimed on Sunday mornings, you will discern two dominant themes. Conquering and coping. How can I conquer my world?

How can I enter into my destiny? How can I triumph over my enemies and claim my inheritance?

How can I better cope with life's daily struggles?

How can I relate more effectively with my peers and coworkers? If Christ is mentioned, and he usually is, he exists to aid us in our search for significance.

He is important only so far as he awakens us to our importance. We talk about him so that we can feel good about ourselves.

[66 : 40] Need I go on? And then he ends with this. Paul's point is that we must grant the word of Christ the highest priority in place in the corporate experience of the church.

It must be preached, proclaimed, explained, and applied. And I know you say a hearty amen to that or you wouldn't be here. This is what you want. This is what you need. And this is what we try to bring as under shepherds of the great high shepherd.

The fact that we do this in conjunction with singing is remarkable. Remarkable. We are to sing the truth of God back to him. This is the emphasis of scripture in this passage.

God's word. Now, hear me, folks. This is why it is so important that we sing doctrinally sound songs. Songs that are doctrinally pure.

That is, that line up with the truth of scripture to glorify the Lord. This is why Greg and I look at and approve or disapprove of every single song we sing.

[67 : 41] That is incumbent on he and I as under shepherds of this church family to make sure we're singing pure doctrine. Woe be it to Greg and I if we let you sing something that is dishonoring to the word of God or to God himself.

We don't want to do that. So let me just explain this real quickly and then I'll move on and close, all right? But I want you to get this. In terms of singing, singing and bringing glory to God in the songs that we sing in our church, we are singing the truth of God back to him.

We're just doing it in song. We're singing God's truth back to him. It's the emphasis that we're trying to put. Look, God's word tunes our hearts to heaven.

Doesn't it? God's truth in scripture then is like a tuning fork. Oh, putting our hearts in perfect pitch with heaven. So what are we using to measure our worship?

Bong. We're using this, the word. This is the tuning fork. This is the measure. This is what I use to help all of you. And I say, OK, here's the note.

[68 : 58] And I hear. Right. This is what's helping us do that. Now, you know, the analogy breaks down because.

Well, it just breaks down. Some of us are more melody challenged than others, but it's a melody of God's word being sung to him. Right.

That's the point. That's why he can say with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. As God's word tunes our hearts to heaven, it puts our worship in harmony with heaven.

Song comes from the overflow of your heart. So it is possible for you to stand out there and sing the song like this.

Oh, praise to Jesus. He's the most wonderful one in the world. I love the Lord. Don't let your pastor see you like that.

[70 : 01] I have been known to stop it and say, OK, we're going to take another stab at this. Cue it up at the beginning. And this time. So I don't want to have to do that, but I will.

What what song is your life singing? Your life is singing the song of your heart. That's what it's singing. Whatever you are putting into your heart and nurturing there is making its way out in a melody of meaning because you are a meaning maker.

You are constantly making meaning of your world. So whatever it's coming at you that you are allowing to go into your heart, that is the melody that your heart's making. Be very careful.

Be very careful. So what we have to ask is this. Let's put the question up there. No one is my heart tuned by the word of Christ so that my worship is in harmony with heaven.

All right, let me do this third point real quickly. All right, let's move through it. But I want to get it. You mind if I just go ahead. I told you I was loading you up. Buckle in. It's OK that we've taken a little bit more time because as soon as we finish, we'll put the tables out and you get fed.

[71 : 09] You don't even have to go stand in line at the restaurant. So you're good, right? Amen. All right, I'm going to keep going. I'm going to keep going. The third point, Christ's glory and our good. Verse 17.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Do it all from a heart of worship. It's all about worship. With Christ's peace, umpiring your heart's choices and Christ's word of truth, tuning your heart to be in harmony with heaven.

Now, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Verse 17. Live your life for the sake of Jesus. Do we have that? Yes. Thank you, brother.

You'll notice that in the span of these three verses, Paul attaches three injunctions, three commands for you to be faithful. Did you see that? Did you notice that? In verse 15. Let God's peace umpire the desire and devotion of your heart. And notice in verse 15. And be thankful. Verse 16.

[72 : 09] Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. Notice. Singing all of this with thankfulness in your heart to God. Verse 17. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks.

Three times, three verses. Thankfulness. Three injunctions. Tied to the commands of do this, do this, and do this. And each time, do it with gratitude in your heart.

Gratitude in your heart. Show yourselves thankful for God's gift of peace by how you live.

