

10-18-26 Message

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SPEAKERS

Pastor Dow Boyer

Let's go to the Lord in prayer, Heavenly Father. We thank you for this day, Lord. We thank you for the opportunity to come and to share your word, Lord, rightly divided. And I pray that it would edify the saints today. I pray, Lord, as we look one more week at the Book of Philemon and we look at it from Paul's perspective today, Lord, that it would be something that we go and we'd study for ourselves, and and that we would try to make application where possible, Lord. But we would understand what's being said, Lord, and what to do with what's being said. So, Lord, we just thank you so much for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, and that He was buried and three days three days later rose again, Lord, from the dead, Lord, and that His precious blood, when He shelshed away all of our sins, and all we have to do is receive that gift today. And Lord, I pray that everyone in here has done that. And if not, today would be the day. And Lord, we promise to give you all the honor and glory in Jesus' name. Amen. All right, so we've been kind of working through this really large book in the Bible called Philemon. Now, has everybody had a chance to read through the whole book yet? I mean, you guys are doing great, I'm sure. But you think, why spend three weeks talking about this? I think there's a lot of good stuff, kind of in here. I think it gets overlooked a lot. I think it's interesting that Richard Jordan believes it should be one of the pastoral epistles. You know, and so I think that a lot of times you go from something that he believes should be one of the pastoral epistles to something that just gets glossed over a lot, and I think that's why we want to spend a little bit of time talking about this. It certainly changes the perspective if it is a pastoral epistle, but I think it also helps understanding the book of Colossians. So week one, we kind of talked about this idea of forgiveness means to pardon, to remit as an offense or debt, to overlook an offense, treat the offender as not guilty, since forgiveness is a interwoven theme throughout this little epistle, as well as the word love, which is going to be something we talk about here today. And we talked about in week one, that there are there are some things like if you are in Philemon's position, right? Can can you forgive for Christ's sake? Is this something small that can lover can love cover it? Are we giving a place to the devil by not forgiving? Are we creating a root of bitterness by not forgiving, are we pursuing peace by not forgiving? Things that we should be doing, and are we leaving vengeance with God, or are we enacting vengeance on our own? In week two, we talked about from Onesimus's point of view, the one who had done the wrong, right? And with him, you know, we talked about the fact that he ran, but then he got saved, and now the process was for him to come back. And some of those conversations that that must have happened while he while Paul's in prison. Here's Onesimus, and here Paul has a relationship with Philemon. He knows one of the parties in this transaction. Here Onesimus gets saved, and Onesimus starts growing in the Lord, he becomes profitable so much that Paul says, "I would have retained him. But he knew that it was time for him to go back after a season.

