

04-24-2022 Coggin sermon

Speaker1: [00:00:02] Amen. Thank you, Billy. Thank you, team. Thank you, Church. I'm excited to ask you to pull out a copy of God's Word, whichever one you have with you on your phone, your pad, or your personal copy. And let's open together to the Book of Philippians. I told you we were going to be in it last week, and here we are. The music made us ready for it. And so let's see what God has to say to you this morning. I love the book of Philippians. You'll hear me say this a lot. It's one of my favorite books. Here's what happens every time we come to God's Word, because it's worthy to be applied to all of God's people at all times. That book that I study, it's a great book because God's got a message for me and He's got a message for you. And the book of Philippians is no different. It's a book where Paul shows us that to know Christ, to be in Christ, He loves that term. Is that it means that we have the amazing option available to us. Now, listen to this. To choose because it's a choice. Joy. No matter what is going on around us. Really, the question that we're going to be able to ask at the end of this book and throughout the book is is Todd, are you waking up today? Making the choice because it's available to you in Christ to choose joy or not.

Speaker1: [00:01:26] That's really what it boils down to. And it's going to be on repeat. Lots of examples, lots of texts, but that's what it boils down to. This is the option that's available to us. Can you imagine that you, though the rest of the world, could be fallen apart? Could be living a life of true joy. I'm not talking about this fleeting happiness that can come from something in the world, like buying that new pretty thing that you like or that new toy that you've been wanting. That that happiness is it's fleeting. It's here today and gone tomorrow. And lots of things can control that. But nothing can take your joy in Christ if you don't let it. I'm talking about this deep, abiding contentment in him no matter what. It's available to you as a believer today, just like it has been to all believers throughout time. So I love this book all about joy. Another reason I love it is because it's so personal. Paul, look here. He has such affection for these these people in Philippi. Yet, though he knows they're doing good. Ten years after he established this church, though, he has a great affection for them. He knows they're not perfect. And so what does he do? He offers correction and encouragement. It reminded me this week of the ever growing affection that God has put in my heart for you. Coggan Avenue Baptist Church. It's it's like the scale is like this.

Speaker1: [00:02:54] I'm just I just love you. I love being here. It's exciting. It's fun. It's it's praiseworthy. But couldn't we admit, even in the midst of all the good things that God is doing, all of us, and sometime probably during the day, every day, at least every week, could could use some correction. I know I can. And even some encouragement. So that's what he's going to offer throughout the book. See, you're always or you need to always be ready to grow no matter how good the situation is. And a couple of things that Paul is going to grow us in through his spirit, if we will allow it, is to grow number one and our knowledge of Christ. Notice I didn't say our knowledge about Christ. We'll clarify that later. And number two, that we can grow and discovering how real joy is available to us despite life's circumstances. But before we jump into that message that's going to consume us for many weeks, let's kind of lay the foundation of the book. So some of you, can I call you Bible nerds if you're out there? I'm a Bible nerd. Is that okay? That's okay. Some of you baba nerds are going to love this text today because we're going to be we're going to be doing that work of laying the background, giving you some background information, some contextual information. And it's it's a lot of fun for me.

Speaker1: [00:04:06] The church began you can read about it this week on your own and Chapter 16. Most scholars believe that Paul established this church and somewhere between 49 and 52 ad he was on a second missionary journey and he had some friends with him. One of them's name was Timothy. Another's name was Silas. And most people believe that Luke was him with him as well. After this, departing from John Mark, which he also had to leave his dearly beloved brother Barnabas behind, they they made a separation after that and after God spoke a special message to Paul in a dream, he set sail for the place called Macedonia. You can just call it Europe. And he landed. And what you now know is modern day Greece in the city of Philippi, you can still visit that on a Greek tour today. It was a fantastic city, the center of so much commerce. But what they didn't realize that they were also going to be a key factor not only in the kingdom of Rome, but praise the Lord, like Brownwood, Texas, also for the Kingdom of God. Paul, when he arrives here, he does what he's what he always did. He he looked for a synagogue. Now, synagogue could be in a city if they could find ten count on one, two hands. Right. Ten Jewish men that were willing to gather together. Paul searches for the synagogue, and guess what? He finds he doesn't find one.

