

Put the Gospel First (Part 1)

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] I know, on Wednesday night. Now, I think I told a few people already, now look, in all honesty, being real open with you, I enjoyed a little bit of time off given what Suzanne and I went through over the holidays.

Between her and me, we were barely one person functioning. And I know it's good to have you guys back. Y'all were sick. Oh, wow.

This thing went around and hit a lot of people. All right, so a couple of business items before we jump in tonight just to make you aware. So, Derek, if you'll throw that meme up there for me that Greg sent me kindly.

This helps explain the problem. Yeah. So, here's the deal.

Now, this is unofficial because I haven't even talked to my brother Greg about this, but given all of the models that we've been following, to include the guy you turned us on to, Mr. Krass, but he knows his stuff pretty good.

[1:06] All of that, I'm 95% sure we won't be here on Sunday, all right? 95% sure. Because it's worse now. It's ice. The snow was going to be bad enough, and then the snow freezes over Saturday night, and it makes it horrific.

But now that it's going to turn to ice on Saturday evening, it makes it even double the issue. So, you pretty much count on we won't be here Sunday. Men, it looks Sunday looks...

Our Saturday morning looks cold but clear. So, we'll be here Saturday morning? You think? See, this isn't official. We're doing this on the fly here. I've probably written off the whole weekend.

When is it arising? Well, one model said, your guy said Saturday earlier.

I know, I know, I know. So, there's this guy Greg turned us on to, a weather guy, and he's really knowledgeable and pretty solid and all, but he is.

[2:08] He's pompous and crass, which we didn't know that until we kind of dialed in and listened, and he's just an unbeliever, and he's very crass. Anyway, several models are saying that it'll be ice on Saturday later, and one model is saying that it will be ice by noon.

Things will be in bad shape. So, I think you're right. I think we have to wait until Thursday and Friday. So, guys, stay tuned on the website and any other special things we send out by GroupMe or whatever, we'll see what the men's breakfast does.

I mean, right now, it's supposed to be 22 degrees at 9 o'clock in the morning. Oh, boy. Greg and I, we need to be careful. what we pray for, right?

Because we pray for cold weather. Come on. And we might have overdid it a little bit. Yeah, I'll give you... Yeah. Pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing.

Here it comes. All right. Well, thank you all again for being here to kick this off. I do pray that maybe the crowd will grow a little bit.

[3:17] I know whenever... So, let me say this. Whenever we do a book study, whenever we do one of these, it's kind of a mixed bag about who we might get to hang on because of this.

Because a number of folks struggle to feel faithful in reading a book, even a small paperback like this. So, here's the thing. One of the reasons that Greg and I do this with you is we do want to put good resources in your hands.

This becomes resource material. So, you know, you have it now. You can go back. This is a brief and very focused commentary on the book of Philippians, and it's super, super well done.

D.A. Carson is a master at this. All right. Another reason that we do this with you is we want to help you build the discipline of reading into your life. You need to read, folks. If you're a Christian, I'm just not going to hedge about it.

You need to read. You need to do it. It needs to become a habit in your life. You need to read. Now, that doesn't mean you have to sit down every single day and read a chapter in a book like this or whatever, but you need to grab good resource material and you need to spend some time with it growing in the Lord.

[4 : 30] All right. It's how we grow. You should be at least reading your Bible consistently, and then Greg and I would be happy to talk to you about good resources or put them in your hands and encourage you to interact with them.

So please, please don't depend on Greg and myself to read this to you when we meet on Wednesday night. We will be doing some of that, obviously, but read it before and be ready.

You may have that questions. They may get answered in the process or not, and if not, I want you to be able to know enough about it to ask. Okay? Be encouraged.

We're not going to give you busyness. We're going to try to put stuff in your hands that can really help you think about what it means for you to get close to Jesus and grow in the Lord.

All right. Well, let's pray together because we have a bunch to cover tonight in this. We don't think we're going to get through the entire chapter, and that's fine.

[5 : 33] We thought we would take it in two parts, so no worries there. Okay, let's pray together. Well, dear Father God, as we bow our hearts to You, my prayer is that You would help us in being filled with the Spirit, that is, being filled with the knowledge of Your will, that we will take that knowledge and allow it to let us grow in love for You, Lord, that it will draw us near to Your heart and give us Your heart, that we will more and more adopt the will and ways of Jesus as we interact with our world.

Father, I thank You so much for these souls, these friends, these brothers and sisters who have come out tonight in the cold weather for another Wednesday night study getting started.

It thrills our hearts, Greg and I as shepherds, to see the desire that they have to grow in the Word. You know, it's the truth.

People who love the Lord, people who want to follow Jesus closely and pursue Him, want to hear the truth. They want to be taught. They want to gather and be led well in conforming to Jesus.

And so I thank You, God, that You have put that desire in our heart. We give You all the glory. And we just go ahead and pray now, Father, that as You send this weather system our way and as it hits all of these states on the eastern part of the country, we ask for the safety of the Spirit working in lives on the roads and as people try to get here and there.

[7 : 10] And we pray especially for those in our congregation, Lord, to be kept safe and that we would do a good job of shepherding and caring for their physical needs in light of what this storm is potentially going to be.

If we're not able to meet on Sunday, I pray that You would help us to keep in our hearts that wonderful, warm sense of fellowship in the Word and that we would be in prayer for each other.

Very simply, we would take a little bit of time on Sunday if we can't meet to pray for each other, to see names and faces and ask them to be blessed in the Lord.

Praying the prayers that we see in Philippians is one way of doing that. Thank You for Your grace and mercy as we look into Your Word in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Okay, let's start with this question tonight as we think about Philippians chapter 1. I'm going to ask you to turn there, Philippians 1.

[8 : 13] Actually, I think what I'll do... Let's go ahead and read the chapter and then I'll ask the question. So we've got... How many?

We've got 30 verses in chapter 1 that we need to cover to understand better the context. Hopefully, you've already read it and have a good idea of what's going on.