And so last week we talked about Onesimus being one that has to go back. But imagine these conversations. Mark is mentioned in this list. Demas is mentioned in this list. Like these other people that probably could have drawn on their experiences to help young Onesimus to be able to understand that hey, even though you've lived unprofitably, now that you are in Christ, you are profitable, right? So that was a real theme of last week, hopefully, it was an encouragement to a lot of you. So now, the Apostle Paul. What role is he playing? This seems like a personal letter, not so much to a church. It's included here in Scripture. There was no accident in that. And yet, Paul, we're going to see how did he handle this situation because here he receives Onesimus and, and to be honest with you, the convenient thing would have been to not get involved, right? Raise up Onesimus, keep him with him, right? This way, it's more convenient for Onesimus. It's more convenient for Philemon, who is doing the work in Colossae and is moving forward, but the convenient thing isn't always the best thing, and so that's kind of where Paul is in this. I mean, he's in the middle of this. Like, what do I do with this? Paul wasn't under the law. There wasn't a requirement for what Paul was about to do. The motivation was love, and the motivation was the body of Christ, but it was not the law that drove him to do this. Now, what's interesting is we talked about a couple of these things week one, but I'm going to bring these back right here. But in Philemon one five, it says, Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints. So here, Paul, when he's starting out, his part in this is reminding Philemon, "Hey, we've heard of your love, we've heard of your faith, and how you are and how you act with the saints. In verse six, he says that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. And so, when you look at this word communication, it's not just verbal that he's talking about here, it gives the idea of sharing or joint partnership, right? So it's this idea of sharing of thy faith. You may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus, which the second part of that is effectual, and that's interesting because Scripture is going to define what this word really means for us, but it's really dealing with the working inside of you and not just head knowledge. And this is a real challenging thing, I think, for a lot of people. I think a lot of people get to the point of knowing a lot of things about the Bible, knowing a lot of doctrine about the Bible, but knowing is just part of it. Head knowledge is just part of it, right? I mean, head knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing you don't put a tomato in a fruit salad. Am I right? So, so just because I know something, right? But anyway, all seriousness aside, it's this really is about him saying, "You know these things, right? He says, "If we look at this verse again, that the sharing, if you will, the communication of thy faith may become effectual, dealing with working in the inside, creating purpose in the inside by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. So, in First Thessalonians 2:13, we see for this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God, which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth. The word of God, which here's going to help us define it, effectually worketh also in you that believe. It's this inner working that's being talked about here to create purpose, right? So it's like even with the idea of our giving, since we don't tithe today, right? We're not under the law, but as every man hath purposed in his heart, he gives cheerfully. It's because what's going on on the inside, not just the head knowledge of the forced law, the forced commandment, right? But it's that generosity of the giver as he purposes in his heart, and so this is talking about here. He says that it may become effectual, like working inside you by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you, in Christ Jesus. This is important. He starts out by talking about love and faith toward other people, and that really is the difference here. You're talking about a biblical definition of love works towards other people. It's not selfish. You can even go through and in several places in Scripture, we'll look at some of these here today. We think about one place in First Corinthians 13 that's specifically going to talk about charity when you're talking about words that are linked kind of to this. But charity, even in First Corinthians 13 two, it says, "Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries And all knowledge, all knowledge, right? And though I have all faith that so I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. Just knowing, being filled with head knowledge, being filled with every chart, but then not having charity, or not putting it

into practice, what doth it profit? Now, what's interesting is the very end of First Corinthians chapter 12, last verse. He says there is a more excellent way, and he's talking about charity. That's leading right into chapter 13. He says in First Corinthians eight one, knowledge puffeth up, but we know it's charity that edifieth. So the link in this part, Paul's response here, is appealing to not only Paul's. Love for Philemon, Paul's love for Onesimus, but but why for love's sake, Philemon needs to forgive Onesimus, and you see the difference there, right? When you're reading the Lord's Prayer, and you get and you're trying to live under that, your pressure to forgive is what the law and fear that God will not forgive you. That is not what's being discussed here, because we are not under the law in this dispensation of grace. Right mystery is being revealed from the Apostle Paul to the body of Christ. The instructions are being given, right? So some of these things just like, well, this same theme is here, and the same theme's over here, but the motivation may be 100% different, and more often than not is. I think it's important for you to be able to understand that we're not threatened that God will not forgive us if we don't forgive others, God's not holding above you His forgiveness based on how we forgive others. But there still is what is the most beneficial thing to the body of Christ? Different motivation altogether. But I think for a lot of us today, it's like our brains are filled with so much scripture, but our bodies are holding picket signs and have been on strike permanently. It's one thing to know it, but is it the doctrine working in your heart and producing anything in your life to how you deal with other people, it should. And I think we're going to see in Paul here. You're going to see that that response should be producing something in you. It should be purposing something inside of you, as far as working with other people, I think that's probably one of the main reasons why Richard Jordan thinks this is a pastoral epistle. He thinks this is a pastoral issue. I mean, here here is the being directed to the Philemon, who is the the pastor essentially of Coloss. The church is in his house, right? So I think that it would make some sense that you could lump it into that. Now you notice that he was talking in this verse when he was talking about the effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. I think that's an important phrase for each and every person in here. Every good thing in us is because we are in Christ Jesus, not because we somehow conjured up enough morality, but in Christ Jesus. And here's why I think this is interesting. Because as he's presenting Onesimus and sending him back, he's now presenting an Onesimus who is in Christ, right? And you're like, how did he get in Christ? Maybe this is new to you. Maybe you've never heard this before. Maybe maybe you've not understood this phrase. Maybe you've got hung up in a bunch of terminology that gets thrown around right from a lot of denominations. It's really simple. One is only in Christ when they place their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the shed blood of Jesus to wash away their sins and His raising again from the grave three days later, that is being presented to you as a gift that you receive. The moment you receive it, you are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. You are taken out of Adam and you are placed into Christ by spiritual baptism. This is what had happened to Onesimus; he was now in Christ. He was part of the body of Christ. So Onesimus wasn't a sum of his past mistakes. His identity now was the same as Philemon's, the same as Paul's. It took reconciliation from someone who was far from God being brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ, and so the one thing you do kind of see here is you see some symbolism, I believe, in the Book of Philemon of what Christ did on the cross for us as well. You know, we know there's only one mediator, but Paul, in a way, plays this role as mediator. I mean, there are times where he's saying, "Put this on my account. All of our sins were put to Jesus's account, and it was taken somebody who was estranged and who was far away and was putting them now in a right relationship, which that's what the work of the cross did. It puts us in a right relationship with God by the finished work of Jesus Christ. So you see some of those parallels in there. But here's the thing: Philemon wasn't under the law. Paul didn't command him. That's not what's happening in this. And instead of doing the easy thing, he steps in and beseeches Philemon for love's sake. So Philemon one nine says, "Yet for love's sake, he didn't say, "For yet the law doth say, yet for love's sake, I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. It's interesting that he calls himself the aged at this point, I think a lot of people think that's because Onesimus was a young man at this point, and that Philemon or was younger than Paul in a way, and

