

## Galatians #2 - There's Grace For You!

- All right welcome. Well this is my phone. Do you have a phone? And this is my Bible. You know what the phone gives me, bad news. Have you noticed this? Bad news, right, bad news. You're like, oh what's goin' on in the world? It's all bad news. MSNBC, bad news. FOX, bad news. CNN, bad news. Some of you, those are trigger words. That's how bad it is. Just hearin' those words triggers you. You're like okay, well let me look over on social media. You know what that is? Bad news, more bad news, really bad news. People supporting things that are terrible. Yay, thank you very much. Okay, let me check my calendar. Wait, wait, wait. Lot of things to do, bad news. That's okay, I'll check my banking app. Bad news, bad news. Bad news, bad news, bad news, bad news. You know what this is?

- Good news.

- Good news. This is good news. So I'm gonna put this down. I'mma pick this up. We were on vacation a few years ago. I was literally holding my phone and we were out on the lake and it fell in the water. I was like oh nah... Yes, yes Lord I receive that as a sign from you. As it fell to the bottom of the lake, I felt my joy rise in my soul. This world is just filled with bad news. You know what we need? Some good news. And you know what, the bad news of this world, what it really does, it discourages you. That means it sucks the courage out of you. You get fearful, anxious, scared, worried, fretful, and depressed. What good news does, it pours courage into you. To encourage someone is to literally put courage or pour courage in them. My prayer, my goal for you today is for you to be encouraged as we hear about some good news, and that God would use the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to put some steel in your spine, to put some spring in your step, and to put some hope in your future. Now, the whole central message of the Bible is called good news. As you read the Bible, you'll hear this word called gospel. What gospel literally means is good news. And the way it would work in the ancient days, a king would have something awesome to tell everybody that they would go excited about. So he would send out a herald. Right, and the herald would come and say, I have gospel, I have gospel, I have gospel, I have gospel. And everybody'd stop what they were doing and come to hear this gospel. What gospel means is good news. And the king has an edict. The king has a decree. The king has something amazing to share. Well then Jesus comes along, our King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. And the gospel is the good news that our king is sending from his kingdom into all the nations of the world. And so I want to tell you about the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it starts with some things that I want to ask you some questions regarding. Number one, here is the beginning of the good news. You have a problem. Is that good news or bad news? That's actually good news 'cause it's clarifying, amen. You're like, I didn't feel like I had a problem but everybody else did. This now makes sense of my reality, amen. It's good news to know that you have a problem. What that means is you're not the way you're supposed to be. You know what, we're not the way we're supposed to be. You know what, the world is not the way it's supposed to be. That's actually good news. It means that things should be different. That gives us hope that things could be different. Otherwise if you