Speaker1: [00:05:22] That. That gives you a lot of context about the book right there, doesn't it? There's not a lot of Yahweh followers here. It's a largely gentile city. Now, ten years later, when he writes this later letter, there's a mixed bag of Jewish and non-Jewish believers. But when he established the church, it was almost all pagan. And so there's a large majority of Gentiles that we need to take into account. And it makes a lot of sense that the things that they were struggling with. But after he couldn't find a synagogue, where does Paul head? He heads to the river. And I think it's very interesting, though, he was looking to share the gospel with other men. He found a woman. By the river. Whose name was Lydia. And after, as it says in Acts 16:14, after the Lord opened her heart, I had to stop right there this week. I was like, That's a good point. God. After the Lord opened her heart, she came the faith in Jesus Christ. Why do I stop there? Because it's Paul that did the sharing, but it was God that did the change. Some of somebody needs to hear that today because you were out there pounding the streets, sharing the gospel and your school, sharing the gospel and your workplace, and you're like, What am I doing? Nobody's coming to know Jesus is their personal Lord and Savior. I'm a failure. No, you're not.

Speaker1: [00:06:31] You're only failing if you're not sharing if you're sharing your winning because the responsibility to convert the soul is not up to you. That's God. In fact, he does through his spirit, the word and the change. And he did it in Lydia. But also interesting note, and I think it's worthy because of the gender confusion and our society today that the first convert was a woman. She had a key influential position in the church as it started. Why do I take special note of that? Because I think we need to in our society because the Bible makes special note of it. Lydia had influence. Lydia had a position. She had a ministry in the church. And we need to hear that today, because we've done all kinds of things wrong with women in the past. And I'm not a woman. I'm just telling you, we've messed some stuff up. And sometimes we've asked women to be in roles that God hasn't asked him to be in. And other times we fall into the oppression of women. Both those things are wrong. So I want you to know at Cogan Avenue Baptist Church, we believe what I think the Bible clearly says, and we just got to get to it that men and women are equal before God in worth. But there are different roles for men and women in the home and in the church. Instead of fighting that we should celebrate that because that's God's plan.

Speaker1: [00:07:43] And just like marriage, God's plan is beautiful because God is beautiful. God's plan is good because he is good. And we can acknowledge the the influence of Lydia here, because it's worthy of acknowledging and we have in the past we do today. And we will continue to have the influence of women in the ministry at Coggin after he leads Lydia to Faith, the church started and so he goes throughout the city and some other things are interesting that happened. He gets put in jail. Isn't that interesting? He's out there ministering in the city. He comes upon this young girl who is possessed by a demon. This isn't common. Just put yourself in the story if it's lost its pizzazz for you this morning, you walking through the city, you see a demon possessed girl. That's kind of freaky. We make movies about that today. It's not common. One of the things that Demon allowed her to do was to tell the future. And she had a handler that would make money off of her ability to tell the future. It was wicked. Paul cast the demon out of this girl. That scene is awesome. The handler of the girl didn't like it, and so it earned Paul and Silas a beating. This is how the church began in Philippi. A beating. And they got put in jail. And I love that the point of this whole book about joy is illustrated in its foundation.

