

# Partnership in the Gospel

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the assistant pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

A special welcome if you are new or visiting with us. We're glad you're here. And we are glad you're here not because we are trying to fill seats, but because we're following after Jesus, and we're following after him together as one community.

And we're convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. And so God has something to say to everyone, and everyone needs to hear what God has to say.

Whether you're someone who's called yourself a Christian your entire life, or if you're someone who doesn't call yourself a Christian. Maybe you have doubts or questions or objections to Christianity. God is going to speak to all of those things in his word, and so that's why we open up his word every Sunday, so that we can hear from him. If you've been with us the last several months, you know that we just finished a series in the book of Ruth.

[ 1 : 14 ] And now today we're going to be starting a series on the book of Philippians. And Philippians is a letter. It's a letter that's written to a church very much like our church.

We're going to see at the very beginning that this is a church that has saints, and it has deacons, and it has elders, just like us. And it's a letter written to a city very much like our city.

Philippi was a prominent and major city in Macedonia, just north of Greece, but it was also a military city. It was a military city because of its history. It was a military city because many military families would settle there.

But most importantly, it was a military city because the Roman government had declared it to be a Roman colony. And so that meant that if you were a Roman citizen and a soldier, you could get special tax benefits.

And so, of course, as you know, if there's a tax incentive, people are going to move in. And so there's a great incentive for Roman citizens and for military families to be a part of the city of Philippi.

[ 2 : 14 ] And this church that was much like ours and a city that's much like ours had struggles that were much like ours because they lived in a culture that worshipped the emperor rather than Jesus.

And this was actually heightened by the fact that they were a Roman colony. They experienced this at a greater intensity. They were a church that, while they were working together, they sometimes struggled to figure out how to do that.

We're going to see that the church in Philippi had trouble with unity. People had very different ideas, perhaps, of what their ministry needed to look like together. And so Paul has to address that as well.

And it's to a group of people who are trying to hold fast to the gospel in the midst of people, other teachers who are teaching them something false. And the author, Paul, is writing to this church that he founded.

It's a church that he started. And this church had been around for about 10 years at the time that he wrote the letter. We've been around about 20 years, so twice as long, but this still wasn't a very old church.

[ 3 : 16 ] And it was a church planter, a missionary, writing back to people he loved. Writing about how they should handle all the difficulties that were in front of them.

And by the way, when Paul writes this, he's in prison. He's in prison in Rome. And he writes to a city, Philippi. If you remember the story of Acts, it's a city where he was in prison.

Remember in Acts 16, it was when Paul converted the Philippian jailer and his family. So he's writing from a prison to a city where he was in prison.

And yet, while he's in prison, he finds tremendous thanksgiving and joy. And so our question this morning is, how exactly does Paul do that? How does he find joy and thanksgiving in prison, in difficult circumstances, when both himself and the people he's writing to are facing tremendous opposition?

So that's our question as we come to the letter to the Philippians. Remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

[ 4 : 26 ] And that it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

And so we're going to turn to it now. We're in Philippians chapter 1, starting at verse 1. Please read with me.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always, in every prayer of mine, for you all, making my prayer with joy, verse 5, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Please pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you that you remember that we are just dust. You know that we're feeble and frail. You know that we need to hear your word just as much as the church in Philippi did in the first century.

[ 5 : 39 ] That as we live in America, we need to know what you had to tell to those who lived under the Roman Empire. And so we ask that you would do that. That you would open our ears and our eyes.

That you'd soften our hearts. That you'd help us to understand everything that you've written to us. We ask all these things in the name of your Son. Amen.

If you were watching the news early this year, you might have seen that there was a record that was set. And this was a record that was broken. It had been set for, it had not been broken for I think about maybe 10 or 20 years.

And it was the record for the highest enrollment for a class at Yale University. This was just a normal class.

Wasn't advertised. But as students found out about it, word of mouth began to spread. And so they started telling each other and registering. And before they knew it, there were almost 1,200 students registered for it.

[ 6 : 43 ] And the previous record, I believe, was for about 1,050. So this was about 150 more students than registered for any class in the over 300-year history of Yale. And it was so large that they had to find a new lecture hall.

