

Walking Worthy

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[0 : 00] I was trying to think of something funny to say about Davidson grads because Matthew is a Davidson grad. Wes forsook the land of his fathers. The best thing about Wes is that his brother went to Clemson. Now I was so excited to make fun of him in public, but thank you for coming and preaching to us.

That was fantastic. Thanks, Andy. That was great. Obviously, Andy and Jenny, we were in seminary together. They were a power couple there, and I'm glad that they are here now to serve y'all.

It's my privilege to get to share God's word with you this morning. If you look in your bulletin, you're going to see that we're in Ephesians chapter 4. As you're looking at that passage, I just want to say thank you for supporting our ministry. If you're new here or just visiting, RUF is the campus ministry of the PCA.

What that means is because of churches like yours, we are sent to the college campus to reach students for Jesus and equip students to love Jesus and love his church. I just got back from Tokyo.

We went to Tokyo for a spring break mission trip. We took 10 students from Colorado State, actually met up with 8 students from Montana State, another RUF in our presbytery.

We spent a lot of time with Japanese students there, and there are very, very few Christians in Japan. Some of you might already be familiar with that. It was something I wasn't really fully aware of until this opportunity came on our radar.

[1 : 30] There's a lot of revival happening in Asia right now, but not in Japan. It is still one of the largest unreached people groups in the world. I got the privilege of taking students over there and hearing them have a lot of spiritual conversations.

We hung out with probably about 30 Japanese students, and maybe two of them were Christians. It was an incredible experience, and it's because of your support and your prayers that we're able to do things like that.

Thank you so much. Now, as we turn our attention to God's word, I'm going to read this for us as we begin our time together in his word this morning. And then I will invite you to join me in going to the throne of grace, that we would pray for God's blessing on our time together in his word.

And so this is God's word for us this morning from Ephesians chapter 4, starting in verse 1. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. Let's pray.

[2 : 49] Gracious Father, we do thank you for your word this morning. We thank you that you are a God who speaks, that you speak a better word than we ourselves could muster in our own strength.

And that you speak to your people this morning, even as we have already heard your word and sung your word and prayed your word and gathered in your name because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Would you help us to continue to worship by seeking to submit to your word? Father, you know where each of us is coming from this morning. You know the burdens we carry. You know our relationship to Jesus or our curiosity about the gospel or maybe even hostility towards some of these things.

Father, would you meet each of us where we are by your spirit? Would you give us eyes to see and ears to hear? Would you help us to deal graciously with one another as we seek to understand these things and apply them to our hearts?

We ask all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I'm excited to be with you all in this passage. And I'll just confess that this is one of my favorite passages in the New Testament.

[3 : 53] And so when Matthew here, I think, asked me to come during this sabbatical, this is just one of the passages that kind of came to my mind.

It's one that it's better, I think, to do in two parts. And so I'll be back next week to do the next section. And so I'm excited about that. I don't often have that opportunity as an REF guy that's often filling in in other pulpits to do two weeks in a row.

And so it's a sweet passage. I think it's the sort of passage to be looking at and praying over and thinking about what sort of fruit are we hoping to see in our church? What sort of fruit would it be sweet for Matthew to come back from sabbatical and see the Lord cultivating among us?

And as we turn our attention to this passage, I want to begin by asking this question. I think a lot of us probably, I think I know what the answer is. This is rhetorical. It might get awkward for the person sitting next to you if you just shout out yes to this question.

So don't do that, even though I'm going to kind of answer it myself. Have you ever struggled with the question of worthiness? You see why it would have been awkward for someone to say yes right away? Even though most of us are probably like, yes, of course.

[4 : 59] Right? Whether it's maybe having a job and then thinking like, am I worthy of the choice that was made? Am I going to honor the decision someone made in putting me in this position? Perhaps you've felt that in parenting on the difficult days where you're kind of thinking like, man, God entrusted me with these children.

Am I really living in a way that kind of honors that gift? Many of us can relate to that question of worthiness. It's something I can relate to as someone who, in my calling, I have to raise support. I have to raise the funds that support that ministry. And it's because of faithful churches like yours and individuals that that ministry happens. And while there's certainly a desire to be a faithful steward of that, over and over again in this role, this is my 12th year now on RUF, I've just seen God's grace through the generosity of his people.

