

# Never Give Up The Christian Walk

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[ 0 : 00 ]    Amen. Amen.

Amen. Steady hearts and steady minds as we move into this next week. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Oh, got it.

All right, the title of my message is the headline, for those of you who have been doing the Wednesday nights, Never Give Up the Christian Walk, the Basics of a Content and Peace-Filled Life. So I started doing this a while ago, I think when originally Jeff was planning on being out of town, so we didn't realize this was all going to sync up, so it worked out nicely.

Don't we all want to feel good? We want to be joyous and content and peaceful. Secular teaching would have us believe that our feelings or the things we experience in our minds are unmanageable, out of our control, that we are victims of our circumstances and victims of our genetics.

The bad thing that once happened to us is now fully and completely defines us, so that anxiousness, nervousness, fear are rooted in our minds.

[ 2 : 05 ]    Between every good thought is this swamp of despair. We keep coming in, we climb out of it. We keep coming in, we climb. It's just a constant roller coaster of despair. We get in this cycle of despair, depression, sadness, whatever you want to call it, put a name on it, and then we finally climb our way out of it.

Don't we want that to be constant? We want that to be steady all the way through. Paul has some thoughts on that, naturally. So my bottom line up front, this is kind of like a thesis.

I do this in the military for those who haven't heard me do this before. We do long, obnoxious briefs, and they get pretty annoying. People fall asleep after about 15 minutes. So they do this thing called the bottom line up front.

They put it out right off the bat and say, this is what the brief's going to be about, because I know most of you aren't going to pay attention anyway. So here's what it is. Perfect peace can only come from one place, the Lord.

The world's ways may temporarily alleviate some feelings, but they won't fix anything. The answer is here in Scripture. By rejoicing in the Lord, praying, thinking on things that deserve our attention, and putting our Christian knowledge into practice, that God of peace will be with us, because He's always been there.

[ 3 : 15 ]    This does not mean you can now check out for the rest of it. You still got to be with me here. So think back to a time when you remember being content and peaceful. Just a second. You're sitting there, something, an event, a time of life, a phase, anything.

You remember sitting there going, man, life was good. Life is really good right now. I'm just, I'm really happy. I'll give you mine for context. It'll take two seconds. We were in Alaska. We just bought a new truck.

We were pretty young. This was a big deal to us. Maybe a month. We hadn't even had it in a month. It's still shiny. Still stickers on this thing, right? I was sitting out on my back deck, sipping a cold drink.

Weather was beautiful. It was spring in Alaska. So what does that mean? 45 degrees. So it was rightly comfortable for us at the time. And lightly clouded sky. Does anyone know what a microburst is?

It's a small, very powerful thunderstorm. They drop their winds really fast. They're extremely powerful. And then they disappear in the sky as blue as it was before it started.

[ 4 : 13 ] I'm sitting on the deck. I see the trees ruffle a little bit. The wind blows down hard as it could right over my house. I had an old truck I was working on. The canopy for an old truck bed. Big 400 pound heavy fiberglass canopy.

The wind came down, picked up this canopy, threw it in the air about 30, 40 feet, and smashed it down right on the hood and the front windshield and everything in the new truck. Just didn't know what to say.

I'm just sitting there kind of. I instantly got frustrated. I was mad. It was a new truck. I mean, we didn't have a ton of money at the time. All the money went into this thing. I was like, you've got to be kidding me.

My peace, my content, it was instantly shattered. Completely gone. I was so frustrated. Golly, I was angry. And then Jessica called the insurance company like, you guys haven't even owned this just a couple weeks.

And they couldn't even understand what we were telling them, how the whole front of the truck got destroyed. But I was peaceful. Right before that, I was content. I was so happy.

[ 5 : 14 ] We were steady. We had, the weather was beautiful. We had a good job. We were perfectly fine with where we're at in life. Instantly, it was shattered in a moment. Completely trashed in a moment.

The remedies for depression, anxiety, nervousness, they're never ending. The world's remedies. From psychotherapy to a myriad of medication, there are plenty of ways that the world has to temporarily alleviate these feelings.

Remedies that numb us to the fear, to discontentment, the pain of life. I don't need to preach statistics or anything like that. I'm sure most can see and get online and understand what those statistics are and the rate of climb of some of these constant anxiety and fear and some of these things that people report having feelings of.

They're extremely, it dominates, it dominates some of these medical journals and news cycles and other things. But it's clear the world's ways aren't truth.

They're not truth and they're not God's ways. As always, the answers to these questions can be found in God's Word. We're going to be in Philippians 4, 4 through 9 this morning. I'm in the NASB.

[ 6 : 23 ] I kind of switched back and forth to NASB, ESV. So if it goes between two translations, I'm sorry. When I first started this, we didn't realize that it was going to be the Wednesday night study.

So it kind of worked out nicely. So the Lord has conveniently aligned our teachings. For those of you who go to our Wednesday night studies, this is the fourth chapter. It's the Never Give Up the Christian Walk section of the book, hence the title.

He kind of goes through each chapter and has a theme for each chapter, breaks each verse down. So for those who want to go back and see how D.A. Carson handles this, page 129 for the note takers, if you want, that's kind of where he starts this section of verses.

So he applies each of the behaviors that Paul mentions here. He applies each of them to perseverance. Hence his title for chapter 4, Never Give Up the Christian Walk. Persevering is a very basic part of Christian life.

I would say probably an essential or necessary part of our lives, especially persevering in our thought life, which is really going to be where we're focusing today. In one man's opinion, mine mainly, this is the most difficult thing to master for me.

[ 7 : 33 ] We can train ourselves to get up in the morning. I can train myself to, I recently quit caffeine, you know, just for a reason that was very sad. But, so we switch to decaf coffee, which is not as good as real coffee.

You can train yourself to do that, right? You can get your body to do that. How about taking care of that thought? How about consistently and over and over again, thinking in the way that we should, taking care of that thought, stopping that thought when I see something, hear something, feel something.

It's difficult. Most of our Wednesday night goers should be familiar with the background and themes for Philippians. But for those who don't go to Wednesday nights, you should go.

I'll stop at the Wednesday nights, but I'm kind of making a plug there. Hopefully everyone's catching it. So we're on the same page here. There's a brief background where we're at in chapter 4 of Philippians. It was written by Paul or a scribe dictated by Paul.