he was showing kind of wisdom at this point as well. He's saying Paul the age now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Let's focus on this love's sake for just a moment, right in Romans 12:10, Paul says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love and honor, preferring one another. And this is tough. This is this is one of those things that you can get it in your head, but it's not so easy to do. It's not easy to prefer somebody over yourself when they've hurt you, when maybe you you don't like the way they talk, maybe you you don't like maybe even the way they smell. I mean, I'm I'm being real. We we come up with every reason our mind, right, or the or the shows that they like, or the cars that they drive, or maybe they're a little too Western for you with the cowboy boots, right? Whatever it is, right? There's so all these things in our mind. It's just like it's really hard for me to prefer you over myself, and maybe it's stuff that you know about that person, and you can't get that out of your head, maybe it wasn't even done to you, but you know they did it. That's a hard thing preferring one over another. But it's interesting. He says, "Brotherly love in honor, preferring one another. That would be like for love's sake, to prefer one another, Galatians 5:13 and 14. For brethren, you have been called unto liberty. Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, just because you're not under the law, right? But he says, but by love serve one another. He says, for all the law is fulfilled in one word. Even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. He also says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. In verse two of chapter six, we're told in Second Corinthians five verses 14 and 15, the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. Our motivation for serving the Lord today in this dispensation of grace is the love of Him and for what He's done. Our motivation for forgiving other people is for love's sake. Is it making sense at all? Now, Titus 2:10. This is I talked at the very beginning when I think probably when I was praying about the doctrine and how important the doctrine is. Titus 2:10 says not purloining but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Part of this forgiveness for love's sake, that's been effectually working on the inside, purposed in our heart, adorns the doctrine of grace. Right, putting on the doctrine of grace, it gives the idea of the doctrine should drive our behavior, just as the wrong doctrine really is driven by the wrong motivation, right? It leads to the wrong motivation, which leads to actions that are made, actions that are done, and puts people back under a different dispensation. Usually, under the law is what's being dealt with there. So this is not talking about head knowledge. It's love being the purpose to adorn the doctrine-it's the doctrine changing us from the inside, and the power of the Spirit activated to get us to do the work. Now, if that's what's happened in Paul's life, if that's the reason for writing this letter, which was not. Convenient thing to do, then I think we can say, "Have we been in Paul's shoes? Where the easiest thing to do would have been just to let's let somebody else handle that. Sometimes we are face to face with needing to bring two people together, and we would rather sit it out, and it's not going to affect your salvation if you sit it out. But I just wonder what are the ripple effects if all of us sit it out all the time. So here's the first thing, kind of we see with Paul. If we were going to say, well, what are some observations of what Paul did from this book, and the first thing is the focus was salvation. That's always the first step. It wasn't, hey, now Onesimus has come to me, I'm going to send it back to Philemon. It's Philemon's problem to deal with. Philemon's got to share the gospel with him, right? Paul did not send Onesimus back until he was saved. Right, remember Philemon 1:10. We'll look at this at a couple different places here. It says, "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. So, in a circumstance that we don't understand, somehow they are face to face. Paul is sharing the gospel while Paul is in house arrest, and Onesimus gets saved. I'm sure that the conversations came up like, "Where did you come from? Who do you know? Hey, I know Philemon, but still the focus was salvation, and I think first of all, for us, when we're trying to do some things, it's like when Rachel and I went through Lafayette Counseling and got our certification years ago. When they were teaching us how to biblical counsel, it always started with salvation, because if you're about to give spiritual information to a natural person, they're not going to understand. It always has to start with salvation. It starts with the gospel, even on the walls. There, it's to have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. You want