A grace that it would be foolish of me to look at and think that I could somehow earn. And that's something that all of us need to be reminded of. And I want to remind us of as we begin our time in this passage, one of the tricky things about just jumping in midway through a letter, right, is we might be missing some of the context that led up to the passage.

And you'll notice that at the beginning of this passage, there's a very important and powerful therefore. And this therefore is common in Paul's letters. We'll often find him building out the beauty of the gospel and diving into the riches of what Jesus has done for his people before eventually shifting into a therefore, how should we live?

[6 : 29] If God has secured something for us in the sacrifice of Jesus by his grace alone, if he has forgiven us and brought us into his kingdom, how then should we live?

It's often how we find Paul structuring his letters. And so I want to remind us of that as we begin our time together in this passage, because in that shift towards this exhortation, it would be easy for us to take this word worthiness and to take these calls to cultivate certain character qualities as a call to earn something that we can't earn.

And so I'm just going to remind you of a verse earlier in Ephesians that I think is actually so important for us as we look at this passage together. In Ephesians chapter 2, starting in verse 8, if you spent much time in the church, this is probably a very familiar verse to you.

If you're here this morning not as a visitor or someone who's not sure where they stand in relation to the gospel or the Bible, this is a beautiful verse to go to and really wrestle with what the gospel is. But Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. What a beautiful statement of the grace of Jesus, something that we can't earn, something that is a gift, something that can only be received by faith.

[7 : 45] But he goes on to say in verse 10, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

And so even early in the letter, as Paul is still kind of expanding on the grace of Jesus and the reconciliation especially that is ours in Christ, you could see him tipping his hand to what he's going to talk about later.

That because of the grace of Jesus, we've actually been called into these good works that we should walk in them. And you could see him picking up on that metaphor, can't you, in this passage, as he urges us to walk now in a manner worthy of the calling that is ours, a calling that's already been secured by the grace of Jesus.

And so I want to begin our time considering that this morning by asking another question. This one, also, you know, don't shout it out, but this might be helpful to take notes.

This might be something to jot down and think about, chew on. You know, what would a visitor or outsider visiting this church say is valued here? What would someone who's visiting say is honored here?

[8 : 53] It's kind of like the meat and potatoes of what this church is about. And I'm asking that question because it gets at this idea of living worthy of something, right, of honoring something, of saying this is what's valuable to us.

And we want to point others to that thing of honor and value, right? If we're blind to the reality of what we kind of intrinsically value, then it'll be very hard for us to repent and change and live in the grace of Jesus, which is at the heart of the Christian life.

But the other thing I hope will happen this morning is we walk through this passage together and we think about this question of what is valued and honored is that we'll also have the opportunity to give God glory.

That I hope one of the things, especially if you've been here for a while this morning as we walk through this passage, is you'll not only have opportunities to say, wow, Lord Jesus, how can we grow in this area? How can I grow in this area?

But also, wow, Lord Jesus, praise you for the fruit you're already bearing in our community, for the ways in which you're already at work in these ways.

[9 : 58] And so I hope we'll have that opportunity to do that because I think Paul wants us to see what's at the heart of what it means to walk worthy of the grace that's been given to us in Jesus.

Twice in all of his letters, Paul uses this phrase of walking worthy of the gospel, right? It has such a weighty feel, doesn't it? It should have a weighty feel to us. And in both cases, he ends up talking about the way that we live together.

In Philippians, he talks about striving together for the gospel. But in both cases, there's a call towards unity that's centered on Jesus. And so what I want us to wrestle with this morning as we look at this passage together is that we honor our Savior Jesus by pursuing each other as he has pursued us in the gospel.

We honor our Savior Jesus and we point to our Savior Jesus by walking, by pursuing each other as he has pursued us. And to put that in other terms, our effort toward unity in the spirit, towards unity that's centered around Christ, actually points to what Jesus has done in making us his people.

We're actually pointing the world to the gospel itself as we seek to love and serve each other. And that's why I think in both instances in Paul's writings, he says that this is what it looks like to walk worthy of the gospel.

[11 : 19] And so as we begin our time in verses 1 through 3, I want us to once again ask this question, what is living worthy of the gospel? How does Paul expect us to answer this question, right?

If we ask this question of each other, we'd probably get a variety of answers. And one of the things I want to challenge us on this morning is that Paul's not just grabbing a random part of the gospel. He's not just saying, well, what would be some good answers?

I like this one today. I'm saying this. I think he's getting at the heart of the gospel itself in terms of how we respond to grace. If we were to go out on the street and ask someone this question, right, what do you think it looks like to live worthy of Jesus, right?