believe, the counter-myth and narrative is that we're good people evolving and getting better. How many of you that's not your reality? It's not you. You don't say boy, you know, I don't know why Jesus is gonna have to come back. 15-20 minutes, this and heaven'll be indistinguishable. So similar, amen. You know why you're frustrated? Something went wrong. You know why you're discouraged? Something went wrong. Do you know why you want to change? 'Cause something went wrong. Do you know why you want the world to change? Something went wrong. That's actually good news 'cause it's clarifying. It makes sense of reality. Point number one, you have a problem. We all have a problem. Number two, you ready? You are the problem. Is that good news or bad news? Your spouse thinks it's good news, amen. You're the problem. You know what this good news is, it means now I can stop blaming everyone and everything else. 'Cause we blame it on our culture, right. Yeah, I yell at people 'cause I'm Italian, or I'm lah-din, or you know I'm Middle Eastern, or it's my personality. I'm a J-E-R-K. That's my personality type. So I'm a victim, it's genetic. My dad was a jerk too. You know so, it's the culture, it's the school, it's my parents, it's blah-blah, blah-blah-blah. Here's what you can do. Look in the mirror and say, you are a problem. That's what you can do when you get up every morning okay. You are a... 'Cause let me tell you this. The biggest problem in your life, it's you. The worst decisions that have affected your life made by you. The most dominant voice speaking to you is, I know you think it's me, it's you. So you have a problem. You are the problem. Number three, there is a solution. Is that good news? Yes, that's good news. This gets us out of the trap that many people fall into. Hopelessness, despair, fear, worry, anxiety. There's no solution. We live in a nation built on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in which the number one category of prescription medication is antidepressants. Okay, and I'm not saying that those are always a sin. But I'm saying that everybody's sad. Because if you look at your world and you look at yourself, and you don't believe that there is any solution, you lose all hope. You lose all hope. You have a problem, you are the problem. There is a solution. Here's another one. You are not the solution. Is that good news or bad news? Good news 'cause some of you are like, I've been tryin' really hard, it ain't workin'. Good news, it ain't you. Oh good, yay. This is where in our world that doesn't know God, it's self-help, self-love, self-esteem. What it's saying is you are your hero. You are your savior. You are your rescuer. You are not. Let me just tell you this, make it clean. You're the problem, not the solution, amen right. You're the crisis not the rescue crew. That's good news. In addition, here's the really, really, really good news. Jesus is the solution to all our problems. Because whatever problem you have, the big problem that's under every other problem is the sin problem. That there's a God who made us, there's a God who made the world for us, there's a God who loved us, there's a God who speaks to us, there's a God who wanted a relationship with us. We have rejected him. We have rebelled against him. We have run from him. As a result we have brought death, destruction, and the demonic into our own lives, and the lives of others. And the good news is this. There is help beyond you and there is help beyond this world. If your hope is in you, your hope is in vain. If your hope is in the next election, your hope is in vain. If your hope is in just giving it more time, and spending more money, and waging more wars, your hope is in vain. The problem is us and the problem is this world. And the solution is Jesus Christ who is not like us and doesn't come from this world, amen. So here comes the deliverer. Here comes the hero. Here comes the rescuer. Here comes the Savior. Jesus enters into human history. God becomes a man. And Jesus Christ comes to

live the life you have not lived, the life of perfection. He had no sin. He had no failure, fault, or flaw of any sort or kind. He revealed himself to be God. He loved, he healed. He encouraged, he blessed, he unburdened. He brought the kingdom of God. And what we did because we are bad and he is good, we murdered him and in that moment, he took the worst evil and he turned it for the greatest good. And he suffered and died in your place for your sins. Not only did Jesus live the life you have not lived, he suffered the fate you should have suffered. And then three days later on a Sunday... That's why we're excited and meeting on a Sunday. Jesus rose from death. He overcame our biggest problem. He defeated death. He forgives sin. He gives new life. I have good news for you. There is forgiveness of sin. There is hope for this life. There is power for a new reality. And there's an eternal relationship with God that never ends. Amen, that's good news. That's good, that's a lot better than what you're gonna hear on the news tonight, amen. And what happens then is God creates, and this is our theme in the book of Galatians, Satan counterfeits. God is bringing life and Satan is always seeking to undermine that with death. And so we're gonna look at this wonderful letter of Paul to a series of churches in a region called Galatia. And we're gonna look at what God is doing and what Satan is doing so that we can be part of what God is doing, and not part of what Satan is doing. Let me just say this briefly as well. Some of you say, I'm not sure about Satan and demons. Look around. Tell me we don't have an enemy. Anybody feel like there's an enemy out there somewhere? There are powers, principalities and spirits that are at war against God and those whom God loves, okay. So as you look at your life and you look at this world, don't look at everything and say I can't believe God did that. Say I see what God is doing, creating life. I see what Satan is undermining, counterfeiting, bringing death. So he's gonna start by telling us the difference between revelation and speculation. If you're new, we're gonna take 13 weeks, go through a book of the Bible called Galatians. And here we find ourselves a little ways into the book. Galatians 1:11-12. For I would have you know, brothers. Let me just say this. If you're a Christian, God is your Father, Jesus is your big brother, and the rest of us are brothers and sisters. You know what that is, family. How many of you love your family? And sometimes they annoy you. Welcome to the family. Okay, that's how it works. And in that culture you need to know that oftentimes it could be illegal to call somebody a brother or sister who is not a biological relative because it gave them legal status for the family inheritance. What happens though is when God becomes your father and Jesus becomes your big brother, it reorients your identity where your primary identity is in your eternal family, not just your earthly family. I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel, that is the good news, amen, that was preached by me. The gospel has to be preached. Let me say this. You can't show. You can't show the gospel of Jesus Christ. You have to speak it. You can give somebody clean water, and a sandwich, and a hand up, and all of that's good. And it's God's love, and grace, and mercy. But they can't know that Jesus is God become a man, born of a virgin, lived without sin, died on a cross and rose from the dead, unless you tell them. And a sandwich doesn't communicate that much information. So I believe in good advice. I believe in good deeds. I'm all about good news. Preached by me is not man's gospel. There's lots of counterfeits. Religious ideologies, lots of speculation. For I did not receive it from any man. Nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. He's talking about this good news. Where does it come from? It doesn't come up from the earth. It doesn't come from philosophers. It doesn't come from