And be thankful. Be increasingly expressively thankful. I like that. It won't surprise you as to how this increase in gratitude happens in your life.

It happens as you become more scripture-saturated. As you let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Say, what are you talking about? Or look. I'm talking about Paul telling you in three different commands.

[73 : 16] Tying it in three different other commands. Do this command and be thankful. Do that command and be thankful. Do this command and be thankful. Well, how do I grow in my thankfulness to the Lord?

It's all tied to being word or scripture-saturated. The word will help you do that. You say, Jeff, how in the world does this happen? How does it happen that the word of God is going to help my heart grow in gratitude to Christ?

How's that going to happen? How's that actually work? All right, look. I'll put it up here for you.

Because the word of God informs and transforms your heart to do what?

To love God and to be loved by God. Now, that's the highest commandment of heavenly living on the earth. The greatest thing you need to be concerned about as the scripture bears on your heart is the scripture teaches you to love your God and to be loved by him.

And loving God and being loved by God will transform and inform your heart in a way to make you so grateful and so joyful, no matter the circumstance.

[74 : 22] This is not pie-in-the-sky stuff. This is the real nitty-gritty stuff that we depend on as Christians to carry us through life in a God-honoring way. Verse 16, Let God's word tune your heart to sing in harmony with heaven.

Notice next what it says, With thankfulness in your heart to God. Verse 17, Live in worship to the glory of Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Here's the point. Say, Jeff, what's the point? Let's sum it up and I'm almost done. Here's the point. It is very, very difficult, if not impossible, for us to be at odds with God and others when our hearts are filled to overflowing with thankfulness to God.

Amen. When we are thankful to God just for the air we get to breathe, it has such a profound effect on the way that we look at the world and interact with the world and with each other.

Can I be thankful in grief? Yes. Can I be thankful in cry tears of grief and sadness? Yes, you can. In Christ, you can.

[75 : 31] We often do that as our hearts break for our friends and our family members in a lost world. I'll tell you this, folks. Put it up here for me, brother.

Gratitude promotes godliness. We value what we're thankful for. Conflict, strife, critical spirit, an unforgiving heart, a desire to find fault with other people and tear people down to build yourself up, to rehearse other people's wrongs.

Those are all manifestations of pride that are stemming from a greedy, ungrateful heart. Paul warned in Galatians 5.15. We'll throw it up here for you.

What did he say? If you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another. That's the way of an ungrateful and spiteful heart. But then he said this, But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

So, friends, look. Letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in you, walking by the Holy Spirit, those are the same things. They both speak to your obedience to God from grateful hearts.

[76 : 40] So, look. Let the peace with God that you have umpire your heart in these relationships and situations. Let that peace umpire your heart towards yourself, toward your God, toward your church family.

Allow Christ's Word to tune your heart to be in harmony with heaven as you worship God with your entire life. And then, look. Increasingly become a thankful person that is living out of an abundance of gratitude to God.

Why? Just simply because he's good. That's enough. Because he's good. He's a good and gracious king. That is the godly good that you and I enjoy and have the privilege of offering to each other as a spiritual family.

So, as you approach Thanksgiving, let that season remind you that you are serving a good and gracious king and he deserves our worship even as we reach across to each other and help each other worship in the Lord.

Let's pray together. Thank you for your kind attention. Dear Lord, we do honor you and thank you in prayer as we thank you for your word of truth that teaches us about a sovereign God, a God that we are being taught to love, that we are being taught loves us in spite of all of this that goes on in our lives and the way that we fail you.

[78 : 05] Sometimes, Lord, the truth is we speak things that are not God-glorifying. We do. Sometimes we think things in the attitude of our hearts that have no place abiding there and we give them room to be there.

Sometimes, Father, we actually do things that we know we shouldn't do. We go places we know we shouldn't go. We look at things we know we shouldn't allow through our eye gate and our ear gate. And so, we come now under conviction and we ask you to forgive us. To please forgive us, Lord, as your people and see within us what you test out that we do want and desire to be godly.

We want to be a holy people here at Grace Church. We don't want to be an exclusive people in pride who look down on others. We want to be a humble group of people who welcome in people of different cultures and backgrounds and skin color and language, whatever, so that we can all learn to love Jesus together and show the world what peace really is.

Thank you for Jesus. Thank you for the word of Christ. Thank you, Father, that we can do all things in your name and for your glory because you have saved us and given us hope.

[79 : 26] hope. So now let us sing and fellowship together as we seek to honor your heart. In Jesus' precious name, amen.