So if I could, I'm going to ask my brother Greg if he would read those first 11 verses for us in Philippians chapter 1. I'm going to ask you to do it.

I'm going to ask you to do it. to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are still alive to the overseers and the leaders pray to you and keep from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance for you. All the way in heaven's prayer is mine for you all making my prayer and the glory because I'm going to be talking to you in the gospel from the first day to now.

[9 : 09] And I'm sure of this that even if you can a good work in you will bring to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart for you all are practitioners with me in this race both in my prison and in the repentance and confirmation of God's prayer.

For God is my witness how I yearn for you all for the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that you, God, may have found more and more with knowledge and all the servants so that you may get through when you're asking and so be sure and glorious to the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that come to you in Jesus Christ and the glory of the glory of God.

Amen. Thank you, brother. Matt, would you mind doing 12 through 20 for us? Yeah. I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out the greater progress of the gospel so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well-known throughout the whole of the glory of God as to everyone else and that most of the brethren trust me in the Lord because of my imprisonment have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Some to be sure are preaching Christ even from Indian strife but some also from goodwill. The latter do it out of love knowing that I am afflicted to the defense of the gospel. The former pretend Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motive.

It can cause me to stress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way whether in pre-chance or in truth Christ is fulfilling and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.

[10 : 48] For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ according to my earnest expectation and hope. And I will not be put to shame in any way but that with all boldness Christ will even now as always result in my body whether by life or by death.

Amen. Thank you, brother. Michael, would you like to do 21 through 26 for us? Would that be alright? Thank you. Thank you. I know that I will remain and continue with me after your progress and build it in your faith so that your proud confidence will be aligned and you try to do this with my coming to you again.

Great. Thank you, Michael. And Jeremy, would you mind doing 27 through the end of the chapter? Okay. Well, we conduct ourselves in a manner of words of the gospel of Christ.

For what brother I come to see you in the name of Christ are the few of you that you are saying, saying, and one story with one line starting together for the faith of the gospel.

In no way are lost by your purpose because it is a sign that you have to trust the spirit of salvation for you and that peace of God. For to you it has been granted for Christ not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake experiencing the same confidence that you saw in me and now here to be in me.

[13:06] Amen. Thank you, brothers. Now, I didn't count them up but you heard him mention the gospel several times, right? Heard him mention the gospel several times and you know from reading this first chapter if you read it that much of what D.A. Carson is going to do in the way of a common theme in this particular little commentary is he's going to try and help us better understand what applying the gospel to everyday life could look like especially as it bears on the different issues that the Philippians themselves were facing as believers.

Alright, so let's start with this question for tonight. we're going to put the gospel first. What is the gospel? That's the first question.

Now, let me let you think about it for a second. So now, you're in a room full of believers here so you're not witnessing the unbelievers right now. You don't have to pretend that we're doing it like that.

How would we answer that question what is the gospel right here in this room tonight particularly based on what we've read? How would you sum it up? You need to try to try to be concise.

Who's going to start us off? What is the gospel? The good news of Jesus Christ regarding our salvation.

[14:27] Excellent. Thank you, Michelle. You got a great start. That's it, right? That's the kernel. Okay. Anybody want to add to it? It's okay to do that.

Michelle did what I asked. She's very concise. Anything we want to add? Alonzo, what do you think?

Alright. The gospel includes the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies speaking specifically about whom? About Christ. About Jesus. Anything else?

Would there be anything you might want to add if you were talking to an unbeliever? By faith and grace in the Lord?

Is that what you said? By the grace of God through faith in Christ? Because without God's divine favor working in our hearts, we would never even want to embrace the gospel.

[15:27] God has to give us the want to. And that's where His grace comes in. And then He has to give us the ability, power to believe. And that believing is His gift of faith. Alright, these are great elements that you've mentioned.

These are wonderful elements. Now here's the thing. Would you be surprised if I told you that in our travels in ministry, whether we're doing international work, whether we're going to a church in another state, or whatever, over the last, let's just say the last decade that Suzanne and I have been involved in ministry in other places while we've been here at Grace, that we consistently come across Christian after Christian after Christian that struggles to answer the question, what is the gospel?

Would that surprise you? It wouldn't. Okay. Well, it's true. That is true. We do see that quite often. You might be surprised to find out how many pastors struggle to answer that question concisely.

You know, not give you some long round-the-world diatribe, but just say it. Alright, here's one way to think about the gospel. Does that sound a lot like what we've said?

God's good news about His salvation from sins in Jesus Christ. Now, I understand that's very concise. We didn't identify whose salvation.

[16:54] There's so many ways we could do that, but think about that as the kernel of it. We're talking about the way that God has brought near to Himself and come to own unbelieving people separated from Him by their sins in unbelief.

How does He bring those people near to Him and bring them into a different status, a different relationship with Him so that they're no longer separated from, but they're brought near to?

This is the gospel and it comes through Jesus. Jesus is the only way God's done that. Now, there's another way we can think about the gospel. It's God's nature, character, ways, life, and will in His walking word.

His walking word, Jesus. Jesus was the living, walking expression of the truth of God and the word was with us and dwelt among us, right?

And in His written word, the Bible. So, it's true that when we say the gospel, we're typically meaning the specifics surrounding how we come to be brought near to God in the forgiveness of our sins through Jesus Christ.

[18:13] Typically, the gospel is centered on the cross. That's what we mean, right? The work of Jesus on the cross is the gospel. But actually, folks, the good news of God is from first page to last.

This is the good news. There's not one part of it that's good. It's all good. It's all good news. Even the stuff that talks about our depravity turns into good news because we come to the cross and our depravity.

And that's where we find the hope that we need. So, in a more general sense, we can say that the gospel is the good news of God contained in the Scriptures. But more specifically or especially about Jesus Christ.

Now, the reason I'm taking a few minutes to do that is I want us to be clear about what he's talking about when he says the gospel. He's using it in which sense? More often than not, which sense is he using it?

Which one? Especially. Which one? Especially. Yeah. More times than not, whenever he mentions...