religious founders and leaders. It doesn't come from politicians. It doesn't come from pithy statements, or marketing firms. It doesn't come up, it comes down. That's the good news of Jesus Christ. It comes down from the kingdom of God. Just like in that ancient day a gospel proclamation would be sent out by the king, well this good news comes directly from the throne of our King Jesus, amen. And that is that there is hope for this world. There is help for this world. There is healing for this world through the person and work of Jesus Christ. And what he's talking about here is man's gospel, he's talking about counterfeits. And so next slide please. Let me just distinguish this for you. We're gonna do some comparison and contrast. One of the ways to understand something is to say here's what it is, here's what it is not. That's what Paul does repeatedly through Galatians. What he says here is that the gospel, the good news, the person and work of Jesus Christ, it's revelation. That means it comes from God. You know where speculation comes from, man. You take a philosophy class. I think, in my opinion, from my perspective, according to my experience, according to those that I have researched, according to books I have read in the past. Okay. You know what we need? Revelation, not speculation. We need God to tell us 'cause we don't know. And he does. Our God is a God who speaks to us. Revelation is based on truth. Speculation you're gonna see in a moment is based on tradition. You know what people longing for eternity often settle for, tradition. They're saying you know, I just, I want to go back. Well you didn't go back far enough. You didn't go back to your Creator. You went back to created manmade traditions. I'm not saying that there's anything sinful or wrong in your traditions. But ultimately at the end of the day, just doing things because they've been done for a long time doesn't mean that they're the right things. Revelation is God's word to man. Speculation is man's words about God. I'll tell you this. If you want to get to know somebody, the best way is to get to know them and let them tell you who they are, amen. How many of you have heard somethin' about somebody? You're like, man, I heard they were just terrible, awful, horrible person. And then I met 'em and I was like, I actually like them. That wasn't true. Other people you're like, I heard they were amazing and I met 'em and uh, they are terrible people. You know what, the best thing to do is not to hear what everyone else says, but to hear who someone declares themselves, reveals themselves to be. The best way to get to know God is not for everybody to chime in, but for God to speak down. I'm a God of love. I'm a God of grace. I'm a God of mercy. I'm a God of forgiveness. I'd like a relationship. I'd like to unburden you. I'd like to heal you. I'd like to bless you. I'd like to never leave you nor forsake you. Well that's amazing, that sounds incredible. I didn't hear that in philosophy class at the community college. I never heard a philosophy professor say, come to me all you who are burdened, weary, and heavy-laden, and in me you'll find rest for your soul. Never heard that from a philosophy professor. Never heard that. That's revelation. And revelation is unchanging because God gets it right the first time. Speculation is always changing, modifications and updates, 'cause human beings never get it right the first, second, or 17th time, amen. So okay, this'll be our little therapy. I love you, you're gonna serve me. I'mma talk about my Jeep for a moment. I have a 2015 Jeep that I love, okay. And I bought it 'cause it had low miles. And I thought, you know, why not get a Jeep with low miles. And ever since I got it, I keep taking it to the shop. I have blown multiple cams, rockers, and lifters. It has been in the shop constantly. Some of you would ask, well how do you drive it? I drive it like a Jeep okay. I drive it like a Jeep. I didn't buy a Prius, a golf cart. I bought a Jeep, amen. I bought a Jeep. So I drive it like a Jeep.