We don't know. Either way, it's Paul's words coming from the Holy Spirit. Most likely during his imprisonment in Rome between AD 60 and 62. One of the often called prison epistles, along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.

[ 8 : 41 ] This letter takes a little bit different tone than some other ones. It's a joyous, kind of takes a joyous tone. Unlike some of Paul's other letters where he strongly addresses churches and their sin, urges them to right behavior before the Lord.

The Galatians, for example. Galatians is a good one. Where he admonishes the Galatians for being so foolish and led astray to believe that things done in the flesh or works of the law require to perfect their faith.

None of that can perfect your faith. So Philippians starts out with Paul's greeting and informs them of his circumstances, much like he does in previous letters. He's writing to a relatively young church found in AD 51, so maybe 10 years old-ish.

As our Wednesday nighters already know, this letter is a perfectly succinct guideline of what our living faith should look like. Hence the title of the book, Basics for Believers. We're just skipping ahead a little bit in that, so you get a bit of a read ahead.

So Paul starts by exhorting the church about being steady through persecution, exercising humility, remembering Christ's example to be a light in the darkness.

[ 9 : 49 ] He then speaks of his companions Timothy and Epaphroditus before moving into warnings about being legalistic. My brief flyover of the letter is just a major oversimplification, so please don't take this as your complete study on Philippians.

Please go home and please study more deeply, or go to our Wednesday night studies. Catching up on where we're at in chapter 4, though, he starts a brief section in chapter 4 of admonishment, starting with a call for two of the ladies in the church to live peacefully together in verse 2 and 3, and there's a reason for that.

We're going to kind of flip that around. We'll come back to it in a little bit. But then he picks up where we're going to start in verse 4. So Philippians chapter 4, verse 4 through 9.

Finally, brothers and sisters, So Paul is going back to a common theme throughout Philippians, rejoicing.

He mentions it in every chapter leading up to this. He talks about rejoicing. So there's no surprise he starts this section by commanding his church members to rejoice in the Lord.

[ 11 : 39 ] This is the first point in our outline. More technology. There we go. This is the first point here. We talk about rejoicing in the Lord. We're going to camp out here just a little bit this morning. In chapter 3 is where he begins to add, He talks about rejoicing in the Lord.

He talks about rejoicing previously. Rejoicing in your circumstances. Rejoicing in different things. But here he takes a switch in chapter 3 and talks about rejoicing in the Lord. As opposed to rejoicing in this or that.

This is important to capture. And this provides kind of the segue into our text. This provides a context of where joy is to exist. Namely, in the Lord. The simple command from Paul carries some theological weight.

You have to ask, why rejoice in the Lord? Why switch and go that direction? Or maybe another question, what do I have to rejoice in the Lord? What do I have to rejoice about in the Lord?

What does this have to do with contentment? Among all the things we could and should rejoice about, there is one primary reason. And it's the foundation of it all. Follow me to Luke chapter 10.

[ 12 : 50 ] Starting in verse 17. You guys probably already figured it out. But. Luke chapter 10, verse 17.

Now the 72 returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And he said to them, I watch Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

Behold, I have given you authority to walk on snakes and scorpions in authority over all the power of the enemy. And nothing will injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

Amen. This is when Jesus sent out the 72 ahead of him to proclaim the gospel. They came back excited. Naturally, given that kind of authority and power on earth, one would be pretty excited being casting out demons.

And everything that goes along with that is they were preaching the gospel ahead of Jesus. And when he says, when I watch Satan fall from heaven, he's essentially saying, I know the demons were subject to you. I was there when this started.

[ 14 : 11 ] And I gave you that power. But what does it say here in the last verse that we should be rejoicing about? Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you.

He knows they're subject to them. But rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. Rejoice because your salvation is secure. Much like the 72 though, what are we usually rejoicing in?

The world things that we can see. Just like them. They could see them being able to have this earthly power, the things that were given to them. Maybe the money showing up when it's needed. The heart problem all of a sudden disappearing.

Amazing things God does in our life. The new truck that we just got. How steady our job is. How great the weather is today. All these things that we commonly, like, oh man, God, you are amazing.

This is so good. My job is going good. My marriage is going good. Life is going good. All this is great. But when is the last time we were praising God and rejoicing because our names were recorded in heaven?

[ 15 : 13 ] Which is much more valuable than any physical experience that we had. Albeit those experiences are praiseworthy. I don't want to take anything away from that. Those things are reasons to praise the Lord.

And we should be praising God and thanking Him for His provision. It says this in Isaiah 61.10. I will rejoice greatly in the Lord.

My soul will be joyful in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation. He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness. As a groom puts on a turban and as a bride adorns herself with jewels.

This is really the foundation of it all and kind of sets the stage for where we're going for the rest of the time today. Paul continues through the next few verses with more practical admonishments, but it all rests on this.

Our salvation is secure. Therefore, look back to the previous few verses. This is where we're going to kind of go flip backward, as I mentioned before.

[ 16 : 21 ] When he's addressing an apparent disagreement between two women in the church, we don't know much about it. There's not a ton of context there. I don't think it matters a whole lot. Paul implores the recipient of the letter, a potential elder, a trusted coworker in the Lord.

We don't know who he assumes will be reading this or giving it to the church to help these women, who he says among others also, whose names are written in the book of life.

Then he immediately starts in verse four to rejoice in the Lord. The theme is constant. You see how it's constant throughout this. Matthew Henry has this to say about his commentaries on this.

Let us seek to give assurance that our names are written in the book of life. Joy in God is of great consequence in the Christian life, and Christians need to be again and again called to it.

It more than outweighs all causes for sorrow. It more than outweighs all causes for sorrow. This is so very supportive of our text today.

[ 17 : 20 ] Before we move forward anymore, let me challenge you, church family. Spend some time rejoicing and praising God for your salvation and that your names are recorded in heaven. Capture that thought and dwell on that at times.

It's massive. The idea of it is massive. We've been given such a great gift, such a humbling gift by a God who chose to give this to us.

This outweighs everything else. This should dwarf all these other little things. Next time you're quietly driving somewhere, have a moment alone. Ponder the two eternal outcomes that are possible.