If they have any idea, even if they don't have an idea about who Jesus is, I bet a lot of us would expect some moral answers, right? Maybe don't do certain things, don't smoke or drink certain things, don't do certain behaviors.

It might feel like a lot of stereotypical answers for someone looking on the outside in about what the church is about. For those of us in the church, what might our answers be?

[12 : 21] We might be tempted to say that it looks like worshiping a certain way. We might be tempted to say that it looks like knowing certain things about the gospel. And I don't mean to suggest that any of those things are in and of themselves bad things or even bad answers.

But where does Paul begin? Where does Paul begin as he lays out this beautiful idea of walking worthy of the gospel? He begins with the community of Christ and the way that we live in relationship with each other.

And so I think there's four things we see clearly in this verse that all kind of feed into this idea of what does it look like to actually walk worthy of the gospel? And I'll just point out before we jump in and look at the individual trees, just make sure we see the forest, right?

All of these things can only be done in relation to others, right? Most of us, or we might expect many people to answer this question, what does it look like to live worthy of the gospel with individual points of holiness, do's and don'ts.

But notice that all of the things that Paul lists for us here can only be accomplished, can only be expressed, can only be experienced in community with others. And so I want us to walk through these things and think about these things briefly, unpack them a little bit more.

[13:37] But let's start off by recognizing that all of these things are in relationship to others. And the first one especially, right, with all humility. Now we might have some worldly definitions of humility that could be pretty self-centered, right?

And this one is particularly convicting for me because I'm someone who has in the past struggled a lot with self-deprecation. The way that I talk about myself and think about myself internally, and sometimes we can confuse that with humility, right?

But a wonderful, faithful, biblical counselor once pointed out to me that, right, like self-deprecation is just another form of selfishness a lot of times because it's very self-focused.

And I think a biblical definition of humility is not a self-focused, it's a self-forgetfulness. It's a putting others in front of ourselves and valuing them and the work that Jesus is doing in them above so many of the things that we are tempted to value.

Just to flip over to that passage in Philippians I've referenced earlier, in chapter 1, verse 27 is when Paul uses that phrase again, let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel.

[14:46] But it's in verse 3 of chapter 2, as he continues, he says, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

And I just mentioned that because there he kind of gives us a working definition, doesn't he? He defines humility by not thinking about yourself so much and thinking about others' needs, right?

This picture of humility, it's not a false humility, but it's a concern with others. It's a concern with what others need and what others are experiencing, especially here in relationship to the body of Christ.

How can I serve those around me? I love the announcement earlier, like, youth group, we want to care about service, right? How are we serving each other as a body?

And that matters even when we think about our youth and how we lead them to Jesus. Gentleness, right? Gentleness is something that can't really be expressed except in relationship to others.

[15:50] Kindness and meekness with others. And as I use that word meekness, I hope that's a word. I hope meekness is a word that makes you think of Jesus, right? And sometimes we tend to think of that word just as weakness or timidity.

And yet that is not at all what Jesus was, was it? But meekness is having great strength and power and yet using that power to lay down our lives to serve others.

And so Jesus had great strength and yet that great strength was often displayed in the way that he served others. And as impressive as the clearing of the temple was, as miraculous as that was, the greater strength was Jesus in the garden, wasn't it?

Saying, not my will, but yours be done. That is the sort of thing that we're invited into. And that's the sort of character quality that we are striving towards in the community of Jesus.

Are we displaying gentleness towards each other? And this is so powerful because especially in our reformed circle sometimes where we love theology, and I love theology too, theology is great. We could be really concerned with the content of what we're saying and forget that it also matters how we deal with each other.

[17:02] That gentleness is one of the character qualities of Jesus that points to the gospel itself, that points to a suffering Savior who lays down his life for his people. Are we cultivating gentleness?

And that's something that happens as we communicate with each other. Working with college students, I've learned that if I'm asking them about their relationships and who they've talked to recently, I can't just say, who have you talked to and leave it at that?

Because a lot of times what they mean is like, I texted someone or I DMed them or other forms of social media that I don't really understand. But these flat mediums where they're not actually getting in front of each other and looking each other in the eye and interacting with each other.

And one of the things I'll often remind them of is like, in order to love people well, you need to be in front of them. You need to be with them. You need to have opportunities to show them empathy and kindness.