Speaker1: [00:08:59] It was about midnight. Do you remember when Paul and Silas were in jail that they're probably still bleeding, that they start choosing joy? I love it. I just love it. And they start singing praises to God for giving them an opportunity and the ability to suffer for the sake of the gospel. And in that moment, an earthquake came. The chains on their hand and their feet. They fall off the doors of the gates, to the jail. They fling open and God orchestrated all of that. Think about it. Orchestrated all of that. Just for one gospel presentation. The jailer wakes up, he sees the gates open. He's like, I'm done. They're going to kill me. All these prisoners are gone. But guess who's still sitting in jail? Paul and Silas. Now think, what would you have done if you were in chains and you got put in jail for the wrong reason and all of a sudden the doors are open? I know what you're going to do like me. I'm out of here, not them. They. They could feel that God wanted them to stay. The jailer wakes up and he's about to kill himself because he failed. And Paul says No. And from that moment he shares the gospel. After God opened the jailers heart, the jailer comes to no faith, the second believer and the church that was established in Philippi. And then he goes home, follows the jailer home, leads his whole family to faith.

Speaker1: [00:10:09] This is how the church began. No wonder Paul has an affection for the church in Philippi and he maintains his affection for them. And guess what? They maintain their affection for him. He doesn't even use the word apostle. Usually when Paul writes the letter, he says, I'm Paul the apostle. I don't he doesn't say it like me, like with arrogance, but just to establish apostolic authority. Why doesn't he do that here? Because they already know him, love him and trust him. So instead he uses the term looking for do loss or servant. Paul loved this church and they loved him. Philip II. It will learn more about it. It was a fantastic city. Lots of commerce. A key location is probably one of the reasons God Paul there. But remember, where's Paul writing this letter from? He established the church ten years earlier. Ten years later, he's kind of got into some trouble. Because he just keeps sharing the gospel. Listen, if you're going to get in trouble, get in trouble for sharing the gospel. That's all right. He's in jail. In a city called Rome and is awaiting a trial to determine whether he will live or die. And he writes this letter to his friends. And his friends didn't abandon him. Church That's a good message on friendship. Ten years had passed. They could have forgotten him. They couldn't keep up on Facebook. There is no Instagram or Twitter.

Speaker1: [00:11:30] They had to either write each other or see each other face to face, and they never lost contact with him. In fact, they sent a man named Pepper Titus. Once they found out that he was in prison in Rome, they sent a hepatitis to him to encourage him and to take care of him physically. And it was that reason that Paul wrote this letter after the visit where Hepatitis was sharing some things that were going on. This visit was fantastic for him, and it further solidified his love for this church. Paul was not a prideful leader to them. As he describes himself here. He was just a faithful servant. When I read this book, I get so excited because I think though it's been 2000 years later and our societies are totally different, the context and the situation was kind of similar. Because I think they lived in a jaded world. I believe, if you haven't noticed, we live in a jaded world. But despite the fact that they live in a jaded world, this church grew in their boldness and faithfulness. And you know what? I've seen us do the same. So there's lots of compliments in this letter that I think I'll be able to share and encourage you with as well. But he knew they weren't perfect. So he writes the book, number one, that helped them to know Christ more and to to choose joy in their situations.

Speaker1: [00:12:46] The word joy is used 14 times in this book. And remember, Paul is writing about it from where I'm going to keep reminding you of this, because it's huge. On vacation in Maui. All right. Living his best life. No. He's writing it from prison. So every joy packed sentence that you write, just don't forget that he was likely in chains, likely starving and hungry, and it didn't matter because Jesus, as we sing about today, was worthy and he was enough for Paul, and he also was enough for the Philippians church. He writes to his friends, you know that look at verses one and two. You can just see the affection dripping from his words. He says, I write this, Paul and Timothy is born servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus. That word in Christ. Paul uses it that term 50 times in his letters, who are in Philippi. That's why, you know, it's the church in Philippi, including overseers and deacons. And he and he says a very common greeting that I'm not going to run over because it's also powerful, he says. Grace and peace to you from God, our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. There's lots of things here, number one. Paul tells you that he's not alone in prison. Who's with him either part time visiting him or maybe right there on the floor with him. Timothy The church knew Timothy because ten years earlier Paul brought Timothy with him.