and it keeps breaking. And it sounds like if you put spoons in a blender, that's what my Jeep sounds like about half the time, okay. So here's what I'm tellin' ya. We're not in heaven yet, kids. In heaven we won't need a powertrain warranty. Until then, somethin' to pray about. So what happens is, this week I'm meeting with, I got the mechanic. I went to the dealership. I was like that's it, I need the oldest guy here. I don't need that kid with three whiskers. I don't need that kid. I need Yoda. I need the crafty veteran. So I grab the crafty veteran, the old guy. I was like, how long you been doin' this? He's like 40 years and I can't even hold a wrench. Perfect, we're goin' for a test drive. So I put him in the car, the Jeep, and we're drivin'. He's like, this sounds terrible. Yes it does, sir. It does, that's why you're here. And here's what he said. He said yeah, they didn't get this motor right. It's a Galatians motor. It's a Galatians motor. It's a Galatians motor. He said yeah, they keep blowin' cams, and then it jacks up the rocker, and then it bends the lifters. Yeah, they didn't get this one right. That's why we keep working on it. We have to keep working on your Jeep because it has a design flaw. The only thing that's perfect in this world is the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the word of God. The only thing that we don't need to fix is the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the word of God. The only thing that got right the first time was the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the word of God. And what Paul says is, I told you about the gospel and then these yahoos come in after I leave and they're trying to do some modifications and updates to something that's perfect the first time. They're gonna ruin it. They're not going to help it. Now let me say this. I didn't say this in the first service. Revelation and speculation are constantly at war. I didn't say this in the first service. But let me tell you a weird story. When I was a brand new pastor... I have been a pastor now, senior pastor 23 years. I mean literally almost half my adult life. I had a ministry that met at night. Bunch of punk rock kids. It was not a big deal, we're flat broke. Let me just tell you this. If you start a ministry for single, unemployed men, who are committed to punk rock and anarchy, it's not a real income stream. I'll just tell you that. So we're just not doin' so good. We lost our building, we're homeless. And I'm lookin' for a place to rent. So I go meet with another pastor. And they have a beautiful building and there's nobody there, especially at night when we meet, it's empty. And I said well, we don't have much money but I'll give you what we got. Could we please use your building? And we had a good conversation and it got down the road. It got all the way down to the end to write up the paperwork and this pastor met with me and asked me a few questions. They said, well before we sign the deal, I just have one question for you. I said okay. I'm a young pastor, new Christian. I don't know what I'm doin'. And this pastor asked, do you still believe in Paul? I was like, surely this is a trick question, right. Like this is trick question. I said, literally I pull out my Bible I said, the guy who wrote 13, maybe 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament? She said yeah. I said, yeah. She said, then I can't rent the building to you. She said, the church should have stopped believing in Paul a long time ago. He talks about people being sinners and sexual activity being immoral, and he hates women. She said if you believe in Paul, I can't rent you the building 'cause I can't have anything that Paul taught taught in this building. I was like, well. I was like, well, if lightning is coming, I'll be going, you know. Okay. Because when the world has ideas and God has an idea and there's a collision and a conflict, at some point you gotta decide, I'm gonna go with the human speculation or the divine revelation. Next point, redemption versus religion, compare and contrast. He's gonna tell us a little bit about his story and his history. Galatians 1:13-16A. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism. What