to find out: is was our problem? Is was this person even indwelt with the Spirit of God? So the very first thing Paul focuses on clearly from this is Onesimus's salvation, and then later in verse 16 we see, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, for how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So once he got saved, he started raising him up, started growing him in the knowledge of the truth. Now this is the thing that's hard. I mean, because I mean, some of you guys are very, very advanced doctrinally, but then there are others in here who are just figuring this thing out, and maybe some of you like I want more on a Sunday morning because of where you're at spiritually. But it's important that we try to bring everybody together, right? And so that's why Sunday mornings look like they look. And then if you want more in depth, you can come on a Wednesday night or Sunday school, right? Wednesday night we're starting Ephesians chapter two this week. So you haven't missed a whole lot if you wanted to try to jump in. But these next few weeks are going to be amazing. Next five weeks we're going to cover the chapter two. But that's where you start growing. Like okay, I've got a good foundation now. I'm understanding some of these basics. Right, I'm seeing the differences between the different dispensations. I am now starting to understand what is for me today. Now I want to go a little bit deeper, right? So growth is always the goal, absolutely. But Paul had to grow Onesimus to the point where Onesimus now he says he is profitable to me because of who he is in Christ, and apparently because how he served the apostle Paul, but it always starts with salvation. Even Paul, when he's writing in Colossians four three, I mean these two letters are so closely linked, right? But it says, withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I also or I am also in bonds. Who did Paul see while he was in bonds? Onesimus. What was he doing? He was sharing the mystery that was kept secret before the world began, and Onesimus gets saved. A prayer request to the Colossians, who he's getting ready to send Onesimus back to, is that pray for us that I might be able to do this very thing that I'm in bonds for, and that's sharing the mystery. And now he's going to send him back. The church knew. I'm sure. I'm sure it wasn't like this tight knit secret, you know that only Philemon never shared with anybody. I'm sure somebody said, "Where is that that servant of yours? Where did he go? I'm sure it had come up right at some point. And now Paul is saying, "I'm using my imprisonment as a mission field to see all men saved and come to knowledge of the truth. And so, for us, when we're interacting with other people, it should always start there. Is this person saved? It's really hard to try to counsel. It's really hard to try to bring people up in a doctrine if they're not even saved, and that's where the focus was. To where we know in Galatians 6:10 it talks about, let us do good unto all men, especially those who are of the household of faith. So we see this first of all. What was effectual working even in Paul's life, and what he's talking to Philemon about here? It's doing the work. It starts with salvation, and then it's a focus on other people. It was never intended to be just about you and your edification. That's why the whole body is fitly joined together, right? And supplying every every joint is supplying to the body of Christ. We are all supposed to be working together, holding Christ as our head, right? And so, as we work through that, how we do that, we have to be focusing on other people and not just always inwardly focused. In Philemon 1:10 again, he says, "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus. But now we look at just the first part of this verse. "I beseech thee for my son. Later he would say, "Put it on my account, if he hath wronged thee. And you see that this was him saying, "All right, now that he's saved, now that he's growing, I want to help him be able to go, not because he's commanded to, but as the Holy Spirit doctrine is working in his heart, it's the desire to want to get and that he's wronged. I'm cutting in and out up here. So with this, we see this kind of example. Now here's another interesting thing: both these letters, Tychicus is taking, and Onesimus is with him. So listen to Colossians 3:12 through 14. Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, you think the Colossians knew anything about a quarrel? These two, maybe specifically, if you can think about, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above these things, here's for love's sake, right? If you want to think about, and above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Both these letters going to the same place. This addressing