Getting back on track, Paul moves into verse four with the command to rejoice in the Lord. So the first question to ask yourself as some of these feelings begin to take over, whatever it is throughout the day, sadness, fear, anxiety, worry, stress, I don't know.

Insert word here. You can figure that out. Are you rejoicing in the Lord? Do you make your salvation a conscious thought?

[ 18 : 25 ] Remember, this is the most difficult thing, I think, in going through persecution and conforming to Christ-like behavior. It's the problem of the mind, the thought life is extremely difficult. Now, if you are making your salvation a conscious thought, you are content in your salvation knowing that you know where you're going.

If so, is that being seen by others with your gentle spirit? Resting in God produces good fruit in us. One of those is a peaceful and gentle disposition.

In verse five, he says, let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The word for gentle used here is more closely defines what is fit and proper with gentleness.

So it kind of more aligns with doing the right thing, serving, helping, guiding, whatever, with a gentle disposition. So you're adding that air into what you're doing, not just being gentle in everything you're doing, but having the gentle spirit as you go move out and do the things you ought to be doing in life.

Much of the examples for the same word in the New Testament, the word is used in relation to the meekness of Christ, such as in 2 Corinthians 10.1.

[ 19 : 40 ] Now I, Paul, myself, urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent. There's another example of that.

But this is doing the right thing with a gentle demeanor. Don't let this escape your attention. Our salvation is everything. God chose us before time to receive this gift.

You hear me beating that in because that's going to kind of put everything into place as we move on. Much like Jeff said a few weeks ago, I guess maybe a month and a half ago now, we've been out with ice and storms and bad weather.

I don't know if you remember when he was up here, he said, I lost my words. He doesn't, Jeff said, I don't know why he chose me over others.

I don't know that answer. I don't have the answers to that. I don't know what God did, but he did. That's the point. So being given such a great gift, how then should we conduct ourselves?

[ 20 : 39 ] We are told exactly how, with a humble and gentle demeanor. When we put this into perspective, it's almost a little selfish now to be so consumed by whatever has a hold of me in the moment.

I'm certainly convicted of this, yet I know my feelings aren't truth, and even then I'm still so consumed by them. But the thing that sets you off at work and family, marriage, life, parenting, we get so consumed by these things, and it pulls our thought life out of where it should be.

Yet I know my feelings aren't truth, and still I will be so consumed by them, and I won't even consider my salvation while I wallow in my despair. And while in that state, you can be assured, I'm not letting my gentle spirit be seen.

See how that comes out? It's kind of all circular. It's not a spirit of gentleness. As if Paul knows, some readers may be thinking on this and pondering on that.

He finishes verse 5 with a small sentence. It almost seems out of place. If you're reading it, it seems like it's kind of just like dropped in there. It says, the Lord is near. There's no paragraph, break, or separation in sentences as he continues in verse 6.

[ 21 : 49 ] Generally, this indicates it's all, the way they've translated, it's all one thought. It's one continuous thought. For those of you with an ESV, you should notice, if you have electronic Bible, you can probably switch back and forth and see this.

This was interesting to me. You should notice that in your translation, after the Lord is at hand, there's a semicolon. I think this translation better kind of captures the flow of that.

That semicolon indicates a continuing thought to the following sentence. It continues a movement forward into that sentence. I think this translation is a little more appropriate because when you consider what follows, it paints a clear picture.

It's almost as if to say, the Lord is near, semicolon, so, what's the next verse? Do not be anxious about anything, but by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

This kind of moves us into the second main point. When anxiety and worry strike, are you going to the Lord in prayer? Much like on Nehemiah, if it remembers back to Nehemiah last year, I don't remember, November, December, we were talking about what was Nehemiah's constant reaction to the stress and the troubles and the challenges of life that he came into.

[ 23 : 08 ] When calamity strikes, the first thing that we do, oftentimes, I do, is I try to fix it.

I try to fix it. I try to solve my way out of it. I think my way out of it. I want to fix it, have somebody help me do it, whatever worldly way I can do it.

This was not originally in here, but it just popped into my head of thought. When your main water line breaks and you have a three-foot hole right before a massive ice storm and I just want that thing fixed, all I want to do is get this thing fixed.

my mind was not on God's good provision. It took a good friend of mine to go, oh my goodness, as we're covered in mud, bent down, three-foot hole, filled the water, said, we haven't prayed.

Thank the sweet Lord he was there because that was not where my head was at. may be brought on by, I'm sorry, now how about when this feeling of overwhelming fear and anxiety and fear comes up?

[ 24 : 15 ] All right? We can't fix it. Oftentimes the things of life, you know, we can, the water pipe, the thing, the car troubles, we can try to fix that. Now how about switching gears a little bit?

How about that feeling, that fear, that anxiety, that stress, that tension, that nervousness? What do we do then? That's much harder just to fix. We can't just fix the water.

We can't put a patch in it. We can't fix the window. We can't go to the doctor and get the bandage done. Maybe it's brought on by some past event or maybe something that you witnessed or were part of and it brought back some feelings of some kind of fear, anxiety.

Now I'm not minimizing things that people have gone through. By no means is that it. This does not take down the things that people experience in life. This elevates them for us to look at the Lord in those situations more so.

Jessica and I have been through, we've been soldiering for over 25 years. We've seen and been part of much. The fact that someone may be jumpy after an intense life, that's normal.

[ 25 : 20 ] That's okay. This doesn't mean something is wrong with you. By trusting in the Lord and resting in God's peace though, it gets better. Or maybe someone has been in a serious car accident or witnessed a terrible event and this has anxious nervous feelings.

Maybe when you get back in a similar situation, maybe you see or hear or feel something that brings on that moment again. Maybe it's just plain old worry and nervousness about things out of your control.

That's probably more my thing. I want to worry about things that I can't affect and I can't do anything about it, but goodness sakes am I going to spin myself into oblivion trying to solve this problem? And I just want my anxiety to go away.

I want my nervousness to go away about the thing at work tomorrow that I can't do anything about. I'm not in charge. Unfortunately, I might just have to wait patiently, pray, and rest in the Lord. When those feelings do come up, we have to ask ourselves, does that feeling define me?

Do those feelings consume you and define who you are and what you're about? Do we consider ourselves chronically, insert whatever that is here, chronically anxious?