he's saying is this. I was a really devout religious guy, 100% all in. He was absolutely devoted. He would be in our day the equivalent of a religious zealot terrorist. He's that committed. Every year, you know, who gets the zeal award? Paul got the ribbon. Who's most likely to kill people? Paul won, yay. Good job Paul. He's devoted, he's devoted. How I, what, persecuted. Do you know what? Christians face persecution. Different ways in different cultures, but there is persecution. Persecuted the church of God, what, violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among many of my people. He was like an Olympic caliber religious person. So extremely zealous was I for the traditions which stood counter to the truth of my fathers. Problem is, wrong father. Your ultimate allegiance is not to the man who caused you to be born into this world, but to God who has caused you to be born again. But when he who had set me part from when? Before I was born, who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me. Let me say this quick. Okay, first let's have an argument. This'll be fun. Okay, so do you choose God or does God choose you? Some of you went to Bible college you're like, we wasted a whole year on this. Every night, this is all we talked about. Okay, how many of you think that you choose God, okay? You're like I don't know. Okay, how many of you think that God chooses you? Oh, okay let me tell you this. God chooses you then you choose God. Oh, you're welcome, okay. How do I know this, Paul. Here's what he says. God set me apart from the womb. That's a long time before you're makin' choices, amen. Was Paul lookin' for God or was God lookin' for Paul? God was lookin' for Paul. Did Paul love Jesus or did Jesus love Paul? Paul didn't love Jesus, Jesus loved Paul. God is at work before you work. God's grace changes you. God's love is a gift that he gives you and then you share it with him by loving him back. So if you're here, let me just tell you good news. God loves you, God picked you. If you're a Christian, God chose you. Some of you've never been picked for anything. Right, even at recess. You're like, I never got picked, and I was home schooled. It's terrible. God picked you. Be on team Jesus, amen. Now if you look at team Jesus, you may realize these are not the all-stars, amen. I'll take the short kid, the kid with asthma. 'Cause God's a God of grace, amen. And a sense of humor. That's how he works. You need to know that. So what he's saying is, I wasn't pursuing God but God pursued me. God had a plan for me from the womb and I didn't know his plan. What he's contrasting here is redemption and religion. Next slide please. Redemption is about Jesus Christ. Religion is about me, me, okay. Redemption is about Jesus' resume, right. Stand before God. Don't bring your resume. Set it on fire. Bring Jesus' resume. Stand before God. Don't bring your report card. Set it on fire. Bring Jesus' report card. Stand before God. Don't bring your performance review. Set it on fire. Bring Jesus' performance review. I'm here with him. Here's the deal. He did all the work for you, amen. See, he lived, he died, he rose, he did all the work. Some people will say, well there's a problem between us and God. Somebody's gotta do something. Religion says, I'll do something. Redemption says God did everything. Imagine you've got work tomorrow or this week. You show up to work, somebody's there. What are you doin' here? How come you're in my desk? What are you doin'? I'm here to do your job. What, did I get fired? No, no, no, no, no. No, I'm gonna do your job from now on. Well what's gonna happen to me? Oh you're still gonna get the paycheck and all the benefits. What the heck? How many of you'd be like, the Lord does answer prayer, that's amazing. Pastor Mark, is this a prophetic word? 'Cause I receive it, okay. What would you think about that person? That's amazing that you would do all of my work and give