kind of passively, I think, of how they should behave. And here, these two men are going to show an example to the church of what forgiveness looks like. And later, I believe Onesimus was serving in this church. He went from completely unprofitable, even to the church at Colossae, to profitable. Paul reminds us in Philippians two, three, and four. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. It's so easy to be preoccupied with your own struggles, with your own self, with your own desires that you'd rather not get involved with others, you can't make anybody do anything. That's why Paul's saying, "I'm not commanding you to do this. I mean, as parents, our kids-that's a little different, but adults-I've had situations I can't force person A and first person B to be best friends again. I don't know if they think that I'm somebody special, or that we need to come and confess your sins to me, or that I'm some priestly guy. Right? I'm I'm just seeing two brothers in Christ, and I'm trying to do my best to bring them together. But I can't make I can't change them from the inside. That's why Paul. Is appealing to the effectual working on the inside of them. If they both purpose as they're seeking the Lord to do the thing, right? That's what Paul was appealing to. But here we see that Paul focused on salvation, and then Paul's focus was always on other people because that's what charity does-the betterment of other people, and then he was focusing on bearing others' burdens, and this is hard today. A lot of us feel like, man, my burden is heavy enough. Right, but Philemon 118 19, he says, if he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put it on my account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand. I will repay it, albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Essentially, what we can infer from this is that most likely Philemon owed his salvation to the apostle Paul as well. So here Paul is saying, "I'll pay it if he hath wrong thee. I will pay it. It reminds me of that: bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. The law of Christ being love. Remember the Good Samaritan, where it's interesting, since Paul says, talked about, and I think Galatians chapter five we were talking about earlier, as far as thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Well, there was a question that the 12 had to Jesus about who is my neighbor, and it's the whole Good Samaritan parable, and I think there's probably some dispensational characteristics with this parable, but just the focus here is that Luke 1035. It says, "On the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him. Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. It's kind of that principle of put it on my account. Do we bear other people's burdens? Are are we willing to kind of get in the ground, help them stand back up? Are are we willing to talk truth into them? If you see that they are distraught or they've been holding on to something, I mean, are you able to talk to them, or do we just brush off? They won't listen to me. I'm not going to get involved. It's not my position. I think if you're right in between two things, that's one thing. If you're on the other side and people are seeking counsel, that's another thing. Paul was right here in the middle of it, and some of you are right here in the middle of two people, and a choice is going to be made: get involved or don't. And if you do, it should be for love's sake. It should be appealing to that. The other piece of this, we see that Paul is appealing to this doctrine of grace and what it really means. Because remember, in verse 16, he tells him to receive him back, not just as a servant, but as a brother. Because see, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. He's asking him to demonstrate supreme grace by welcoming him back as a brother, a fellow laborer, no longer just as a servant. So forgive him, have him back. In verse 21, he says, "I have confidence, or having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou will also do more than I say. Again, the appeal is grace, just like God with us. It's God commendeth His love toward us in Romans eight that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. In our very worst state, God gave His very best, and I think the other observation-not only salvation being others first focused or others focused-it is bearing others' burdens. It's appealing to grace, but it's also he was proactive, even if it was inconvenient. The church matters. Holding the head matters. Being unity in the body of Christ and no schisms matter. And sometimes, even if it's inconvenient, we have to be proactive for the sake of the body of Christ. In verse 11, he says, "In time past, was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me. So therefore, in verse two, verses later, whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might