And here we see Paul saying that this is one of the main ways that we honor the grace of Jesus in our lives, that we walk in a way that honors Jesus' grace to us.

[18:03] The third thing we see in this passage is patience, long-suffering. And hopefully for you, this is one of those things that we're called to that is a little bit of a warning flag, right?

This is not going to be easy. One of the things I'm convicted about is like, we can talk about these things in a way that sounds beautiful and sterile.

But how many times do we see in the New Testament these calls to bear the character of Christ and it involves patience? Something that implies this is going to be difficult.

This is going to be messy, right? There's no need to call for patience if everything is just easy once we all believe in Jesus. And remember, he's not principally speaking to people outside of community.

He's speaking to the Ephesian church about what it looks like to walk in honor of the sacrifice of Jesus. This is something for Christians to struggle with. It's going to be a battle for you and I as sinners who've been cleansed by the grace of Jesus or being called to put off the old man and put on the new, to live lives together and to go deep with each other.

[19:17] It's going to take patience. We should expect to fail. We should expect to sin against each other. We should expect to struggle and to need Jesus to bring patience into our lives.

Bearing with one another, putting up with messy people, right? This is one of the slogans of what it looks like to be a Christian in the New Testament.

This is one of the slogans of the New Testament church. How many churches do you know of that the vision statement is bearing with one another in love? You know, it kind of implies a rough go, doesn't it?

It's not exactly the vision statement that most of us want on our website for people to see here. And yet this is what Paul is saying is walking worthy of the calling that we've been giving. As he transitions now into the therefore of Jesus's grace, what does it look like to follow Jesus?

It looks like bearing with messy people because Jesus bears with us. I hope you see how all of these things are aimed at our life together.

[20:26] None of these things are things that we take into our closet by ourself for our own private spirituality. This necessitates us moving towards each other in the body of Jesus. A lot of times I feel like our Christmas gifts to our kids, I mean, it's like the cheapest, most insignificant thing that they love.

One of the things that sticks out to me is one year we really nailed it. It actually was kind of the thing we meant to be the main thing. And our kids were young enough that they didn't care that it was all like secondhand hand-me-down stuff. That's a beautiful stage of life.

If you have kids that are really young and they can't tell the difference between a new gift and like a used thing you got off Facebook Marketplace, praise God. We got a bunch of hand-me-down Nerf guns from someone in the church.

These kids like no longer were interested in Nerf guns. And then we bought those little like cardboard bricks that I feel like every church nursery in history had at one point. Does this church nursery still have those? Anybody?

Yes? No? They still exist. Apparently you can get them on Amazon. So like the night before we like put all of these, before folding these boxes and then like a light bulb went off.

[21:28] People actually had to fold these and put them together? Like I just thought they came out like these cardboard bricks. So we built a fort in our living room and we put all of the guns out. And like that first thing we did was just like a giant Nerf war.

Right? And it was so fun. My parents came and visited and like my dad, who's one of the most quiet people in the world, got into it. At one point the kids got tired and quit playing. And it was like just me and my wife and my father playing.

You know, it was beautiful. It was a great gift. I was like, man, this went great. But if our kids had gotten up that morning and they saw those gifts, and even though we had built a fort, it was clearly like, all right, it's on.

If they had looked at that and said, all right, the point of this gift is for us to go take these guns and put them in our room. And these are just for us. And we're not going to play together. Right? The entire point of that gift was we are going to play together as a family.

Right? So much of the gospel is look at all the riches and gifts and the treasures that are yours in Christ. By his spirit, you are co-heirs with Christ.

[22 : 33] You have a new identity. That the spirit is working to cultivate these gifts in you, is working to shape you into the image of Jesus. Those gifts are meant to be used in community.

They're meant to be used with the family of God. Right? And here, Paul is reminding us of that as he says that all of these things are things that we can only do with respect to each other.

And so there is kind of an ironic, like, yeah, living worthy of the gospel is beginning to live a life of holiness. But a lot of times we define holiness by individual, personal things.

And here, holiness is moving towards each other, isn't it? And beginning to display towards one another what Jesus, once again, has already displayed to us in the gospel.

In his patience, in his kindness, in his goodness, in his faithfulness, in his heart for his people. This passage encourages us to cultivate those things. What does it look like for us to show up in each other's lives and cultivate those things?

[23 : 37] What does it look like for those to be the things that someone who's visiting says, this church is about loving each other the way Jesus has loved them? This place is messy and they show patience with each other that is otherworldly.