[ 26 : 29 ] Do we tell ourselves, oh, I can't know God's peace because I have a thing going on. I have a condition, a problem, a something. There's, God's peace is not, I don't even recognize what that is.

I can't even process the idea of what that's like right now. Using context in this letter is key. Remember this, who wrote this letter? Where is he?

Hence the prison epistles, right? Paul was in prison and he's not certain of what his outcome will be. He doesn't know at this point if he'll be released, if he'll be put to the choppy.

He doesn't know. And this is what he wrote. Remember our salvation and our relationship to Christ is what should define us, not the lies of the devil.

In Matthew 6, 25 and 27, you don't need to turn that, I'll just read it. It says, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you'll eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

[ 27 : 38 ] Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not more, not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his lifespan. But how difficult is that?

That is difficult, right? Because we know, I'll use the water pipe, we can fix the water pipe. The mind, the challenge of the mind and the troubles of the thought life is difficult. It is hard.

It takes perseverance. Do not be anxious about your life. The Lord is near. Back into the practicality of Paul's instructions, he says, but in everything by prayer and pleading or supplication, maybe your translation, with thanksgiving, make your requests be made known to God.

Paul says, in everything by prayer and pleading. This should be a constant posture for us. Bringing up that lesson in Nehemiah several months back, does anyone remember the first thing he did when he encountered trouble with opposition?

[ 28 : 51 ] I already pounded that in a little bit. He faithfully went to the Lord in prayer. Everything he did, he was prayerful and diligent and steady. He went to prayer every time. The first thing he did, he didn't fix it.

He said, oh, have we prayed yet? How much more should we be reliant on the Lord in prayer with our thought life and the things going on in our minds?

We're not one misstep away from getting executed by a king like Nehemiah or surrounded by enemies that have a plan to destroy us and kill us and they've even told us, we have a plan to kill you.

I'm paraphrasing Nehemiah here. We have a plan to kill you, destroy you and remember, right when it starts out, he's going to go to the king. If you remember the context, he wants to tell this king that he wants to go back and restore the walls and bring Jerusalem back to life and one misstep and the king has his head.

We're not in that kind of life. Our life isn't there. We're wrestling with worry, malcontent, anxiety, spiritual depression. As far as I know, no one here is secretly rebuilding a city and dealing with warlords.

[ 30 : 00 ] There are parents in here with small children, which is, is very similar. So, you may want to pay close attention. I've been there. We're commanded here to pray and plead with the Lord and make our request known to him.

Remember that little sentence at the end of verse five? We kind of paused on there. The Lord is near. Remember, Paul kind of stops there almost as if to say, don't forget, the Lord is near.

Therefore, for everything else to follow. Psalms 34, 15, we're told, the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears are toward their cry for help.

God hears us. He hears us. He knows what we need before we ask. There's one more word in verse six I don't want, we don't want to miss and gloss over. Thanksgiving.

It is with thankful hearts we are to approach him in prayer. Going to God in prayer highlights our reliance on him and our need for him. Our salvation is secure.



[ 31 : 08 ] If you can't think of anything to be thankful about when you wake up that morning, non-decaf coffee, hopefully, for the rest of you, if there's nothing else beyond that, how about your salvation?

Thank you, Lord, that you know me. Start there and see what flows from that. Thank you, Lord, I have a house. I have a job. Thank you, Lord, I have a family.

Thank you, Lord, I have kids. I have health. I have a church family. It grows from there. It takes work. Going to the Lord in prayer highlights our reliance on him and our need for him.

Our salvation is assured our heart, if our salvation is assured, our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude for our Savior. But the devil wants nothing more than for us to be in despair, constantly worrying about everything that we can't control, which pulls our minds away from the Lord.

That thought life switches. Once you get that thought in your head and I'm just, I'm sad, I'm frustrated, I've got this trouble in life, I've got this trouble at work, whatever this thing is, it snowballs out, doesn't it?

[ 32 : 20 ] It just kind of grows from there. You ever see, well, we probably have seen it recently, you know, kids start rolling a snowball downhill and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and by the time it gets to the bottom, that's it, you know, that's how you build a snowman, okay?

That's our thought life. That little thought is just cancerous and it turns into a massive ball of stress, anxiety, and worry. It pulls our minds away from conscious thankfulness toward the Lord.

So zoom back out for a minute, kind of catch up where we're at. We've already got our tool bag, some of these basic principles half full. Remember, Paul started out by telling us to rejoice in the Lord always. God graciously chose us for salvation.

This is the foundation of it all. Remember that. How then should we act as a result of that? If God's given us such this great gift, how then should I act? By letting our gentle, humble spirit be seen by everyone around us.

And then in everything, by prayer and pleading with the Lord, we should go to him with our requests. Our hurts, our bad habits, our worries, our frustrations, our praise, all of it.

[ 33 : 35 ] But we need to remember that we have much reason to be thankful. And that should permeate our prayers and requests to the Lord. And by doing this, Paul tells us, and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

God's peace will protect us from the attacks of the evil one. This requires work, though. Not work for your salvation. Your salvation. That's not the point here. So flip that switch around.

This requires a constant work of the mind. I'm going to throw out kind of a bold statement here. And this is me at times. So this is a proverbial three fingers pointing back at me.

The lazy Christian will have a very hard time with this. It is difficult. It takes consistency. It takes work. No, I won't think that.

No, I have no reason to be anxious. God is in control. No, I'm not going to go down that rabbit hole of sadness and despair. I'm going to focus on what God has given me already.

[ 34 : 38 ] You know what? Let me start with my salvation and grow from there. But this isn't a one and done. This isn't like the water main. I fix it. I'm done. I don't have to think about it anymore. Off I go. I'm somewhere else now.

This is constant. This is a leaky water main all the time. And you need to constantly revisit that. And hopefully it gets easier and better and your thought life grows in response to what your Savior has given you.

Being disciplined in our prayer life as well, and in a bit we're going to kind of go into our thought life more. Nowhere does it say in here brain. The user words minds.

It has a idea of a thinking life, not necessarily a physical brain or a physical method of computation or processing.

He's talking, specifically talking about how we think. This isn't something that you are just genetically discounted from being able to accomplish is kind of the point. Like, oh, my brain, I can't do it because my brain won't let me.