Speaker1: [00:14:07] Next, he tells us his audience, the Saints who were in Christ in the city of Philippi. Who is that? Everybody. That means it applies to everybody that's here today. You're in Christ because you're a part of his body and you're a part of his global plan of redemption. It's a very special place to be. So he's writing to you and to me. Finally, he gives his standard ingredient of grace and peace. C Grace. Let's not just run past that. Grace is what you need. And I promise you, peace is what you want. Grace is God's favor shown to you not because you earned it. It's technically unearned or unmerited favor. Christ earned it for you. And if you have grace, then also peace and joy is accessible to you. As we continue these introductory verses all the way through verse 11, Paul is going to be saying this beautiful prayer. But I want you to notice Paul is illustrating in his prayer some marks of a faithful follower that he wants you to emulate. In fact, you're going to need to know these verses because they're going to be kind of like presuppositions that are better. Help you understand, according to Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the conclusions that Paul is making about joy later in the book. So if you have a friend or a family member that misses these first 11 verses, these introductory verses, have them go back and study it or listen to the message because they set up in fact, I believe they open up and unlock the rest of the book.

Speaker1: [00:15:31] God wants you to be a faithful follower so that you have access to the joy that awaits you. Would you stand with me now that we've done the introduction and let's just read it together, starting in verse three of Philippians chapter one. Listen and notice his affection. He says, 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 and to now meaning these last ten years, for I am confident of this very thing that he 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 all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this I pray. That your love? May abound. Still more and more in real knowledge and discernment that you may approve the things that are excellent or best in order to be sincere and blameless and to the day of Christ, haven't been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and the praise of God.

Speaker1: [00:16:52] This is His Word. Please be seated. And it's in this word that I see some marks of a faithful follower that I want to stimulate. The first two marks are this I believe, a faithful follower, which is what you want to be right is marked by selflessness. And Gospel support. Paul here is is telling them he prays and then he prays for them. And we're going to talk about his example of intercessory prayer in just a moment. But I want you to look at his heart and pray. Did you know that you can learn a lot about your heart from your prayer life? What do you learn about Paul's heart that we can emulate here? You learn that he was selfless and not selfish. His prayer was consumed not with a bunch of me theology and a bunch of me prayers. It was a lot of God. You receive the glory and I want to pray for others. I want you to notice the selflessness in Paul's prayer and take an opportunity to evaluate your heart based on your prayer life. Now, that's real, isn't it? Why is that a good test? Because it's probably one of, if not the most intimate things that you do. Your prayer. Life is who you are. Your lack of prayer life. And I would even say the content of your prayer reveals a lot about you.

Speaker1: [00:18:17] Just do the percentages with me not to feel guilty, but to just see what the reality is. What percentage of your prayer life do you spend praying for yourself as compared to what percentage of your prayer life do you spend praying to God for His glory with gratitude and for others? That's everything else. Would you say that? I spent

about 90% of my prayer praying for me and about 10% praying for others. And that would just compare that against the mark of this faithful follower named Paul. I would make the contention maybe in Paul as I study him, I don't know the exact percentage, but probably somewhere like 90% of his prayer was just exaltation and praise and Thanksgiving and intercessory prayer, meaning things outside of himself. And there was a small amount of times that he asked for prayer for himself. Francis Chan in his book Crazy Love said, Have you ever noticed how much of our prayer life consists of asking God for stuff that we want? I don't think it should be that way. Church. From the example of Paul, he wasn't just about himself. He was about others. And he shows that in his prayer. He prayed for them because he loved them. He truly wanted to see God glorified. That was his heart. And He truly wanted to see these believers grow in their faith. I want the same for you, and I pray you want the same for others.

Speaker1: [00:19:42] Now to some questions about your prayer life, if that's okay. If you would, give me the liberty.