[19:20] Okay. Let's see. Turn to... page 36.

page 36, brothers and sisters, as he calls you, refers to you. The very last paragraph of page 36. Put the gospel first.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, such a valuation of the gospel ought to be not the exception among us, but the rule. We are talking about, here it is, the good news that reconciles lost men and women to the eternal God.

That's the gospel. He just, he didn't explain it, he stated it. The gospel is the good news that reconciles brings near.

To reconcile means to bring near to. Lost men and women to the eternal God. We are confessing the gospel that God Himself has provided a Redeemer who died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to Himself.

[20:29] That's the gospel. So, He just said the gospel two different ways in a few sentences. You with me? The gospel then concerns a Redeemer, the Redeemer, Jesus, who died, the just, Jesus, for the unjust, us, to bring us to Himself.

Now, you see common elements in these definitions, and one of those common elements is God working through His Son to bring sinners to Himself. You see that?

That's the most simple way I know for all of us to understand what we're talking about when we say the gospel. The gospel is how God brings you as a sinner to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.

So, it's a relationship. It's a spiritual relationship that only God can affect. He's the only one that can pull that off in your heart and in your life.

Without this gospel, top of 37, without this gospel, we are cut off without hope in this world or the next and utterly undone. Compared with this good news, what could possibly compete?

[21 : 47] So, put the gospel first. That's good, huh? There you go. So, right in chapter 1, He's helping us understand more about what we're talking about with the gospel.

So, folks, if there's anything Pastor Greg and I want desperately for you to be able to think about, understand, and articulate, it's what is the gospel here at Grace Church.

It would be terrible for any of you as members of this church to be here for any length of time and have someone ask you what is the gospel and you muff it.

We don't want that because that is really telling. You can't live the gospel if you don't know what it is. And you can't help others come to the gospel if you don't know what it is.

Alright, well, we'll dig in to the chapter together now and let's see a few things for what He's going to tell us. I want to start you right off on that first page, on page 13.

[22 : 49] And this is very interesting how He does this little intro paragraph here. I'd like to buy about \$3 worth of gospel, please.

I don't want too much. I just want enough to make me happy. Yeah. Just enough to make me happy. But not so much that I get addicted.

I don't want so much gospel that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust. No, no, let's not go that far. I certainly don't want so much gospel that I start to love my enemies, cherish self-denial, and contemplate missionary service in some alien culture.

No, no, no. I want ecstasy, not repentance. I want transcendence, not transformation. And I'd like to be cherished by some nice, forgiving, broad-minded people, but I myself don't want to love those from different races, especially if they smell.

I would like enough gospel to make my family secure and my children well-behaved, but not so much that I find my ambitions redirected. Don't mess with my goals and ambitions in my life now, gospel.

[23 : 58] That's meddling. Or, my giving too greatly enlarged. Don't convict me to give more of my money and my time and my stuff.

I would like about \$3 worth of gospel, please. Now, of course, none of us are so crass as to put it that way, but most of us have felt the temptation to opt for this domesticated version of the gospel.

The ongoing pervasive dangers, this is what he's going to introduce now, the ongoing pervasive dangers surrounding a domesticated version of the gospel.

He wants us to better understand and be challenged with the good news of being in a right relationship with our Creator through the Creator's only Son, Jesus Christ.

And now he's saying that what we are tempted to and often do as Christians is domesticate that message and domesticate that relationship.

[25 : 11] And he's saying that's not a good thing. That's not a good thing. When you think of domesticated animals, does another word for domesticate come to your mind?

When you think of a domesticated animal, what's another word to describe a domesticated animal? Trained? Who said tame? Tame.

That's it. That's the word I'm looking for. Right. Right. And so there are some aspects of being dependent, being trained as disciples.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. I'm thinking of the tamed aspect. The tame. We want to tame the gospel in our lives. Three dollars worth, please.

Not too much is what he's talking about. All right. Look a little bit further with me. Perhaps it is especially strong today, this temptation, owing to a number of developments in the western world.

[26 : 10] And so the next thing I want to show you, modern, he's going to now elucidate, modern developments contributing to this dangerous temptation to tame God's gospel.

Now one of the things that Greg and I do as we teach from a book like this, as we allow it to drive us into the scriptures and draw out these truths, one of the things we want to teach you is how to read a book and how to take a book like this that's speaking about the principled line-by-line teaching of the Bible.

We want to put this kind of teaching in your hands in this particular genre because people like this do a good job of taking passages of scripture and walking you through, exposing, expositing that passage.

And when you read books like this, you learn to study the scripture. You read books like this, these people will teach you how to go to the Bible and ask the right questions and begin to draw out of the scripture what the scripture says, not what you read in.

And so now I'm also showing you in this how to take, and I learned this by going to school, okay? I didn't just make this up. This is what I had to do to survive all these degrees that I had to do.

[27 : 29] You've got to learn to read, you've got to learn what to grab and what to throw away because you can't read every book, every single word. So as you look at this, you want to take it paragraph by paragraph, and good writers will generally take a paragraph and at the beginning, somewhere toward the beginning, they will give you the essence of what that paragraph is going to support.

Alright? So you'll have subordinate ideas or clauses that will support the main clause or the main idea. That's good writing. So here he says, we're talking about these temptations that owe to a number of developments in the western world.

Now, what is the first one that he lists there on page 13? The first of these modern developments tempting us? Yes.

Secularization. Now here's how he talks about it. secularization doesn't refer, does not refer to some social impetus driving us toward the abolition of religion.

So he's saying in a fancy way, secularization isn't trying to get you to completely trash and walk away from your religion. Rather, secularization refers to the processes.

[28 : 47] You see that? The processes or processes that squeeze religion to the periphery of life. The processes that squeeze religion to the periphery, the edges, the fringes of your life.

Secularization helps make your religion essentially irrelevant in your everyday life. And so, you show up on Sunday and you punch the religion ticket.

Whether you're Catholic or Baptist or Methodist or whatever you are, your religion isn't something that defines your life. It's something that you do to punch your ticket and salve your conscience, whatever.