[ 35 : 46 ] That's not what Paul is saying here. The language doesn't lend to that. He uses the word mind. In verse 7, he tells us God's peace will guard our minds.

There's a point for that. Everything in this world is trying to distract us from rejoicing and praying to God with thanksgiving. Pray to Him in all things with thanksgiving and repeat.

Remember, this is repetitive. Satan doesn't want us to dwell on these things. Satan wants us to get distracted by the thing. This isn't a brain issue. Physical injuries and medical problems aside, right?

You can have, if I hit my head hard enough, it's not going to work right. And there are other things, medical problems and other things. That's aside. That's not what we're talking about here. Satan wants us depressed and in despair because we're not rejoicing and praying to the Lord if we are.

Kind of moving into our third main point here. In his book *Anxious for Nothing*, John MacArthur says this.

[ 36 : 56 ] Did I get it up there? Did I get it up there? Faith isn't psychological self-hypnosis or wishful thinking, but a reasoned response to revealed truth.

When we in faith embrace Christ as our Lord and Savior, our minds are transformed. I really like this. This is me pausing here. A reasoned response to revealed truth.

Doesn't the world call us crazy when we say we're just trusting in God? I'm trusting God's plan. You know what? I don't have the money. The bank account's empty.

I'm sick. My family's come down with something. There's an injury, a life situation, whatever it is. Have you ever had the friends at work say, oh man, you've got to do this. Here's how you fix it.

Here's the steps to do this. Try this. Try that. And you say, hey, you know what? I'm going to trust in the Lord to work this out. I am trusting in God's good provision. I'm trusting in what He's given me. I'm trusting that He's going to move forward with me as we do this.

[ 38 : 03 ] It really is simple though. Has anyone ever walked across a glass bridge? Follow my analogy for saying it. Or have you ever seen like a glass bottom overhang? You know, like hotels or something.

I don't know. People are afraid of heights. You never can think about it. And you step out into the glass. You don't want to die. I see some shaky heads. Yeah. I'm content jumping out of airplanes. I don't like the idea of stepping out over high things like that.

I don't know. It makes me twitch. I'm not a fan. However, when you see the structure and you take a step back, you understand the engineers how they've designed it, how they've put it together.

They've reinforced this glass, built it in certain ways. It is strong, right? When you take a step back and you think about it, you understand. Stepping out on that glass structure, maybe it's not so crazy anymore because it really is actually strong and good, right?

Because it is a reasoned response to revealed truth. The truth of that structure has been revealed, right? Okay, now it doesn't change that I don't want to do it, but you still are content.

[ 39 : 07 ] Okay, I can do this now. I'm going to walk out of this. So it's not crazy. Trusting in God's plan, John MacArthur's point here, it's not crazy. You're not out of line.

When God's truth has been revealed, you know what? Stepping out in faith, it is logical. It does make sense. It is a reasoned response to that. Apply that same logic to our faith in Christ.

So the truth of God has been revealed to us, so faith is measured, and faith is a measured and reasonable response to that. Romans 12, 1 and 2 is one of my favorite verses.

I might have missed my slides up here. We'll keep moving.

Romans 12, 1 and 2, it says, This is a constant thing that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

[ 40 : 37 ] This is a constant thing we must do. He tells us again, Ephesians 4, 23, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And many other places he tells us the same.

It is a common theme because although we're saved, the battle with the flesh is constant. We cannot let our guard down. We are in a war and this is a battle for our thought life.

We must constantly live out our faith by evaluating our thought life, guarding what we let into our minds and that can challenge our faith. Think of the things endlessly competing for our thoughts.

We don't need an exhaustive list. We'd be here all day, right? But just consider some of the things that help in invading our thought life. TV shows, our phones, video games, music, jobs, spouses, kids, some of those aren't necessarily bad.

So don't say that Matt said your spouses and your kids are invading your thought life. But there's a lot coming at us. Some of those are bad. If you're struggling with a certain thought or you're struggling with, you know what, my life should be like this.

[ 41 : 42 ] I should do this or I should be like that. What are you watching? What do you do at night? You have that time at night. I got, you know, I got an hour at night. I'm going to sit down and put a show on. Now, I'm not saying, I'm not saying every TV show is bad and you shouldn't watch it.

That's not what's going on here but some of it is. Some of it's just trash and it's hidden under the guise of a family show. Well, when that family show shows up and starts doing things you shouldn't be doing or it causes you to think a certain way because of maybe what you see on there or how people are dressed or what they're saying or the proverbial perfect life show where everybody's wealthy and they all drive, you know, Lamborghinis and everything is great and then you start to think, man, my life isn't so good.

I wish, why can't, I mean, they have that or the Instagram reel where everybody's happy, right? It's fake, by the way, just in case you weren't wondering or you didn't know.

I know you know but that's not real. Nobody puts their sad life online. They put their fake life on there. So just, I don't want to beat that down too much but just think for a second when these thoughts come into your life and think about things that are challenging for your thought life.

Think about the things that invade your mind and compete against that and we'll move it. Paul gives us kind of step-by-step example of the things we should be thinking about, things that should be in our mind as opposed to those things.

[ 43 : 11 ] Now technology has made this much more easy to get these things in our mind. My goodness, my phone, I can access, you can access anything on your phone. Put a blocker on it.

Put an ad blocker on it. Put a time limit on it. Most new phones now have the ability to do that. Give your husband or your wife the password to set that up. Limit your time on there. Limit your time on social media.

So Paul will lay out exactly what we should be thinking about. So we're going to take this next verse kind of in reverse order. So in Philippians 4, 8, we're in verse 8. Finally, brothers and sisters, finally can also be a transition, not the end.

So you got a little more. Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there's any excellence, and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

He lists here what should be consuming our thoughts, and at the end of the verse, he tells us what to do with these things. Think about these things, or another word, meditate on these things.

[ 44 : 24 ] The New Kim Jane says meditate, which I think draws out that meaning just a little bit better. So the form of the word is a type of verb.

It means not just, it means not just a idea or a thought, but it's an action. It's an ongoing action. It's knowing what we're supposed to do with these subjects in our mind, kind of what we're supposed to act on these things.

So it is something you have to physically wrestle with and move forward with. It's not just an idea, a passing thought, you glance through it and you move through. It indicates continual action, indicates continual, in this case, thinking, continual thinking.