They had to set up TVs and videos so that people could sit in various places and listen to the lecturer. They had to modify homework requirements so that they could actually give grades to 1,200 students. If you heard about this, you know what the class is about.

It was a class on happiness. And so what Yale students were more interested in than anything else, what they were eager to know about, was how can we be happy?

And that's the question that many of us are asking as well, right? That's the question our culture is asking. How can we be happy? What can we do to escape the feelings that we have, perhaps, of loneliness, lack of satisfaction?

How can we escape the idea that maybe what we're doing isn't worthwhile? How can we escape pain? How can we instead feel at peace, at rest?

[ 8 : 00 ] So on the one hand, it's an alluring question, right? It's a tempting question. It's a reason why so many Yale students flock to take this class. On the other hand, if you know much about happiness, you know that it's a cruel master.

Because happiness is dependent on what we do and what other people do. And not only is it dependent on what we do and what other people do, but it's dependent on our circumstances. Some of you know from hard experiences that you might not be able to achieve happiness right now. Because if it's based on circumstances, sometimes those are out of your control. And if it's based on what you do and what other people do, sometimes it's not enough.

Paul here in this letter that he's writing to Philippians is in prison. He's in circumstances that would preclude happiness for him. And he's writing to people who perhaps can't have happiness at that time either.

They're in the midst of conflict, both from outside of themselves, inside of themselves, opposition all around them. And so what does Paul find instead?

[ 9 : 10 ] Instead of happiness, he finds what Christians throughout the ages have found. He finds thanksgiving and joy. And so as I said at the beginning, we're going to be asking this question, how does Paul find thanksgiving and joy in prison?

What does he give thanks for? And why is he joyful? If you're familiar with Paul's letters, you know that the beginning of his letters often functioned kind of like a movie trailer.

You know that if you go to see a movie in the theaters, you're going to spend probably the first half hour or so, at least it feels that long, right? Watching trailers of movies that are going to come, and you find out about plot points, reasons you should come and see the next movie, perhaps the main conflict that you're going to hear resolved.

And so you get an overall idea of what the movie is going to be about. And Paul does that in every one of his letters. Every single letter that Paul writes, he has a trailer at the very beginning. And this trailer helps us get a glimpse of all the different scenes, helps us understand and see and anticipate what's about to come.

And he does this here in the chapter of Philippians. By the way, it makes it really hard to preach. It's easy to preach one scene. When you have ten scenes in a trailer, you think, what am I supposed to, you know, what are we supposed to do with this? And yet Paul gives us the key.

[ 10 : 28 ] He gives us the key in his thanksgiving and joy, and we see it in verse 5. Gives us this important word, because. Why is it that in verse 3 he thanks God?

And why in verse 4 is it always with joy? Well, we find out that because in verse 5, it's because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Paul's joy in his thanksgiving comes from this one thing, this simple thing. And this is going to be what's going to be given to us in the rest of the book of Philippians. It's partnership in the gospel. And so this morning we're simply going to take a look at that. What does Paul tell us here about the gospel? And what does he tell us about partnership? And what in the world do partnership in the gospel have to do with each other?

First, let's look at the gospel. It starts out in the very first verse. He tells us, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus. And so the gospel, if it's about nothing else, is about a man.

[ 11 : 35 ] It's a man named Christ Jesus. And this man is someone that Paul follows. He's a real man. He lived in time and space and history.

He was a Jewish man. He was born. He grew up. He was a baby. He was a toddler. He was a child. He worked with his father.

They were builders. We're not sure if they were carpenters or stone builders, but he worked with his hands. And yet there was something different about this man, Jesus Christ. And that is his name wasn't just Jesus, but it was Christ.

And Christ means anointed one. And he was the anointed one that was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies about someone who would come and save God's people. And so he wasn't just a carpenter who worked with his father, but he was also a savior who died, that he had three years of ministry on this earth, preaching and teaching about the fact that we need reconciliation with God, that God is pouring out his wrath on mankind.

He's pouring out his wrath because of the ways that we have sinned against him. He's pouring out his wrath because of the way we treat each other, pushing each other down rather than lifting each other up.