Alright, now, what is the result? What does he say the result of marginalizing your religion is or pushing it to the edges? I just kind of gave you the answer. What does he say it is?

the result is that we abandon what? The result is not or is.

[30 : 00] It's not that we abandon religion or banish the gospel. Rather, it's that we do what? Marginalize and privatize.

Whenever people are giving you these words, these become the key words that help express their ideas they're putting across. So, he's talking about now that as these processes squeeze religion to the fringes of your life, we don't end up completely abandoning our religion.

Rather, religion becomes something marginalized and privatized and the gospel is rendered what? Can you think of anything worse than that?

And I'm talking about a Christian now. A Christian coming to the place in their life where they live like the gospel is not important. They don't say it. They just live like it.

These are people still going to church. These people might attend Bible study during the week. But the gospel is no longer serving to define their relationship with God, with others, how they think about themselves.

[31 : 12] themselves. Why? Because secularization has come in and helped push that to the periphery of their life. It's almost an afterthought in their life.

I know this sounds a little heady, but I think he's true. I want to add a word to this. He uses the word marginalized and privatized. You see why we're not going to get through chapter one.

This is the intro to all of this for what we're going to do. I want to give you another word. Individualized. You can write that in the margin there if you want or in a note.

Individualized. Because we've seen this in ministry quite a bit among Christians. What I mean by this is that we individualize or personalize the gospel in a negative way to the point of elevating personal preferences over personally pleasing Jesus.

My own individuality becomes more important than self-denial so that I then in self-denial make it about pleasing Jesus instead of pleasing me.

[32 : 22] My personal preferences come to be so important to me that they're more important in me evaluating any given situation in life that I'm involved in rather than evaluating it.

Will this please the Lord? Is this pleasing to God? What do I know about the will of God that will help me evaluate this and choose a course of action? Well if I've elevated my own individuality and personal preferences above pleasing Jesus who's going to win?

Me. And that's a road to destruction for you. You're going to make yourself miserable and a whole bunch of people around you. You'll be up to your eyeballs in the muck of life before you know it.

So marginalize, privatize our relationships with Jesus and the gospel. The gospel is rendered unimportant rather than life defining. Okay?

The problem of individualizing, to just clean it up a little bit, the problem of individualizing God's gospel work in our hearts, we individualize because we elevate our personal preferences over personally pleasing the Lord Jesus.

[33 : 32] We do that particularly in our relationships with people because at that point my preferences are so important to me that in my relationship with you, if you can help honor my preferences, if you can help me realize my preferences, you're important to me.

As soon as you get in the way or become an obstacle to those preferences, I have no use for you. You become an obstacle. Do you see what we do? Now this is how it works.

And this isn't just wisdom. This is the wisdom of the Lord and I'm just elaborating on what Carson is writing about from Philippians here. And we're going to get into the verses in just a moment.

Alright, if you go over onto the next page, page 14. I want to give you this little paragraph thing here before I give you the second way that we're going to talk about this, these modern developments contributing to these temptations.

Right there in the in the middle of 14. If you go down about one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, about eight or nine lines down from the top, you'll have this sentence beginning.

[34 : 48] So when we insist on the supreme importance of the gospel, we find many in our society skeptical and dismissive. Of course.

Partly, here's why they're skeptical and defensive and dismissive when we try to live and explain the importance, the priority of the gospel in our lives. It's partly to protect ourselves from other people and partly because we ourselves are heavily influenced by the culture in which we live and move and have our being.

In other words, here's what he means. We unwittingly find ourselves formally espousing the gospel and formally confessing that biblical religion is of infinite worth while in reality and at the same time we are no longer possessed by it.

Ouch. Folks, he's saying this is a constant temptation. The issue of secularization makes these dangers real.

secularization causes us to adopt more and more of the thinking and the priorities and the goals of the culture, the world around us.

[36 : 10] Instead of defining ourselves as that unique community that has been brought into closeness to God by the gospel. And so we keep the gospel central in defining who we are and how we live.

No, we allow secularization to come in and begin to push that centrality out, out to the margins, to the edges, to the fringes. And then there's all kinds of stuff that wants to rush in and fill the void.

Okay. Well, we're no longer possessed by it. Look at this second thing. The second thing there right on 14. Number two, second, the sapping influences of self-indulgence.

I like that kind of writing. The sapping influences of self-indulgence would be another reason in Western culture that we're dealing with this dangerous temptation to tame the gospel.

Self-indulgence. Throughout the Western world, wield their power in the church. Scary. For many confessing Christians, it's become more important to be comfortable and secure than to be self-sacrificing and giving.

[37 : 26] So personal comfort, friends, guarantees of happiness, freedom from personal hurt, the pursuit of personalized priorities over heavenly priorities like self-sacrifice, self-denial, forgiveness, those become less important while myself stuff becomes more important.

Third, philosophical pluralism. Do you see that there? Now that's that's kind of fancy. Then if you've never studied this kind of stuff, you know, philosophical pluralism, what in the world?

What is he talking about with this? Physical, philosophical pluralism is the firm insistence that in most areas of human knowledge, he says, and perhaps in all of them, knowledge of objective truth is what?

Impossible. Knowledge of objective truth is impossible. Okay, what is objective truth? What is he talking about?

Because he's saying that philosophical pluralism says it's impossible for objective truth to exist.

[38 : 49] An absolute truth, Amy. Thank you. Let's build on that. What's an absolute truth? The Bible. The Bible contains absolute truth.

Truths. All right, what else? Help me. Flesh this out. How did you understand this when you read it? What's he talking about? All right, let me read the rest of the paragraph there on page 15, four or five lines down.

Well, because truth, because truth is impossible, it is wrong-headed and perhaps immoral to claim that any ideology or any religion is superior to another.

Does the Bible contain ideologies? Jeff, what's an ideology? All right? That's fair. What's an ideology? You didn't know this was going to be a class.

We have a philosophy major sitting in our midst. He's being very quiet because he's being gracious. What is an ideology? A belief system.