So again, I'm using NDSB, words might vary ever so slightly. So whatever is true, now kind of going back to the top of the verse. We know who the author of truth is, so what he tells us in scripture is true, simply put.

So who should we be listening to? Jesus tells us in his response to Pilate when he's being wrongfully accused. John 18, you don't need to go there. 18, 37, and 38.

[ 45 : 34 ] Catch up. I wasn't behind, sorry. Let's see. There it is. So Jesus' response to Pilate.

Therefore Pilate said to him, so you are a king? Jesus answered, you say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born and for this I have come into the world to testify to the truth.

Everyone who is of truth listens to my voice. Pilate said to him, what is truth? There's a lot of theological debate, maybe not theological debate, a lot of historical discussion around this.

This statement right there is used in many philosophy classes and training and discussion, worldly philosophy classes and training discussion because we know the answer. Pilate, not knowing him, capital H, had no basis to understand what truth is.

With no foundation, what defines your reality? Look at our society, right? Anything goes. It's, it's, it almost makes me chuckle.

[ 46 : 43 ] Like it's gotten beyond to the point where it's, it's a little crazy and it's gotten to the point where you kind of have to just, where do you, where do you come up with these? I don't know, I don't know where we've come up with these. Some of the things we're doing now with, with sports and, and gender and some of these different things that you can't even, I, I don't know if we even would have, I think a hundred years ago, do you think someone would have thought that's where we'd be now, would have made that up?

Mind-blowing. Just mind-blowing. But it's simple for the Christian, isn't it? We know that's not truth. So whatever is honorable, I'm sorry, we're going to dwell on what is true in God's word.

So we'll go over just a few of these before moving on. He has a big list here. I encourage you to dive deeper into those. And in a few weeks, we'll probably, a few weeks or a month, we'll probably end the chapter four and they'll break this down a little bit more, these, each of these behaviors.

Whatever is honorable or noble. So what is honorable and noble? What should we be thinking about? Remember, remember Paul, remember this section, Paul was talking about, talking, these are things we should be thinking about.

So we're going down this list of what should I actually be thinking about as opposed to dwelling on my feeling, dwelling on the sadness, dwelling on the anxiousness, dwelling on the whatever. This is what Paul says.

[ 47 : 58 ] Don't be anxious for anything. Remember, God is near you. Instead, think about this. Whatever's honorable or noble. Those things that are worthy of our thought life.

Only those things that are respectable, not profane or vile. I've already kind of beat books and TV shows and movies to death a little bit, but it so consumes our society, so I'm going to, I'll camp out on it just a little more because I can.

But, even books, you know, like, oh, I like to read, you know, reading is good. It's a good thing. Are there bad books out there? Yeah, they're horrible. Like, I flip through my Kindle app.

I'm kind of a space nerd, so I'll read, like, a space nerd book. And, you can't barely flip through books on there, even, like, decent good books without seeing the covers of some of these books that shouldn't be on there.

I would argue 20 years ago, they would probably be in the inappropriate aisle. It's mind-blowing. They're books. It's crazy. Now, get into the book. I'm sure it's even worse. And, let me ask you this.

[ 49 : 03 ] Since we're here, what do you do when you get to that point? Back to the lazy Christian, right? Three fingers back at myself. When you get to that point in the book, you get to that point in the movie, and you realize this is not honorable.

This is not noble. This is not good. Do you just, like, ah, let me just, let me just fast forward to that. And then five minutes later, ah, let me, let me, let me fast forward that. And two minutes later, ah, let me, let me fast forward to that.

At what point do you just turn it off? Same with the book. Ah, that's not appropriate. I'll skip a page. Ah, that's not appropriate. I'll skip a page.

That's not appropriate. I'll skip a page. How many times do I do that before I, I shut it down? What's invading my thought life right now? What is going into my head? It's a no, it's no wonder that anxiety and nervousness and despair and everything that is going on in our lives is absolutely on the rise.

All these things are claimed to be on the rise and going up, but look what we're putting into our minds. Look what we're thinking about. You get the point. I won't beat that up too much more. Maybe I won't in a second.

[ 50 : 11 ] Whatever is right or just because all this kind of goes back to what we see and hear and do. So next Paul says whatever is right or just. Righteous things should flood our thoughts.

Those that are of God and in line with His standard. You see how all these kind of tie in together? So what is a righteous thought or a righteous thing?

Those that are of God and in line with His standard. What Paul is telling you here is apply this metric to the things that are honorable or noble.

How to know if it's honorable or noble. Is it just? Is it right? Does it align with God's standard? It's pretty simple. We know what it should do and frankly, Christian, you know that it's wrong.

I would argue that 9.9 times out of 10 when something comes up you're not thinking well, I don't know if this is wrong or not.

[ 51 : 10 ] I have a sneaky feeling that most of us know it's wrong. We know when that thing comes up shouldn't be doing this. Shouldn't be looking over there. Shouldn't be taking a second glance. I shouldn't be thinking about this.

It doesn't matter what the person did to me. That's not righteous for me to think of this person that way or that's not that is not honorable for me to be thinking about revenge and anger and frustration because they did this.

That is not right. You know the answer. Now, are we going to have the discipline to continue through that thought every single time?

No, I'm not going to think that. You know what? Let me focus on what is righteous and good and holy. And next, what is pure?

Simply put, what is clean and not morally defiled. The line between what is clean and unclean in our society is getting increasingly gray. Even though I just said you probably know what the answer is.

[ 52 : 08 ] I would argue you still do. But as far as society is concerned, that line of what is good and not good, boy, it's getting really skinny. It is getting super tight of what's acceptable and not acceptable.

Think of some of the things that we're allowing in schools and for goodness sakes, even Christian programs and some of these things you see online and some of these other things, it's not okay. Those things aren't okay.

The line between what is clean and unclean is getting blurred or skinny, however you want to think about it. We must be extremely cautious, therefore, about what we're putting into our minds because the world wants to tell us, oh, this is Christian.

It's okay to have this. This is Christian. It's okay to do this. It's okay. This is a Christian thing. You can send your kids here. It's fine. Be careful, mom and dad.

It should be no surprise that we are struggling in our thought life yet still watching shows. I told you I'd come back. Watching shows and movies that are not righteous and pure and honorable. Same with the music.