[00:19:48] Do you pray? If you say, pastor, I don't really pray. Why? Could it just be evidence of a lack of faith? I'm not going to ask you to stand up and own it in front of everybody, but you need to stand up in your heart known in front of God. And that's true. Let it be true. Confess Christ as Lord today. However, saying, no, no, I am a I'm a believer. I just not real active in my prayer life. Could I do all but get on my knees and plead with you to establish an active prayer life? Because this was going to unlock not only the joy in this book. That's why you got to have these verses first. But unlock the power of God and the contentment that you're chasing. Prayer is like air to the believer. Like water. You have to have it. And can we go a little deeper? What is the content of your prayer life? What's your motivation? Are you motivated by love for self or by love for others? Just let the answer be what it's going to be and then let God direct you where He wants you to be.

[00:20:59] Paul's prayer in these verses was full of selflessness, gratitude and intercession. Both of these things are selfless.

Speaker1: [00:21:06] They're not about him. They're about others and about God. Paul was not chiefly concerned with himself, but with others. But he also had something that's amazing. He also had joy. So can I make this point of contention? My contention

is this In the book of Philippians and in your own life, joy is a natural byproduct of selflessness that comes from your relationship with Jesus. Sit one more time because that's huge. Joy is a natural byproduct of your selflessness that comes from your relationship with Jesus. That's just what I see in Paul's life, and I want to see it more in me. He couldn't help but be full of gratitude. I mean, these people look what he says. And versus three and four and five. They literally probably saved his life 2000 years ago. When you went to jail, it wasn't, you know, three hot meals and a roof over your head if people didn't bring you food. Hard for you to survive. It wasn't the jailers responsibility to feed you. It was those who loved you, whose responsibility to feed you. And the Philippine church loved Paul. So it just reflects that love and gratitude to God. He says, I think, my God for you, when I pray for you, I'm always offering prayer for you with joy. Why? Because you participated with me in the Gospel. Praise God for you from this day into ten years ago. Look what it says in verse seven.

Speaker1: [00:22:28] It's it's only right for me to be praising God and thanking him for you. Why? Because I have you in my heart. Because in my imprisonment and the defense and the confirmation of the gospel, you were there with me. More importantly, they were there with Christ. So. So can you not see the selflessness of Paul's prayer? I hope that you do. I hope you emulate it. But if you need more examples, look at the Philippine church because they partnered with him. Guess what? They also were. They were also selfless in their participation with Paul in the gospel work that he did. They participated both physically and spiritually. Paul was appreciative spiritually because they he says, here you defend the gospel with me. You confirm the gospel with me? That term confirmation here just means to validate and clarify the gospel. And it says you've been doing it again and again and again for ten years, and when necessary, you defend it with me. Oh, they supported the gospel work spiritually, but they also supported it physically. They gave money to Paul. God has always used the funds that He has loaned to us to advance the ministry. They were faithful and sacrificial, giving to the poor. They sent a hepatitis to him and he probably brought him food and other needed supplies. Because of what Paul saw in them spiritually. And physically and supporting his gospel work. You know, he says he says, I see that in you.

Speaker1: [00:23:59] I see God working in you. And this was his prayer. Look at verse six. I'm confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it and to the day of a Christ Jesus. See what Paul is doing here. He's doing what I wonder could be

done in your life. Paul based his future evaluation of this church based on their past performance, and he does it with confidence. Is there evidence in your life that God is at work? Is there evidence in your life today that God is at work? Do you support the Gospel? Spiritually. And physically and selflessly. Let's dove in a little bit deeper. When you see people ridicule Christ in front of you at school or at work, when you know people who ridicule the gospel, do you come to the defense of your savior? He doesn't need it. But do you? Do you stand up for the gospel message when you see somebody in your life and your family and your community that you know is desperate for the gospel? Do you step up and share it with them? Do you physically go and share the gospel when you're called? Do you physically give to Gospel Ministry when you're led to? Are you growing in your hatred of sin? Are you growing in your desire to pursue the things of God? Do you find yourself praising God and thanking God more and more? The older you get.