[40 : 10] That'll work. Is that where you were going? It can involve theories. Yes, absolutely. All right? Now, remember now, theories, although they often morph into something that sound more like objective truth, theories are not objective truth.

Evolution is a theory. A belief system.

Okay? So we're talking, now look, does anybody know who D.A. Carson is? Okay. I know they know who D.A. Carson is. How would you characterize D.A. Carson as a writer and...

What word are... He's a scholar. He's a professor at one of the prestigious, most prestigious theological seminaries in the entire world.

I mean, he writes stuff that seminary students struggle with. This is pain because it's meant for a wider audience. You ought to read his commentaries, especially his commentaries where he delves into the languages and all.

[41 : 25] He's a brilliant man. So don't be put off if you've got to struggle a little bit through this. It's worth it. The nugget is worth it. Alright? So again, truth is impossible, it is wrong-headed, and perhaps even immoral.

Immoral for you to talk about truth because that's going to mean that you're going to claim that you have a certain ideology or your religion is superior to another. Then he goes on to say, the sole heresy has become the view that there is such thing as heresy.

Now, not to put too fine a point on it, folks, but some of you know, and I'm not afraid to talk about this because it's just... My wife and I live this, and we live it every single day of our life because in our life of saying truth is truth, we had to say no to our children.

And our children came back and said to us in so many words, you are so wrong and so hateful and so awful to claim something like that that we don't want to have anything to do with you ever again.

We committed the unpardonable sin, and here's the unpardonable sin. It was to claim that there is such thing as untruth. There is such a thing as heresy.

[42 : 49] There is right and there is wrong, and that's all it took. And we didn't do that with pride. We didn't do that preaching. We just said, we can't go with you to these places in life.

Our own convictions in the Lord will not allow us to follow you there. Here's the line. And they took us to the line and they said, if you want a relationship with us, you have to cross the line.

And we said, we can't. Now, I'm not making us a hero. I'm saying this is real. And so when I read this, this is not theory. What he's saying here for my wife and I is not something that doesn't exist or that exists in just the lives of a few Christian people and we just can't relate.

I read this with tears and I say, yes, yes. The biggest wrong in our world right now is to tell other people that's wrong. That's wrong.

Well, you can't preach the Gospel and you can't live the Gospel without taking a stand, drawing some lines and saying, that's wrong and this is right. And it's not because I say it, it's because Jesus says it.

[44 : 06] And I'm just, I'm not going to abandon Jesus. It was one of the hardest things we ever faced in dealing with this with people so close to us was having to look at them and in so many words say, we love Jesus more than we love you.

Now, they didn't grow up knowing that, feeling that, right? We loved them so much that there was no way for them to know that line existed. But when they brought us to that line, we had to say that.

We love Jesus more than we love you. We can never abandon our Lord. We've been trying our whole life with you to bring you with us in the Lord. So folks, this is very powerful and very real and it exists in the church.

And too many times, people are tempted to choose their preferences and be influenced by temptations like this that caused them to walk away from the truth and take their marbles and go somewhere else because they don't like what they were told.

What they were told bumped up against their idols or their preferences or their ideologies. So we need to be careful. This is what he's trying to tell us.

[45 : 24] Philosophical pluralism is a real issue in life. Well, because truth is impossible, because it's wrong-headed, because it's perhaps immoral to claim that any ideology or religion is superior to another is wrong.

And the sole heresy, as I said, is to say that there is such thing as heresy. Now, with that in mind, I want to put this up on the screen and help us.

I'm trying to help you connect dots now in how we teach here and how we preach and minister here. Whenever we're thinking about a preaching series or a teaching series on a Wednesday night or the men's study that we'll do, whatever we're doing, Marivi, what you're doing, what Melanie's doing, we're trying to help coordinate in some sense that teaching.

And when we have an opportunity, we help you connect dots from that different teaching. Marivi might mention in Jeff's sermon on Sunday, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, or whatever.

Remember, that's the way we do it. So now I'm going to do that with you. Look at this. God wants us to live by. That's a statement that I made Sunday and put a slide up with it.

[46 : 41] I put that on the screen and then I did this. And it was in my introduction. His heavenly certainties. Do you remember? His objective truth.

Do you remember? His grace through faith. Do you think it's an accident that we're teaching that and we're coming to the book of Philippians and hearing another man exposit the Scriptures and that's exactly what he's saying?

That's not an accident. That's teaching the Bible. That's the consistency of the Word of God. That's the power and wisdom of the Word of God.

God does not want us to live by guesswork. Guesswork. He wants us to live by heavenly certainties. He wants us to live by His objective truth. And He wants us to live by His grace through faith, which is something that Mitch mentioned.

And that was from Sunday. Now on page 16, well, let me show you this on 15. He just talks about the Roman Empire there. And He says, like ours in that paragraph, like ours culture, it was prepared to use religion for political ends, but unwilling to be tamed by it.

[47 : 59] So instead of letting the gospel tame them, they wanted to tame the gospel. Now over on 16, I read this on Sunday as a way of introducing this material and trying to whet some appetites for people to be here.

A few lines down from the top of 16. So the church at Philippi is not more than 10 years old. It's a young church like us. Very much like us.

Paul perceives a variety of pressures lurking in the wings. Greg and I do that too. We live in this world with you. These are pressures that could damage this fledgling Christian community.

Boy, we have those. We recognize those. Now, Paul cannot personally visit the Christians in Philippi, but he wants to encourage them to do what?

What does he want to encourage them to do? What's the first thing? Alright, maintain basic Christian commitments and then what else?

[49 : 08] Right. Right. So we have two, on the screen here, two main spiritual objectives for holy living. Now, he's laying all this as groundwork before he deals with the first verse.

The first one is to maintain basic Christian commitments. Now, we're going to stop there before we do the second one. You tell me and each other, how important is it in your mind to maintain basic Christian commitments as a spiritual objective for holy living?

Where would you put it on a scale of importance? Would it be... Okay, everybody's doing this. Can you put it in a percentage for me? Zero to 100%. 100%?