[ 12 : 49 ] He's pouring out his wrath for the ways that we have trashed the earth that he gave us to take care of. He's pouring out his wrath for all the reasons that we have failed to do what we should have.

And yet we see here in verses one and two, it's Christ Jesus that Paul puts his hope in because Christ Jesus is the one that came and took God's wrath. He was willing for God's wrath to be poured out on him so that it would not have to be poured out on us.

And so if anything, the gospel here that Paul takes joy in is the gospel that he tells us about in verses one and two. It's the gospel of Christ Jesus.

We continue to find out more about it in verse two because he tells us grace to you and peace. This grace is a reminder that the gospel is something that we don't deserve. Grace is an undeserved gift and so Paul is reminding us not just from verse one of Christ Jesus, but verse two, what he did, that he took the punishment that we deserved so that we don't have to take it.

That's the grace. So we see Jesus Christ in verse one. We see our need for him in verse two, that we need his grace. And we also see what he gives to us in verse two. He doesn't just give us grace, he gives us peace.

[ 14 : 04 ] And so that when we have this grace, when Christ gives us his righteousness because he lived a perfect life, and when he takes our judgment because he suffered the punishment that we should, we have peace with God.

We have peace because despite what happens in our circumstances and despite what we do and other people do, we cannot lose God's grace. We cannot lose the most important thing that we have.

And so there's something unshakable and that's where this peace comes from. The peace is the result of the grace. And so we can see this outline here at the very beginning of the letter.

They're servants of Christ Jesus. He's the one who came and died. But unlike any other man who died, he rose again from the dead. It was an act of grace. And that grace gives us peace.

But that's not the end of the story of the gospel and it's not the last thing that Paul has to tell us here. Because we find out more about this partnership in verse 6.

[ 15 : 11 ] And I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. In other words, the gospel is not just a one-time act that happened in Christ's death and resurrection, but it is something that is ongoing.

It is a work. It is something that's happening even now. And so for those who have put their faith and their hope and their trust in Jesus, they've accepted his punishment on their behalf.

He is at work in their lives right now. He's doing something. That the gospel is not just static but dynamic. It's at work and it's active and it's alive.

If you attend our Explore class this weekend and you decide you want to pursue membership in the church, we're going to ask you, how did you become a Christian? But an equally valid question might be, how are you becoming a Christian?

How has God been at work in your life even now? What is he doing? Because the gospel is not just something in the past historically. And it's not just something in the past in our lives, but it's something that God is doing even now.

[ 16 : 23 ] Some of you know that my car got wrecked in the first hailstorm. I got both my windshields knocked. I was not hiding under the wing of the church.

I got both my windshields knocked out. I had to have my roof replaced and my hood replaced. It's actually still in the shop, so I'm driving this little Mini Cooper, which is fun. I just hope I don't get in a wreck because I don't think I'll win, especially if someone has one of those bumper hoods in the front.

But I do feel like I'm driving a go-kart sometimes. Which, you know, it has its ups and downs. But my car's been in a shop for a month. And I've had a great experience with the shop, mostly except they don't always tell me what's going on, and so I have to call them.

And I call them probably about once a week, and I'll say, what's going on? What's happened? Where are we with the car? And so they'll tell me, okay, well, we've replaced the hood, and we've replaced the top, but we have to send it to get its paint done now.

And the most recent thing was, okay, we've had the paint done, but we have to have all the windows replaced, and it's a holiday weekend, so it's probably not going to happen, so you're probably going to be driving a go-kart for a little bit longer. But there's this ongoing work.

[ 17 : 32 ] It's not just the story of how I turned my car in at the body shop. If I were going to tell you about the work that's being done on my car, that wouldn't be enough, because it's something that's ongoing.

It's something that's happening little by little. And so if you're a Christian today, my question for you is this. If you call yourself a Christian, how is God at work in your life? If you look back over the past year or two years or five years, how have you seen God at work to bring you more love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?

Because Paul tells us that that's what the gospel does. If the gospel is at work in our lives, then it is at work. One of my favorite, by the way, today's C.S. Lewis Day.