And I'll just say that church should be hard. One of the things at CSU, it's a place that's a lot like Colorado.

It's a place of hobbies, right? Students come from all over the country because they can climb or bike or ski or do all these fun adventures, which I love to do with them, right?

And yet a lot of times communities form around those affinities, around those hobbies. And it could seem like really meaningful community, but a lot of times it's kind of like, you've maybe heard the joke about men going to play golf together, right?

And you're together for like three or four hours, get home. The wife is like, so how's so-and-so doing? You're like, well, he's kind of pulling it today. And it's like, well, how's their actual life?

[24 : 37] You're like, ah, he was hitting the ball pretty good, right? Like there's, it's just like we talked about golf and we played golf and we managed to not talk about one serious thing for like four hours.

It's like, how did you do that? A lot of times I think I notice at least on campus, it's easy for students to have what feels like community, but it's all just like, man, what did you ride today?

Like what climb did you do on your bike? What rock did you climb? And one of the things that's challenging about the body of Christ, right, is Jesus invites us into deeper community, doesn't he? We don't just stay at the surface level.

We don't just have a few common hobbies. He invites us into depth. And when we try and get into the messy places of life, that's where these things are needed.

And so I think sometimes it's easy to look at other things in the world and say, well, how come they have such good unity over in the biking club? How come this community over here has such unity?

And part of the reality of that is Jesus is calling us into a deeper community where we don't just stay at the surface level, but we move towards each other with depth.

[25 : 42] And that kind of leads into the second point I want us to see in this passage that we've already kind of hit on here, so we don't have to spend as much time on it, but why is our effort towards unity so important? Verses four to six, right?

When we look at verses four to six, we get this famous statement of one, things that are unified, right? There is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Part of the beauty of what Paul is doing here is that, one, he's calling us back to who and whose we are, isn't he? Right? He's reminding us of now, because of the grace of Jesus, who and whose we are.

After giving us this weighty exhortation, like I said, using a word like worthy, I think is meant to call a weightiness to us. It's meant to feel heavy. He's pointing us back to the gospel, and part of the beauty and the importance of our unity is it actually points to the gospel, doesn't it?

These things that unite us, these things that point to our one Lord, right, by the grace of Jesus, who brings us into relationship with our one Father, God and Father, who is over all.

[26 : 56] Our horizontal relationships in the body of Christ are pointing to this vertical unity we now have in Christ with this one Lord, this one faith, this one baptism.

And one of the things that's convicting about this is that part of what Paul is saying then is that if we let division creep into our community unchecked, without an effort towards reconciliation, without an effort towards forgiveness, without an effort to display the qualities that he's just called us to, that division can actually blur, hinder, hide, contradict the gospel itself.

Right? Someone could come in here and look around and see our division and our squabbling and our disunity over the mode of baptism and fail to see that we really believe there's one baptism.

There is one baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus that cleanses us and brings us into his people. And division can actually hide that.

Right? It's a moment where we have to recognize the way in which a failure to strive towards these things can actually hide the gospel, can contradict our message.

[28 : 15] For those of us who are parents, I don't know if you've ever had that surreal, wonderful moment, where you find yourself so frustrated with the disobedience that you find yourself screaming for all of the screaming to stop.

And in those moments, if Jesus is kind to us, although it hurts to recognize, right, we'll have these moments where you're just like, oh my goodness, I am part of the problem now. Like, I am just right there with them.

I'm a part of the chaos, right? And even though we want this thing, and I think one of the things that we have to recognize as Christians is that, like, our behavior matters.

And when we begin to act like our old selves, when we begin to live for the kingdom of self, it actually begins to contradict the very thing that we're trying to point to, aren't we?

We're just screaming for all the screaming to stop. And so we're called to engage each other with the beauty of Jesus and point the world to the beauty of Jesus as we move towards each other, even in conflict.

[29 : 18] And I hope one of the things you're encouraged by is that this is ultimately an invitation to strive in the spirit. Right? If you look at the passage, the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace, and notice that it's the spirit in verses 1 through 3 is kind of the connection to verses 4 through 6, the one body, the one spirit.

Right? Like, twice Paul points that out to us. He wants us to see that Jesus' spirit is at work in us and is cultivating these things so that we have the opportunity to keep moving towards each other, even when we fail.