Well, he's certainly arguing for 100% right now. Now, let me ask you, how important to you day to day are basic Christian commitments?

How much on your radar is it in your life? You may say, Jeff, I'll tell you, it's really, really easy in my life for that kind of stuff to get pushed, pushed.

[50 : 25] Yeah, I understand that. This is exactly what he's talking about. That he recognizes from outside wanting to push in on the people. And so he's saying, no, look, I want to encourage you, Philippians, and what I'm writing to you in this letter, for you to stay faithful to basic Christian commitment in your life.

And then number two, for you to be on guard against an array of dangers. And he's going to flesh out the danger thing, isn't he? Well, sure.

Carson locates these dangers in this number two. He locates these dangers in two areas of life. What are those areas? What does he say next?

The two areas where these dangers exist? Yes. Temptations from where?

And seductions and opposition from? So you have within and without. That pretty much covers it. Right? It's either in or it's out.

[51 : 32] So, you're getting attacked from everywhere. The threat is everywhere. You're surrounded. Aren't you glad you got Jesus on your team?

Right. Right. I've got the enemy right where I want them. They've surrounded me. That's right.

That's exactly right. because that's the way it works. That is the way it works. Dangers are located in two areas. Temptations from within and then spiritual seduction and opposition from without.

Will you look at Proverbs 4.23 with me? Again, you can see why we're not going to get very far into chapter 1, but this is important. Proverbs 4.23 Proverbs 4.23 Proverbs 4.23 And whoever's there can read it out if you don't mind.

It'll save time. So we're talking about these locations of danger that will work against you keeping these commitments in your spiritual life.

[52 : 53] And the first one are these temptations from within. And so here is an admonition, a warning, an encouragement to watch over your heart with all diligence because from within, from inside of you in your heart flow the issues of life or spring the matters of life.

The way you answer life. The way you make meaning of life comes from your heart. So pay attention to what's within. And we'll talk about how you do that. Alright, another verse.

So if you want to know how to guard your heart, there is a passage that helps you understand a few more items that are involved in that. How about Jeremiah 17, 9 and 10? Let me read it. I'm there.

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. So who can understand it? Well, certainly not you, not me. I can't understand my own heart. I can't understand your heart. I, the Lord, search the heart. I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds. So I can't search your heart. You can't search your heart.

[54 : 43] You can't search the heart of other people. You can't see the heart of other people, even your spouse. What you can see are the evidence of what's in a heart because the mouth speaks from the over.

So what comes out of your mouth reveals your heart. Your actions reveal your heart, your priorities, your desires, your wants, your goals. But the Lord is the only one that can search the heart.

He is the only one that can test the mind. So we deal with temptations from within and we need to understand the boundaries of what it means to deal with that that is within. Again, folks, they don't call it deceitful lusts for nothing. They're deceitful. We'll see this in just a second in these other two verses. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 16, 13. And here we're talking about the opposition that comes from outside. What do we do about that? How do we understand it? How do we face off with it?

1 Corinthians 16. And let's do verses 13 and 14, I think. Yes. Anybody?

All right. So you're going to have stuff hitting you from without. There's a couple of verses that tell you, you better be on the alert because that's going to happen. It's coming. You're going to get attacked spiritually. You're going to be tempted to marginalize the gospel. You're going to be tempted to give up basic Christian commitments. And Paul's saying, I'm writing to you guys to help you avert this, avoid this. Okay. Now let's look at 2 Corinthians 11, 3. We should have this one memorized by now.

[56: 31] We turn to it often enough. All right. What is he afraid is going to be led astray?

Does yours say thoughts? Your mind, your heart. The core of where you make meaning in life, the way you interpret life, your thinking, your self-talk, the way you talk to yourself, the way you define and understand yourself, the way you understand and define God, talk about God, other people. That's all. Those are all operations of your heart.

And so here he's saying, look, I'm very concerned that because of the craftiness of your enemy, that very aspect of your being would be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to whom?

To Christ. What's he concerned about? Your devotion to Jesus. So here he's talking about temptations from within and spiritual seductions and opposition from without.

Folks, the Bible's full of this. It's all over the place. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. And so the point that Travis is making is that we're commanded in the Bible in several places to test ourselves to see if we're in the faith.

[57 : 59] We're to do a spiritual inventory to check ourselves because as we're going to see, one aspect of true Christianity, true faith in the Lord is perseverance. Perseverance. We're going to I think we might get to that tonight.

Perseverance. People can confess. They can say that they're Christians and they can go through a lot of Christian looking stuff. But if they don't persevere in devotion to Jesus, it's just window dressing.

So they don't lose their salvation. They were never saved. And their lack of perseverance becomes evidence that they were never born again. God helps us persevere when we belong to him.

There were some Christians in Corinth that were taking advantage of the Lord's table and they were making it into something that was for themselves.

Other Christians were doing some other things similar to that and they were not repenting for whatever reasons. And so Paul said the Lord made them sleep.

[59 : 04] He killed them. That's a euphemism for death. OK, you can be disciplined by God as a Christian to death where God brings you to heaven rather than let you continue in an unrepentant hard heartedness against him because you belong to it.

Now that's his ultimate discipline and he gets to decide. He will he will do other things to discipline you prior to that because he disciplines those whom he loves. But this is real.

This is real. There are people who were never Christians and so their life begins to show that that was never part of their life. There are other people who are Christians and. They can become very, very hard hearted about this.

Right. That's what we're saying.

Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yep. And so we would say it's spurious. False. It's being it's being brought into great question.

[60 : 14] All right. Very good. All right. So on 16, then here here comes the the lead in to his first main point in this chapter as he begins to put put it forward.

What then? See that on 16 right there toward the middle that paragraph indentation. What then is is his burden? Paul's burden as he addresses the Philippians.

What is God telling us by his spirit through the same words 2000 years later? Well, the first thing this book emphasizes that Paul self emphasizes to the Philippians is this.