I have two C.S. Lewis books with me. I'm going to read you some quotes from both of them. C.S. Lewis gives a great illustration of this in his book, *Mere Christianity*. He says, I find I must borrow yet another parable from George MacDonald.

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on.

[ 18 : 49 ] You knew that those jobs needed doing, and so you are not surprised. But presently, he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense.

What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of. Throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage. But he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.

So how does Paul find joy and thanksgiving in prison? First, it's because he knows that God is at work. Despite the circumstances, despite what he does and what other people do, God is still working in his house.

Still rebuilding and renewing. And he, we see in verse 6, is bringing it to completion. One day I'm actually going to be able to pick my car up.

[ 20 : 10 ] And it's going to look, hopefully, almost like new. Right? It's going to be brought to completion. So that's the work that God is doing as well.

But that's not all we see in verse 6 because we're told that it's going to be brought to completion when? At the day of Jesus Christ. Now this day of Jesus Christ was something that's an idea we learned about in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, it was known as the day of the Lord. And the day of the Lord was that great day when God was going to come and bring all judgment and all justice.

It was the day when everything that was wrong was going to be made right and everything would be restored. That there is a day that is set.

And so that Jesus doesn't just have a first coming, he has a second coming. We find out about, in the Gospels, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, about Jesus' first coming. And Jesus' first coming has an emphasis on salvation.

[ 21 : 10 ] Has an emphasis on his death and resurrection. But it has judgment as well. It's not just salvation. It emphasizes salvation, but it also includes judgment. Jesus' second coming is going to emphasize judgment, but includes salvation.

And so we're mistaken if we look at a few cherry-picked stories from the Gospels and say things like, well, Jesus, he would never judge anyone. I can't imagine Jesus disagreeing with anyone's lifestyle.

I mean, look at this one story that I picked from the Gospels in which he affirmed someone. We have to take Jesus not only as the suffering servant, but as the one who comes in Revelation at the very end and he's riding a horse and he's splattered with blood.

But this time he's not splattered with his own blood. He's splattered with the blood of his enemies. Because when he comes to bring justice on the final day, it has to include judgment.

And so remember I said if you're a Christian, if you call yourself a Christian, you have to ask, how has God been at work in my life? If you don't call yourself a Christian, you have to think about the day of Jesus Christ.

[ 22 : 31 ] Because there is going to come a day when God is going to pour out his wrath fully and finally on the earth. And those who trust in Christ, who have faith in Christ, will be saved through that because Christ has taken the wrath for them.

But those who have not will not. And so those of you who have questions and doubts and objections about Christianity, there's a day of judgment that is coming.

There's the day of Jesus Christ. And there's only going to be one question that matters and that's whether you have trusted in the gospel. If you have, what verse 2 tells us, if you have grace and peace from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It says, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So do you have that grace and that peace? If you don't, it doesn't matter how happy you are because your circumstances will dramatically change on that day.

And so God is calling you to follow after him. He's calling you to put your trust and your faith in him and to choose that joy and that thanksgiving above any happiness.

[ 23 : 54 ] That's what he's calling us to. And so there's encouragement for Christians. God is bringing a good work to completion in you. He's at work even now. And there's a challenge for those of us who do not call ourselves Christians that there's going to come a day when Jesus not only fulfills his first coming but has a second coming and he's going to judge the earth.

And so Paul gives thanksgiving for the gospel but he doesn't just give thanksgiving for the gospel. Remember in verse 5 it's partnership in the gospel. And we see that partnership all throughout this passage as well and we're going to see it actually throughout the whole book. This is a book about partnership in the gospel.

It's a letter written by a man who loves these people at Philippi. Some of them came to Christ because of his teaching and they love him. They've been supporting him financially for years. They've been praying for him for years. And so he starts out with a partnership. Verse 1 he says not just Paul but Paul and Timothy. Now we find out later that Paul as we read this letter it's going to become clear that only Paul is writing it.

[ 25 : 05 ] So he just puts Timothy's name at the beginning and so what does that tell us? Well he values Timothy's partnership so much. Paul is not interested in his own name.

He's not interested in being a personality driven apostle but he's interested in partnering with whoever he can. Timothy's his partner and so he wants to bring Timothy in.