have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. Listen to what he says there. In thy stead, instead of you being right here, I would have retained. Him to be basically a representative of what you should have been doing, or what you could have been doing. But instead, it was time for a season for him to be there and now to go back. And Paul even references this in this letter. He says maybe for a season, this was supposed to happen, and now he's going to come back to you. Remember, we're reminded to be angry and sin not, and let not the sun go down on our wrath. In Ephesians 4:26, and this is Paul giving instructions to the body of Christ about how to walk in the new man. This is what the new man should look like. The new man should be not angry, right? Should be angry and sin not. We're not talking about righteous anger here, right? And then Philippians 4:2. I talked about I think last week. You would see that Paul was proactive in more than one places, right? In Philippians 4:2, he says, "I beseech Judas and I beseech Sinteki that they be of the same mind in the Lord. We saw this again in Second Corinthians chapter 2. Paul's heart was always with believers, is trying to reconcile, trying to restore and trying to strengthen the body of Christ for love's sake. So we think about these things: is can can this be what the doctrine is working out in you? The more that you pray, the more you're in the Word of God. Are you focused on the salvation of others? Are you focused on meeting the needs of other people as best as you can? Are you helping bear others' burdens? Are you appealing to grace, and are you being proactive even if it is inconvenient? Ultimately, this was going to be to Philemon. Philemon was still going to be saved, even if he did none of this. And that's what each and every one of us has here in the body of Christ. However, if he purposes in his heart by the doctrine for the love of others, then grace abounds. Grace gets celebrated. We start seeing the no limits of grace in comparison to the sin, and it's important for us to always remember our own situation. Where would we be if not for grace? And I've said this often, but why do we willingly withhold from others something we so earnestly desire from God, which is grace, and I can't help but think we kind of like being in the power position where we didn't do anything wrong, and it's up to the other person to prove themselves back to us. Sometimes we're in the middle, and we're seeing both sides of this. Whether it's a family situation, we're getting ready for the holidays, so it's probably going to be a lot. Probably some of your discussions in the houses. Whose house are we going to go to? We can't go this house this week. We know how Aunt Judy's been. If your name's Judy, it's not you. I promise. First name that came to my mind, but maybe it is a family situation, maybe it's a work situation or whatever. But you're seeing people, and you're like, man, I need to do something. It's going to be up to them. It can't be a commandment. It's not throwing them under the law, but if you're like, man, I know this person's a believer and this person's a believer. Shouldn't I at least have a conversation? It's going to be up to them, but shouldn't I have a conversation? And I think that's ultimately where Paul was at. He could have done the easy thing. All three people in this letter could have done the easy thing, but just because the easy button is on a commercial selling office supplies does not mean life is that way. Sometimes the very best thing to do isn't the most easy or convenient thing, especially for the betterment of the body of Christ, and for grace to abound over sin. So those were some observations that I had from this. So I'm going to have everybody stand at this point. I want to remind us all that, even in our own situation, that Christ was made to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. That's our story, right? And that today we're kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. So the appeal today is: what we do should be for love's sake. It should be the effectual. Working of the doctrine in and through us, not just knowing the right things. So I'm having a rough time with this mic. All right. So at this time we're going to. Hey, I've sucked it up for this long, so we might as well just power through at this point. So at this time we're going to give you an opportunity. If you have been praying about, maybe you want to join the church, you want to get into a small group, or you've been saved recently and you want to know what are my next steps, or maybe you've been stuck for a while and you want to know I want to grow, I want to go more deeper. What options are there here? We'd like to take this time and invite you. You can come forward. We'll be more than happy to talk to you. If you want to step out while we're singing, praying to maybe avoid a rush, we can certainly do that as well. But this time, I'll pray,

and then we're going to sing, and then we'll let you guys get out of here. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this day. Well, I thank you for this little letter in Scripture, Lord, and it is so rich when you start talking about something that has 20 some verses, Lord, it is so rich in the area of forgiveness. And even when we say, "Yeah, but where is the real doctrinal meat? It's being inferred all about this, this letter. Especially when we look at what reconciliation looks like. Look about how you brought somebody who was far from God, an alien with no hope in this world, and brought near to the Father by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Lord, that is that is the only hope that we have. So this is just a picture of one taking somebody who was far away, putting things on their account and trying to bring them near to the one that they've offended, and Lord, I think that that's something that, as for love's sake, should motivate us to want to restore people or put them back together. I love that Paul was proactive and didn't take the convenient way, and he did this for the sake of the body of Christ, for the sake of holding the head, not because we're under the law. So, Lord, I pray that for each person in here that we'd think about it. Situations need to get in the middle. Is there situations where where we need to bring two brothers in Christ together? Lord, I pray that we wouldn't just sit on the sidelines. We don't have to be mean about it, but for charity's sake, Lord, to be able to go to these people and and beseech them on behalf of what Christ has done, Lord, may the love of Christ constrain us, that we no longer live for ourselves. Lord, that you just be with the people this week, that they would have an amazing week. Continue to strengthen Donna, Lord, certainly our desire is that her heart would they start finding some some procedures and some mechanisms that can help strengthen her heart. But Lord, we certainly trust you, and we know that you're in control. Lord, I pray you just be with the people now. Help us to have a great week. We promise to give you all the honor and glory in Jesus' name. Amen.