Well, there's a biking community at Fort Collins. It's a lot like Colorado Springs, I think, which biking is really big. But there's this youth program called the Wolf Pack. Doesn't that sound cool?

Don't you wish you were part of a Wolf Pack? So we went to, like, the opening intro thing at a local bike shop, and we've got four kids. Our third boy, his name is Wit.

He is very, very cautious, which is funny because he'll do crazy things. But he's very cautious.

Sometimes we call him worst-case wit. And he walks into this bike shop to be introduced to the Wolf Pack, and they've got, like, one of those bike videos, kind of like a ski video playing where people are doing crazy stuff.

[30 : 31] And there was this Red Bull rider who did this loop ride. I think it was pretty recent. And it's, like, he went off this huge jump and then went in this giant tunnel and, like, rides the tunnel completely upside down.

And so they show this video, and they show, like, the leading up to him actually doing this stunt where they have a giant airbag so that he can attempt it and fall under the airbag, right?

And skiers will use this sometimes, too, to practice crazy tricks. And so Wit sees that, and he's like, Is that what I have to do as part of the Wolf Pack? And I was like, No, son, no one is going to force you to, like, do this crazy stunt.

But I was like, Wouldn't it be cool, though, if we had, like, one of those giant airbags and we could just set it up wherever we were riding and, like, All right, let's try this. And you get to fall into this.

And I think part of what Paul is reminding us of here as he reminds us of our one Lord, our one faith, and this unity that comes in the Spirit that we're trying to maintain, but it's also because of the one Spirit we have, right, is we have this incredible safety, this freedom to fail because of the faithfulness of Jesus.

That even as we shift now in Paul's letter to, like, how therefore should we live in light of the grace of Jesus, he still is rooting us in the great of Jesus that because of his Spirit, we can try and do these things, we can try and bear with one another in love, and when we fail, we can run to the throne of grace and be reminded that God's Spirit is at work.

[32 : 02] Because it's a passage where it's actually a good thing, I think, for us to get a little discouraged. It's a good thing for us to feel that weight. It's a good thing for us to look at that and say, man, even though I know the truth of the gospel, I'm so prone day in and day out to wake up and just think, what's going to serve Wes best today?

And to feel that conviction of, no, I'm meant to live for others because Jesus lived and died for me. And yet, when I feel that sense of that weight and that failure, it draws me back to the grace of Jesus.

And so I just love that so much of Paul's letter leading up to this point has been rooting us in the mystery of the gospel, in the grace of Jesus. And here, when he makes his shift to exhortation, he goes back to the gospel, doesn't he?

He wraps us in the gospel and encourages us to move towards each other to the glory of Jesus. And I hope you're encouraged by that, that God is at work in you by his Spirit to point others to Jesus by your efforts to love each other.

Jesus understood the weight of what he was saying when he told his disciples that the world would know that they were his followers by their love for one another because he knew his Spirit would be at work to cultivate that love and to cultivate his heart among us.

[33 : 19] And so as we end our time together in this passage, I hope you're encouraged. Like I said, I hope there's been moments throughout this time where you've maybe even thought, oh, like, that's what so-and-so has done for me lately. I've experienced this in the body of Jesus.

I've been encouraged in these ways. And then when we find those places where we're like, man, that's just not where I'm at right now or that hasn't been my story of late, that you'd be encouraged that this is not something that's supposed to happen overnight.

This is the journey of the Christian life. This is not just something we kind of work on for a season and we move on to other things. This is a foundational idea that we are constantly seeking to cultivate long-suffering and patience with one another, that humility is meant to be a character quality we strive towards as we seek to serve others all of our lives.

It's something for us to cultivate now. It's an invitation for us to give our children an image of the gospel in the way that we move towards each other in our marriages and forgive each other. It's an invitation for us as a community to point others to the love and grace of Jesus as we seek to show that same love and grace to one another.

And it's all possible because we serve one Lord, one Father, the ruler of all. May he be glorified in and through us. Let's pray. May he be glorified in and through us as we seek to give our children an image of the gospel than we would of our own strength, of our own accord.

[35 : 11] Father, as we think about showing grace to one another, you may have exposed certain things in our hearts, certain relationships, certain challenges and struggles right now.

Father, would you help us to see the grace of Jesus in those situations and in those places? Would you help us to feel the tenderness of our Savior?

And would you use that same tenderness to move us towards others in humility and tenderness and meekness and patience? Father, we lift these things up in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Amen.