But it goes on in verse 1 it's addressed to people it's addressed to the saints who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons. Overseers here is a fancy word for elder so he's just distinguishing the different categories here.

There are congregants there's elders there's deacons. As an aside this is why we have that kind of structure here at Cheyenne Mountain because we want to be faithful to what God has given us in his word.

And so here's a question for you. Let's have a thought experiment for a second. Let's say Paul was still alive and he wrote a letter to Colorado Springs.

[ 26 : 08 ] Would you receive that letter? Would you be one of the recipients? Only if you're part of the church.

Paul only writes letters to churches and leaders of churches. Paul is not writing letters to the people in Philippi who all have their own faith journey that involves Jesus.

He's writing it to a church. He's writing it to these believers who are together working as partners for the gospel. And so we can't have one without the other.

We can't have the gospel without a partnership with other believers. Those are things to go together. And so if you are not part of a church I would encourage you to join one.

It doesn't have to be this church. It could be we're having an explore class this weekend. But join some church. There's a lot of churches in Colorado Springs. But find a partnership. Find people to partner with in the gospel because that is what Paul gives joy for here.

[ 27 : 25 ] He gives joy for people. And oh by the way a lot of this letter actually is not going to make sense unless you're in the church. Because as we read along Paul's going to give commands and orders about how people in the church should get along together.

He's going to talk to them how they work through conflict with each other. He's going to present them in chapter 2 with models of people they can follow after. People that they know who are faithful Christians that they can use as examples.

And so this partnership is something that is integral to Paul's life. He doesn't Paul doesn't have a category let's put it this way Paul does not have a category for a saint without a church. He doesn't have a category for a partnership without a gospel.

And so we see it goes on in verse 3 Paul loves these people. He thanks God for them always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

And I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. I don't want to spoil too much but we're going to see next week that part of the reason

Paul is so sure that these are people for whom the work is going to be brought to a completion is because they're people who are in the partnership.

[ 28 : 45 ] They're people who have served with him in hard times and good times. And so I said earlier we can't have the partnership without excuse me we can't have the gospel without partnership.

But there's also a sense in which we can't have partnership without the gospel. Remember when we were in Ruth chapter 3 we talked about the difference between thick and thin communities that there are thick communities that can help each other even in the toughest times.

And there are thin communities the communities are real communities but they're based around very superficial things. And so people in a thin community might know your name but they're probably not going to visit you in the hospital. People in a thick community they know your name they're going to sit with you when you have questions they're going to sit with you when you're rejoicing and when you're in sorrow.

And you can have partnerships about other things. You can have partnerships about cycling or about hiking or about a number of different activities here in Colorado. And so I'm not going to say you can't have partnership without the gospel.

But the gospel is the fullest partnership. It's the partnership that holds together people who have nothing else in common. It's the partnership that brings together different generations and ethnicities.

[ 30 : 06 ] It's the partnership that's going to withstand everything else. You know you can have a partnership around an activity or an interest but what if you lose your ability to take part in that activity?

And how do you resolve by the way this is going to get to what we're going to talk about in Philippians 2 how do you resolve disagreements? What if you have divisions about how to understand that activity?

That our partnership in other words has to be about something. We live in a lonely age in society where people long for community and yet they don't know how to find it.

Now I promised you two C.S. Lewis quotes today and I'm going to make good on my promise. So the next one comes from The Four Loves which is C.S. Lewis' book about relationships and he says this people who simply want friends can never make any.

The very condition of having friends is that we should want something else besides friends. Where the truthful answer to the question do you see the same truth would be I see nothing and I don't care about the truth.

[ 31 : 14 ] I only want a friend. No friendship can arise though affection of course may. There would be nothing for the friendship to be about and friendship must be about something even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice.

Those who have nothing can share nothing. Those who are going nowhere can have no fellow travelers. Let me read that last sentence again. Those who have nothing can share nothing.

Those who are going nowhere can have no fellow travelers. And so in other words if you want deep and rich and lasting community it has to be about something much much greater than yourself.

You know there's something that I've been thinking about a lot recently and that is it's a little bit strange. It's a little bit strange that I'm up here on a Sunday morning preaching to you all.