Speaker1: [00:25:41] Are you growing in your compassion towards others? If so, be assured. And I see it too, that God is at work in you. And here's my prayer for you this week. That he would bring that work to perfection or completion until God takes you home or until Jesus Christ comes back again. Paul was a believer who was marked by selflessness and gospel support. So were the Philippians and the church that was established there. You know, it's awesome for me. Is that already see these things in you? I just couldn't help but share that with you this morning. I already see a passion for the gospel. You can see it in those who lead us in worship, and I can see it in you when I interact with you and I can see it in how you support things. I can see it when you give financially. And I can see it when you go. I already see selflessness in you. I saw it last week. Do you have any idea what joy it brings a pastor to see? This room full service after service after service after Easter weekend. It's hard for me to explain how much joy I feel and felt last week, how much joy I feel now. But then I think. Praise God for you. You were the ones in the parking lot. You are the ones at the door. You were the ones walking in telling people to scoot in.

Speaker1: [00:27:06] You are the ones in the nursery. You are the ones that are out there beating the streets, inviting your friends and your neighbors to church. I see the good work in you. Oh, God. Make. May he continue it. So Jesus takes you home or comes back again. But this week I would rather serve here. With these people because of the heart that I already see than anywhere else on the planet. Because of the heart

that I see in you. There is exciting times ahead. Church Let us continue to be selfless. Let us continue to support the Gospel Ministry. And I promise you, more people will come to faith. And your life will be seen as a follower of Christ by the world. Enjoy. It's waiting for you. It's already here. Let's look at the last mark of a follower that I see here. There's others we're going to get into more. But look at versus nine through 11. It's also selfless, but I think a huge mark of a follower of Christ is not just that they have a prayer life, but that they have a prayer life that is filled with praying for others, meaning intercessory prayer. This is what Paul shows here. He prays for them often. If you don't get that, you're missing it. He prays for them often and he prays for them specifically. What is your intercessory prayer look like? What is your life of intercessory prayer look like? I hope it looks something like this.

Speaker1: [00:28:33] And if you walked in here today and you say, You know what? I kind of need a fresh guide for intercessory prayer. I've kind of been just saying the same things over my family and over my children for years. I'm kind of looking for something new. You showed up on the right Sunday. This is a fantastic guide for intercessory prayer for anybody in your life, especially for a believer. Let's dove into whether verse nine he says, I pray that your love may abound more and more in real knowledge and discernment. Pause. What kind of knowledge is Paul praying over this church? Like factual knowledge about, like, science, math. Or maybe like he's praying for things to be revealed to them about Jesus? No, I think the knowledge that he's talking about here is just knowledge of him. Not about him. Not just where he lived. And how tall was Jesus? I don't know. Right. How old was Jesus when he went to ministry? How old? Those are good facts. But now Paul is talking about an intimate, personal knowledge that can only come through faith and through spending time with him. This kind of knowledge is is beautiful. And it's the same kind of knowledge. I pray for you. Say, Well, how do you know that the word is just knowledge? How do you know it's knowledge of Christ, intimacy with Christ? Because that's exactly what Paul says in Philippians three eight.

Speaker1: [00:30:00] You listen to this and you tell me what kind of knowledge he's talking about. He says, I count all things to be a loss in view of the surpassing value. Meaning number one priority for me. Of what? Of knowing Christ, Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish, pure trash, so that I might know Christ, the knowledge is praying for is the knowledge of intimacy with Christ that comes from spending time with him. But then he also prays for application of

that knowledge in their everyday life and how they live. He calls it discernment. It's better to describe this not as how to live for Christ. We use that term and I'm not mad at it, but let me give you a better idea. To let Christ live through you. What a fantastic prayer. Imagine if we would grow in our knowledge of Christ and discern His will in our lives as a collective group. How much better would our lives be? Answers a lot better. Why did he play these things? Look at verse ten so that you may approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. Jesus. Pastor, is he talking about Christian perfection? No. One. That's not possible, though. We should strive for it and it's not talking about idolizing excellence.