Put the gospel first and we shouldn't be surprised. We shouldn't be surprised to hear that. What is Paul's burden as he writes to these Christians?

What is God telling us by his spirit? Telling us. By his spirit through these same words. Put the gospel first.

[61 : 14] For 10 years, Greg and I have labored together in the Lord with much joy in this congregation. In the privilege of teaching that as the main thing.

That right there, friends, that is the main thing. And we have been about over and over saying keep the main thing, the main thing. Keep the main thing, the main thing.

But then explaining how to do that. How do we keep the main thing, the main thing every single day of our lives? How do we do that? And when we fail to do that, what do we do?

This is all part of helping us shepherd and understand how to take care of each other. All right. So the first thing that he's going to deal with now.

Put the fellowship of the gospel at the center of your relationships with believers. All right. He says that he's going to trace this main idea out.

[62:11] Put the gospel first. He's going to trace that out in what he calls what. Trace this theme in four points. So he's tracing the theme of putting the gospel first with this first point.

Put the fellowship of the gospel at the center of your relationships with believers. And this is very important. So look at it with me as he outlines it.

As often in his letters, Paul begins with a warm expression of thanks to God for something in the lives of his readers. Here, the grounds of his thanksgiving to God are three in number.

But all three of them are tied to the same theme. Okay. So we're talking about the grounds or foundation or basis. In this case, bases for Paul being thankful to God for these people.

Let's read Philippians 1, 3 through 8 again and see what we can identify. Philippians 1, 3 through 8.

[63:18] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.

In view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I'm confident of this very thing. That he, God, who began a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart. Since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

For God is my witness. How I long for you. Every one of you. You all. With the affection of Christ Jesus. All right. Now, Paul's thankfulness to God for what he knows is operating in the lives of these believers is what we're talking about here.

He's a thankful man, but he's thankful in specific ways. And so he says here there are three bases or foundations for this thanksgiving that he expressed towards these people.

[64:30] What's the what's the first one? How would you summarize the first of these foundations for his gratitude toward the Lord? For their what?

You'll find it in verse three. Remembrance. Thank you. So that's the first one. Paul's thankfulness to God for what he knows is operating in the lives of these believers.

And they start with their faithful memory of him. You see it on the screen there. They are committed to Paul's success in gospel work. They are committed to Paul's success in gospel work.

This is how he puts it. I thank my God and all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all. In verse five, in view of your what?

Participation. What does your Bible say for participation? Partnership. Fellowship. Another one might be fellowship. Right?

[65:31] In the gospel from the first day until now. This is interesting that he would start off with this kind of gratitude toward them. It concerns their faithful memory and their commitment to Paul's success in gospel work.

Can I say it this way, friends? These precious people are committed to their pastor's success in his ministry. Greg, I think you and I both could say with great joy in our heart that we absolutely feel that here.

We have the proof of that over years of ministry here. That you want your pastors to succeed in the ministry that they're providing as shepherds.

A lot of the reasons we are successful is because of the investment you are making in us being successful. And that is precious. It's unique.

It's unusual. I hate to say that. It's true. All right. And then the second one that he gives concerns this partnership.

[66 : 38] This partnership. Where does he say this? This is over on 17. I always pray with joy. The word rendered partnership is more commonly translated fellowship in the New Testament.

And he asks there on 17, right in the middle, what precisely does the word fellowship or partnership mean? And so he's going through an explanation of what this means.

What does Paul mean by their partnership with him? That didn't come over, Suzanne, as the second point. Number two. Remember how we corrected it? Yeah.

We get these weird glitches. Anyway, the heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision.

A vision that calls forth our commitment. What is he saying here? That's at the top of 18. The top of 18. The heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision.

[67 : 44] He's defining fellowship or partnership. Now, please, folks, pause there for a second with me. This is how we need to understand fellowship here at Grace.

This is what we need to understand as the core of gospel fellowship or gospel partnership. This is how we can understand what we have all signed up for when we join this church.

We are signing up to understand and to live out that the heart of true fellowship, the heart of true koinonia, partnership in this church, is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision.

And that vision calls each one of us together in a common commitment to whom? Christ. And that puts us on Christ's agenda.

And so each of us are striving to understand and live out Christ's agenda as the elders present that to us and call us together.

[68 : 53] We might all have ideas about how that could operate, look, at any given time, but you need elders to help keep it cohesive and directed.

Otherwise, we got stuff shooting off everywhere. And so the elders are people you trust to do that. And that's part of the blessing of eldership.

And so this is... Yeah. Okay, that's all right. We won't go much further. We're almost... Thanks, honey.

All right, so what we're dealing with here now, again, this is his definition of this first part, talking about faithful memory, then coming into partnership, it should be number two.

So number two should be where it says, what does Paul mean by partnership with him? That's his second way that he's talking about being thankful for them as fellow believers and their submission to him in ministry.

[70 : 01] They are partnering with him in the gospel. And he's explaining that partnership as true fellowship. All right, listen. In this today, I was sent from Poland, in our ongoing ministry with Poland, I was sent an hour and a half video of a meeting that went on Sunday at Poyednania, the church there in the town that we visit, the church there.

There is an American missionary that's been over there a little over a year, and his hope is to start an English speaking international ministry in Warsaw. And so he sent me the tape of their first meeting, not as a church, but as a group of interested believers who are looking to maybe see that church launched in a year.

And they're going to have monthly meetings to talk about what that is. And guess what was one of the first things that this first meeting was all about?

As I watched Tanner, the American missionary, who will be the pastor of that church, the teaching pastor, explain to them that right there. The heart of true fellowship is a self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision.

He talked to them about the shared vision that they have as they form together as a congregation and begin to define themselves by the gospel. He said we have to have a common shared vision of the priority of the gospel in our life.

[71 : 37] If we don't have that, we'll have people all over the map. They'll bring in all kinds of expectations. When those expectations or preferences aren't met, they're going to jet. And he said we can't have a church like that.

See, we're not a democracy. Do you understand that? We're not cultivating a democracy here. We have one Lord. And His name isn't Jeff or Greg.