You know most of you many of you have a military background. I've never been in the military. military. Most of you are married or have been married and I'm not. I'm in my 20s and most of you aren't.

[ 32 : 33 ] Most of you are in your 30s I know that's why it's funny. There's a lot of places I could go in town where there are single people in their 20s. There are places this morning I could go and you might say well you're here because you have a job right.

There are other jobs I could find. There's work for those who are willing to work. So why am I here with you all?

I'm here with you all because I want the treasure. I want the treasure and I'm willing to walk with anyone who's going to walk there with me. And we're here together as one community following Jesus together.

And so whoever is going to walk towards Jesus with me who's willing to help me in that and go with me in that let's come let's go. And that's Paul's feeling here about these people.

That's why he finds joy in thanksgiving not just in God's work not just in the gospel but in the partnership. And so that we can save each other not just that the gospel brings it to us us joy but that we bring joy to each other as we pursue the gospel together.

[ 33 : 48 ] That's what's going to hold us together as a community. That's what's going to keep us. That's also what's going to actually result in us finding the gospel and sticking with it and being brought to completion at that last day.

I have been reading through slowly the Hobbit which I think I read at some point in my childhood but I hadn't read it in a long time and I really wanted to and so I started I haven't quite finished yet but if you remember the very beginning we meet Bilbo.

Bilbo is this Hobbit now he has some adventurous tendencies but he really just likes to stay at home. He wants his house to be very orderly. He wants everything to be very predictable and then Gandalf comes and visits him one day and he hasn't seen Gandalf for a long time.

Remember Gandalf's this wizard. Gandalf knocks on his door and Bilbo's very put out by this. He doesn't really want to see Gandalf but he's trying to be polite. So he lets Gandalf in and says okay I'll have tea with you tomorrow.

He invites him to tea and he thinks he's just inviting Gandalf. What he doesn't know is that Gandalf leaves a mark on his door. And so the next day very early people start knocking on Bilbo's door and dwarves keep coming in and he thinks okay I have a couple dwarves in my house.

[ 35 : 06 ] Well then there's two more dwarves until suddenly his whole house is filled with dwarves. They're eating all his food which he didn't want them to. They're making a mess. He's trying to be polite and every time he offers something to them they say yes.

When they leave his house later they leave it in a mess. And Bilbo thinks that he could just have Gandalf. He could just invite Gandalf into his hobbit hole.

But Gandalf doesn't come alone. we can't have God and his gospel without his people as well. We can't have the gospel without a partnership. If Bilbo wants Gandalf he has to let all the dwarves into his house as well.

But that's not the end. The dwarves then recruit him to go on this adventure he doesn't necessarily want to go on. It requires him leaving his hobbit hole. They're going to go and get this treasure that a dragon has stolen.

[ 36 : 11 ] So they finally convince him. He goes along with them. Along the journey Bilbo gets to face some of his own sin. He makes a lot of mistakes. At some points the dwarves are almost tempted to kick him out.

They're not sure if he has the skills that they really think he needs. Sometimes he's at the end of his wits with dwarves and yet they keep going together. Why do they keep walking along the path? It's because Bilbo and Gandalf and the dwarves are all seeking the treasure together. And they can't do it by themselves.

The dwarves need someone small and little who can get into small places. And Bilbo needs companions who can save himself from his own stupidity. And it's only as they work together and they partner together for the treasure that they're able to make it to the end.

And so brothers and sisters, God has given us his greatest treasure in the gospel. He's given us his greatest treasure in his son, Jesus Christ.

[ 37 : 23 ] Christ. And so he calls us not just to that gospel, but to a partnership. He calls us to walk towards it together with people we might not choose to walk with, people who are very different from ourselves, people who might feel like dwarves when we're hobbits, or hobbits when we're dwarves.

But we stick together. Why? Because as we find out in verse 6, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

Please pray with me. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the goodness of your word. We thank you for the provision of your son, that we can have grace and peace.

And we thank you for the partnership that you have given us here at Cheyenne Mountain. We ask that you would stir it up in us, that we would seek and look to grow more and more as we see you working in our lives and that we would partner together in it.

We ask all these things in the name of your son. Amen.