Speaker1: [00:31:18] He is praying for them to live their best life, the most excellent life that is sincere, not fake, that is consistent, not flaky, a life that is blameless so others can see Christ in you. That's exactly what it says in verse 11. This prayer is not just about people living for Christ through self effort. This prayer is about letting Christ live through. You see, when Christ lives through you and you surrender to His power in your life, that life that you live will be excellent. Guaranteed. Verse 11. Haven't been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and the praise of God. The purpose of this prayer is really the purpose of all of our lives. It's mentioned in verse 11 so that people can see your fruit. What's fruit good for? When you see a fruit tree, let's say it's a pear tree. And you see the pear on that tree. Is that pear mint for that tree or is it meant for something else? The fruits meant for others. For the benefit of others. People should see your life and see the fruit of Christ and it should be of benefit to them. Why is it a benefit to them? It tells you in verse 11 so that they to like you, bring praise and glory to God. Think about that life of righteousness that you live, that fruit that you produce, that not only you bring praise and glory to God, but you live your life in such a way that when people evaluate you and they watch you, it causes them to also praise God and bring glory to His name.

Speaker1: [00:32:55] This is inspired your. All of God's word is inspired, and therefore I would call it maybe one of the most perfect intercessory prayers that you can pray. Memorize these verses, at least get the concept down and then pray these verses over people in your life. In fact, I'm going to give you an opportunity to do that at the end of the service, but let's kind of review the marks of a faithful follower. Is your my is your life marked by selflessness? Indeed. And in prayer. What a challenge. Is your life marked by gospel support in both word and deed? Do you participate? In Gospel work spiritually

through sharing and defending his message for his glory. Do you support the gospel physically? By giving and going when lead. If not, I pray that in a moment you would pray this prayer over yourself and versus nine through 11 before you pray it for anybody else, but then pray it for them as well. But for some of you here today in that prayer time. You need to surrender to the Gospel for the first time. See, the reason that these words are so powerful from Paul and his prayer is because that power was released to him.

Speaker1: [00:34:18] Through the gospel. What did the gospel do for Paul? Everything. It's the same thing it does for you and me. Paul, before you knew Christ was what he was. Hopeless and helpless. He was dead in his trespasses and sins is what it says in Ephesians. He, like you, was desperate, in need of forgiveness. But he couldn't forgive himself. That's why Christ came. That's why we built a cross that was just sitting there last week. That's why we celebrate the resurrection. He came to live that life on your behalf, that you couldn't live because he loves you. So that he could be beaten and tortured and crucified and die as your substitute in your place. He was buried in. Three days later, he rose from the dead. So you could repent and believe. Paul knew that. That's what gives these words power. If you don't know that and this prayer time that I'm about to offer to you in a few moments of silence, you confess Christ as Lord. Plead with Him for forgiveness of your sins. Praise Him for dying in your place and risen from the dead. But for everybody else. Can we just take a moment? And pray versus nine through 11 over somebody in our life. Would you do that with me? Just. Just right now. Vow your head. Close your eyes. You. You have a copy of God's Word. You start here in verse nine and pray this over somebody.

Speaker1: [00:35:45] That their love may be abounding still more and more with real knowledge and discernment, that they may approve the things that are excellent in order to be blameless until the day of Christ Jesus having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and the praise of God. Let's pray that over someone together. Oh, God. May we be marked? By selflessness. May we've been marked by. Gospel, passion and participation. Financially and physically and spiritually. Any other way you call us to. And got one more time, I'd like to just let us ask you to let us be marked by intercessory prayer. And I'd like to pray this prayer over my over these people. Lord, hear my prayer. I pray that our love together would abound more and more in real knowledge of you and discernment of you living

through us, Lord, that we may be able to prove through your guidance the things that are excellent and good in order to be sincere and not fake and and blameless, not perfect because of your blameless illness. They would see that in us to point them to Jesus. God haven't been filled with this fruit of righteousness that comes through you, Jesus Christ, and all of it. God through this church body would be in us and for others, watching us for Your glory. And your praise. Oh, Lord. Hear our prayer. Work among us and the blessed name of Jesus Christ, the church family said. Amen.