[ 53 : 12 ] Same with the internet's bottomless supply of memes and trashy articles and advertising. Goodness sakes, the advertising is half as bad as everything else.

As a practical advice, put an ad blocker on your phone or on your TV or on your computers or whatever. Technology is difficult. It's getting to the point where I used to consider myself okay at it, but even now I have to struggle to keep that stuff out of my purview.

How much time do you spend on the internet a day? Think about that. Is the article worth your attention? Does it do anything for you? I'm extremely guilty of this.

Paul moves into what's next, kind of rounds this out. Think of whatever is lovely or pleasing, meaning graciousness and kind.

We are to be gracious to one another. the book expands on this a little bit more extensively. I'd encourage you to kind of dwell in this section a little bit. We are to be gracious to one another, but remember that gracious, gentle spirit coming out of us is coming out of knowing our salvation is secure.

[ 54 : 26 ] Let our gentle spirit be known because of what God has done for us. Therefore, why aren't we being gracious and loving and gentle to one another? Look what the Lord has done for me.

How dare I act like this to some people? What gives me the right to do this, to think this, to act this way considering what my Father in Heaven has done for me? Admittedly, I struggle with this one a little bit.

In my work, I kind of have a different group of people I work with. We generally get along by being fairly rough on each other. So I must remember that's not how the rest of the world operates.

Duct taping people's keys in a basketball-sized roll of duct tape is generally causes problems. And generally, where I come from, fighting is okay. So I do struggle with gentleness and lovely and peacefulness and being gracious to other people.

But it doesn't matter, and I say that to say it doesn't matter your circumstances. It doesn't matter who you are around. I can still choose to be gracious and loving and kind with those around me. I don't have to fall into some mold because the world says, well, this is what you do here.

[ 55 : 34 ] You don't have to do that. So he finishes this little section out here with an all-encompassing statement.

If there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things. So just in case he missed anything in that list, he expands it just a little more.

So this statement kind of removes any theological wiggle room on what is okay to apply our minds to. Remember, this is a battle of the mind. This is a thought issue here.

The physical action of that comes with limiting the things that go in our minds. Now, the mental action of that and the thought life action of that is now, I don't need to think about that.

What do I replace that with? I don't need to look at that. You know what? That makes me think about this. I'm not going to look at that anymore. You know what? I'm not going to read this because if I do that, I'm now thinking about this. What am I going to replace that with?

[ 56 : 35 ] There's lots to read here. Just kind of a plug. There's lots of things we could be using to consume our mind is the point. So let's zoom back out just a little bit here to catch up on kind of the practicality of everything we've read and everything Paul's given us here.

Now, D.A. Carson puts, these are basics. These are basic things that Christians should know and do and understand in their walk. So starting back at the beginning, we should be rejoicing in the Lord, constantly praying in everything, and now thinking and meditating on what is good and excellent and worthy of praise.

Friends, I will say it is hard for depression and foul thoughts and sadness and anxiety to dominate our minds when we're rejoicing, constantly praying and thinking on righteous things.

This is not it. And let me be clear. This is not a checklist. You know, this is not a checkbox of if I just do these things, I'll feel better. That's not what's going on. This is hard and it is difficult and it will be difficult.

I know because I struggle with it every day. That thought enters my mind. The idea enters my mind. The sadness, I want these, I should have a this or why are these people like this or this, I don't deserve this.

[ 57 : 52 ] This isn't fair. This is a constant battle, church family. It is hard though for those thoughts to enter your mind if I'm praising the Lord, if I'm rejoicing in His goodness.

It is very difficult for those things. Light and darkness don't mix. You flip the light switch on, the darkness goes away. This may be easier or harder depending on the season of life.

So I don't mean to take away those difficult challenges people go through. Hard things happen, bad things happen. You should be sad. Like there are things that do make us sad and feel full of despair.

David was clear on this in the Psalms but there's an answer for that. There's an answer for this. There's an answer for that season. There's only room for one animal in the cage of our minds.

What one are you going to feed? The righteous one or the worldly one? I won't say it anymore but you know what feeds what. So kind of moving into our last main point in verse 9.

[ 59 : 01 ] Paul takes us out of our heads a little bit as we move through our thought life and he tells us, as for the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me practice these things and the God of peace will be with you.

He tells the Philippian church to emulate him. So our final charge is to copy Paul's example by extension the example of the Christian leaders around us.

There are many men and women in this church who I am not ashamed to say, I won't die me out, I won't embarrass you in front of everybody, that I try to live up to their standard. I am so absolutely impressed with some of the men and women in this church.

If you want an example, look around you. They're here. They're here. I consider naming names but one person's exaltation is another person's embarrassment but they're here, church family.

We have an amazing church body. Emulate those Christian leaders. Emulate those Christian brothers and sisters. Emulate Paul's behavior. Do what Paul's asking us to do and telling us to do, exhorting us here.

[ 60 : 11 ] So his final charge is to copy Paul's example and those Christian leaders. Whether it be in service, hospitality, graciousness, or just thinking of others.

Some people are so good at that and remember that's why the church comes together. That's why we come together. So our gifts can be used to edify each other. We come together as a church body so we can all grow and learn and experience that goodness that God's given us.

That should be a replacement for copying the things of the world. And remember I said that line is very thin or gray, however you want to define it.

Even Christian online thought and Christian online material, you must be extremely shrewd, church family. Be very careful with what you're seeing and reading and doing. But we know what we should be emulating and copying and thinking and doing and working toward.

It's not the show where everyone drives Lamborghinis. It's not the perfect life Instagram. Briefly off topic, I feel like kind of throwing this in there. This is also how you discern good leadership.

[ 61 : 21 ] But Jessica and I, being in the military, we have moved around quite a bit with military. We've attended many churches. We've seen them all. The one thing is constant that we've noticed, we know what kind of church we are getting into by observing those in the church.

Can I look at the pastor or elders and follow their example? If so, do it. Paul is telling us to do the same here. And not only that, but he tells us to practice these things.



That world holds a little more weight than just, you know, a quick warm-up for a football game or whatever. It's more than just, well, I saw so-and-so make time and they talked to some new people in the church.