It's Jesus. And so as His under-rowers, His under-shepherds, we're helping all of us be led in a way where we're all rowing in the same direction and for the same person.

We're rowing for Jesus. We're rowing for Jesus. That's what we're trying to do. So this was His second way of talking about His thankfulness for these people.

I'm so thankful that you remember me. I'm so thankful that you've made success in ministry for me a priority for you. Thank you. That is such a humbling privilege, he says.

[72 : 44] And I am so thankful that you are exhibiting an understanding of this self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision for the greater glory of God in your life and that that's so important to you because that is the glue.

That's the cohesion keeping us together as a family. Even from a distance because Paul couldn't be there with them. And then finally, he does this third one.

He does this third one. Oh dear. Is it that one? Is that supposed to be number three? Oh wait, I have the cheat sheet here.

That's right. That's number three. Okay. So that should have a three on it right there. God's continuing work in their lives is the third thing that he mentions in this.

I thank my God and all my remembrance of you. Some people think that that reflects Paul remembering them. It could be. Carson takes the attitude that he thinks it's more in line with them remembering him and he bears that out in the context and makes a pretty good case for it.

[73 : 55] Always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. God is continuing in your life.

Verse 6. He began a good work in you. He's going to continue it. He's going to perfect it. And I have you in my heart. What evidence for this work is Paul focusing on?

And this is where we'll end. What evidence does Paul say he has? What is the spiritual quality about them that is providing this final piece of evidence for this thankfulness in his heart?

Let me see. Let me see. Where are you?

Oh. No. It's a little more inferred than that than obvious for you.

[75 : 10] Let's see. Look on page 18 of the book. And here's how I'll end. And so let me just give this to you. There's a third basis for Paul's thanks to God for them.

And it's nothing less than God's continuing work in their lives. So that's where I get my third point. I thank my God. He begins in verse 3 and now adds, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

This is almost the definition of what a real Christian is. The New Testament affords not a few examples of people who made professions of faith that were spurious. There's that word. Evidenced by the fact that they did not endure.

They didn't persevere. He gives several of them. Then He comes over at the top of 19. A few chapters later, to those who had professed faith, Jesus declared, if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Right? So He goes on to talk about that. Now look at the next paragraph on 19. But not so the Philippians. They weren't fickle. They weren't fake. They weren't falling away.

[76 : 17] Because God is preserving them. Paul is convinced that they will persevere.

That's the word. Paul is convinced by what he's writing in Scripture here as he sees God working in their lives. He's not putting their faith in them. He's putting his faith in God's work in them.

I see God helping you persevere. You've had some tough stuff come up and you're staying strong in the Gospel. You struggle. You strive. You fall. You stumble. But you're persevering.

You're not giving up. That's God. He said that's the only explanation. So Paul gives thanks to God because he's entirely confident as he's watched the Philippians that God did indeed begin a good work in them.

There was no spurious conversion. It wasn't fake. And the God who begins a good work finishes it. Finishes it. Go a couple of lines down now from that paragraph.

[77 : 20] He says, In all my prayers for you all, I always pray with joy. His words remind us of what John says in his third epistle. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Walking in the truth. Persevering in the faith. And so that's what he's dealing with here. I'll put it right up on the screen. Perseverance in holiness and truth is that final evidence that he's so thankful for as he sees God working in their life.

Folks, there is no greater joy in a pastor's life as he ministers in a congregation over time than to see the work of the Holy Spirit helping people persevere through trial in a way that they are being conformed to Jesus Christ and taking delight in the will of God being worked out in their life.

In other words, we see people walking with Jesus in the truth. Everything about our lives is aimed at that. Everything. So when that's happening, it's the greatest joy ever.

It far exceeds material blessings and all this other stuff that could come as a part of this. Alright, are there any questions about any of that?

[78 : 36] I know that there's more we're going to go through. I'm going to pick it up there next time, God willing, and continue on through. So we'll pick it up. You can help me remember page 19 is where I stopped.

Any other questions or comments about the book, what you're reading, or question about it? You ready to go get some dessert, huh? Sure.

Yeah. Take where we stopped and read on and be familiar with that so that you understand. Now that I've given you some of this, you can go back and look at these slides. They'll be corrected by that time.

We do what we can do, right babe? But we'll try to have them corrected and then you can go back and kind of look at them and see the flow of what's going on. And you have in bold through the rest of the chapter what his main points are.

So you know where we're going. Put the priorities of the gospel at the center of your prayer life and so on. Alright, anything else? Alright, good start?

[79 : 47] Okay. I hope you're seeing how we're going to dig down into what he's saying verse by verse through this at a time and talk about why the gospel is so relevant to who we are and what we're trying to do.

Again, if we don't get this part well into our hearts, we're just missing the point. If we're not understanding and living by the gospel, it's all window dressing here at Grace and we just don't want that.

Okay? God bless y'all. So good to see you. Invite others. Guys, last reminder, please remember to check the website. Greg may be right.

It may just be better for us to just say, hey, let's reschedule and postpone it until another Saturday and we can do that no problem. So just keep looking on that.

I'm pretty sure that Sunday is not going to materialize for us here. It'd probably be better for us to stay home. Okay? Alright, let's pray and we'll let you get some goodies.

[80 : 50] Father God, we thank you for the teaching of Philippians chapter 1 and for D.A. Carson and the way that you have used him as an instrument of your grace in helping us to better understand the flow of this chapter and these passages that are contained therein and we want to be faithful to try and get our minds around what it means for us to have this shared vision that we are committed to in the Gospel together and how we're laboring and striving to minister that truth of the Gospel in each other's lives to help each of us stay centered and focused on the main thing and to persevere in the main thing as we give thanks to you for helping us to be in that process together.

We thank you for the souls here at Grace. We thank you that you're growing our little church in number and you're growing us in knowledge of your will. And we are so thankful to you for your greater glory in that work, Lord.

We pray that you'll help us to stay faithful to you and to continue to love one another in forgiveness and with much joy in our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.