I'll do that once. I'll do, you know, they did this thing. I'll try that one time. The word practice gets us out of that singular context. That word means continual doing until you're perfect at it, which I would argue no one will ever be.

It's an ongoing action. To use the, with the recent Super Bowl coming up, we'll use NFL player analogy. You can tell I'm not like super sportsy.

[ 62 : 29 ] The sports ball game was hard for me to translate a little bit here. Do they practice once and then call it good? Think of those guys. They're just like, you know what? I'm going to throw a football and I got it.

Okay. I think I'm good. I did it. What do they do? What defines their life? constantly working at something and improving it. They show up every day to work and they practice.

Day in and day out they run the plays. They do the physical maneuvers, whatever they need to do. They work on different things. They work out. They work with strength coaches. There's a lot of mental performance training they do on how to think quick and hand-eye coordination they work on.

It's massive. We've had a couple strength coaches a few times in my work who've done some of that training. It's pretty impressive the things that they do. Practicing for their craft.

Practicing for what they do. So Paul is telling us essentially the same thing here. You need to be an NFL player at this. Now, don't start throwing footballs around the church. We probably hear about it but the idea is you should be practicing and doing this.

[ 63 : 35 ] This is a constant thing in your life. Emulate those leaders. Emulate those Christians around you that you know are doing good and right and just behavior. So kind of closing out this point and starting to move toward an end here.

We're told at the end of this verse and the God of peace will be with you. Now this isn't quid pro quo so let me clarify that. This isn't do this and then.

Do this one thing. Check this box and you're fine. You're good. Remember, you can't take God's word is perfect. It is written perfectly. He has spoken to us perfectly.

Don't forget the word we just talked about and I kind of beat up with the football analogy. Practice. This is a practicing thing. So remember back a few verses when we talk about when our prayer life, our thought life, and the joining of our physical life are all focused on where they should be.

Then we are told the God of peace will be with us. Remember what he said in that small verse up there where we talked about verse 5? The Lord is near. He told us that first.

[ 64 : 56 ] Ephesians 2, 13, and 14. I'll just read through this real quick for the sake of time. But now in Christ Jesus, you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.

He has always been there. We just don't always remember that. He's been there the whole time. Oftentimes, I know I get so distracted by life, the world, work.

All these thoughts will send me down a path I don't realize the Lord is near me. Digging in the hole in the mud, I'm ashamed to admit not even on my mind. My mind was, I want to get this wet hole filled up before 10 degrees shows up in a few hours.

That was all I could think about. I'm not thinking of him. I'm more consumed by my feelings than truth. There's no psychological disorder here, only my sin that's causing this to happen.

So let's tie all this together again. We'll move this to a close and look at the evidence of this in action. So Paul makes his statement. He tells us what's going on.

[ 66 : 07 ] He starts with our salvation and then he moves in a little deeper and proves what he's told us. When we give into our feelings of sadness, despair, and worry, I'm sorry, when we give our feelings of sadness, despair, and worry room to grow, they will consume our thoughts and ultimately us as we let them rule our minds and thought life.

Although not always easy, we have clear, simple teaching from Paul on how to enjoy God's peace in our life. Now this isn't some Christian self-help checklist like I keep mentioning that. I want to kind of drive that point home.

This isn't something we just kind of knock out and be done. Practice. This isn't something the faithful believer, this is something the faithful believer should be practicing continually over and over again.

Because we have so great a God that has gifted us our salvation, we should be in constant state of rejoicing, knowing our Lord is near us at all times. We don't need to be anxious, nervous, and worried about anything, but with hearts of thanksgiving, going to the Lord in prayer.

Then, being disciplined in our thought life, replacing those lies in our mind with the things scripture tells us are good and right and excellent. And finally, practicing that good behavior and speech that we see in our others our leaders and others around us.

[ 67 : 34 ] And we know this works. We know this is something, this is not something Paul says, you guys need to do this stuff, you're going to feel better, just trust me on this. Remember, where is he?

What's he doing? What's he going through right now? And here's what he tells us. The evidence for it is skip down a few verses if you're still in your Bibles. Paul tells us, not that I speak from need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in.

I know how to get along with little and I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. He's in prison, he doesn't know what's happening and he tells us he's learned to be content in any of life's circumstances and he can do all things through him who strengthens me.

He proves to us the evidence of his life. He proves to us with the evidence of his life that God's ways are better than our ways and his peace as a result, even in prison.

[ 68 : 43 ] We know he practices these things that he talked about in life because he told us to practice the things that we have seen and heard and learned from him. He told us to do what I'm doing, emulate me.

So when I watched our brand new truck get smashed into little pieces there, the whole front end destroyed, sitting there a few years ago, my peace was immediately broken, immediately shattered, immediately done.

I went from happy, I went back down to that trough of the, we're in Virginia, so the swamp of despair, because my contentment was not resting in where it should be.

My contentment was not resting in my salvation. My contentment wasn't resting in what God's done for me. I was not thinking of what was righteous and lovely and holy and concerned with a gracious attitude toward my wife and toward others.

It was tied to my current condition and one small circumstance away from being shattered, literally in this case. So my current condition was what held my contentment in place and all it took was a little bit of wind.

[ 69 : 48 ] Poof, it's gone. Friends, as we move to a close and we think about these basics that believers should know about, ask yourselves if those thoughts seem to be all-consuming at times and have been given too much room to grow in your mind.

Remember, there's only room for one animal. What are you being filled with? What are you thinking about? What are you resting in? What's good and righteous and lovely and holy to you?

We know what it is. Give thanks to the Lord and think on your salvation and rejoice in Him for your salvation is secure.

Let's pray, church family. Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity to be here today with this church family. Thank you for being able to learn and grow and study together as a church family.

Thank you for giving us just these simple things, this building, air conditioning and heat, this place to meet, Lord. We thank you that we've been given your word and we can study and learn the things that you've given us that we can go back through over and over and we don't have to rest in our own understanding but we can rest in your goodness, Lord.

[ 71 : 01 ] Thank you, God, for providing the opportunities you give us. Pray, God, you strengthen us as we move out into this week and we apply these things to our mind and we practice these things in our lives and we study your word daily, God.

Pray that as we do those things and move out into the world that our gracious and gentle and loving spirits will be known by those around us and our lives will be witness of the work you've done in us. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.