me all of the benefits of the work that you did. That's what Jesus does. You know what that leads to, humility. You're like, what did you do? Um, I messed it up. That's what I did. And then Jesus fixed it. It's humility. What religion leads to is pride. Here's what Paul says three times, I'll read it to you again, in his telling of his story. He says, I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. I was advancing beyond many of my own age. Extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my father. What he says is this. I, I, I, and then he says, but God. But God revealed Jesus Christ to me. Redemption makes you new. New heart, new nature, new desires, new life, new hope, new power. Here's what I can tell ya. I've met a lot of people in my life and I love ya and it's good to have ya. I've met a lot of people that regret a lot of decisions. I've never met someone who regrets receiving the grace of God and Jesus Christ. I've never met that person. I used to have burdens and now they're lifted, and I used to live under condemnation, and now I feel forgiven. And when I die I'm gonna be blessed forever. Oh, worst decision I ever made. Such regret. If I could undo that. How many of you you have things you regret, but not belonging to Jesus, amen. If you're here and you don't belong to Jesus, I'll tell you this. 100% of people who belong to Jesus are glad they belong to Jesus, okay. Religion makes you worse. It takes the worst parts of your disposition, the worst parts of your personality. It plugs them into an amplifier and cranks the knob to 10. Did religion make Paul better? Worse, he's like, I went from being arrogant to murdering people. That's not graduation to the next level. Let me tell you a little bit about his story. It comes from the book of Acts, the church history book of the New Testament. Acts chapter eight, there's a guy named Stephen, who's an early church deacon. And there is a mob of angry, zealous, religious terrorists and they come to murder him. And it says they all laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. This name changed later to Paul. 'Cause here's the idea. Sometimes when you meet Jesus, the change is so new that you need a new name because you're truly a new person. That's why Abram becomes Abraham, Cephas becomes Peter, and Saul become Paul. Such a radical change he's like, new name. That's how big this change is. And what happens is though, as Saul is persecuting the church of God, they lay the cloaks at the feet of Saul 'cause he is the alpha male in the wolf pack going to get the shepherd, Stephen. As Stephen is dying, do you know what he does? He prays God's grace would come to Saul. He's echoing, Stephen is, the Lord Jesus from the cross. Father forgive them. I've told you this before. There was an old missionary named Amy Carmichael. I love one of her analogies. She says, when you bump a container, what comes out is what is already in. Okay, so let me ask you this. What just came out, water. Do you know what was in Stephen, grace. You know what was in Saul, law. You bump Saul, law. You bump Stephen, grace. It looks like law is killing grace and grace prays for law to receive grace. And then grace transforms law into grace. That's a revelation from God. I just thought of that standin' here. Some of you've experienced religious people that are like Saul. They've given you church hurt and abuse. You need to know that you need to pray for them. That the grace of God would come to them as the grace of God has come to you. So Stephen who is filled with grace prays for Saul who is filled with law and his law is killing grace. Grace is interceding for law. And then in chapter nine, Jesus answers Stephen's prayer. Stephen dies. Before he dies, heaven opened up and he said that he saw the Lord Jesus standing. Let me tell you this. The Bible says that Jesus right now is seated on a throne. I'll tell you this. If you give grace to somebody, Jesus gets up off his throne. You know what, in a sporting event when something is wonderful happening,

everybody gets out of their seat to cheer. When you give grace to someone, Jesus Christ gets off of his throne to cheer. 'Cause ours is a God of grace. And grace comes down from this King. And when this King sees his grace being distributed, he rejoices in those who are distributing it. Chapter nine. Stephen goes up, Jesus comes down. To deal with who, Saul. Some people are like, somebody needs to deal with them. I'll just get out of the way. Sick Jesus on 'em, you'll see what happens. Jesus, it says that Saul is going out to arrest, and harm, and harass God's people and a light shines from heaven. To me, I just see it, 'cause I'm, you know, I'm peculiar. That wasn't like a write that down shock, I didn't know that. But nonetheless, how many of you've seen those police chases where there's a guy who's running, but there's a helicopter over him? It's like Jesus is up in heaven with a flashlight. This'll be awesome, click. Okay watch this, angels, watch this. There's Saul of Tarsus. Oh he's running, follow him, follow him, follow him. Follow him, follow him, follow him. Light. Can't get away. And Jesus comes down and speaks to him. Everything changes once Jesus speaks to you. Acts nine, falling to the ground. So he's humbled, he's scared. He's like a prisoner of war who's surrendering. I would get down, but I don't know if I'd get up. I'm at that age, if I drop somethin', I'll order another one on Amazon. That's what I do. Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Who is Saul persecuting, Christians. Who felt it, Jesus. How many of you love somebody so much that when they're suffering you feel it? Jesus loves you so much that when you're suffering, he feels it. Why are you persecuting me? Why are you persecuting me? And he said, who are you, Lord? Let me just tell you this. If a light shines down from heaven, you are knocked to the ground and blinded, call that person Lord, okay. Just cover all your bases. Just a little advice. And he said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus. That's revelation. That's down from heaven. Whom you are persecuting, but rise, enter the city and you will be told what do do. You're not gonna do what you want anymore. I'mma tell you what to do. You're not the Lord anymore, I am. The Bible says he was blind for three days. Now just for a moment, just close your eyes. Imagine suddenly you couldn't see. After a few seconds you thought, well this is odd. Then a few minutes go by. Now your anxiety level is rising. Am I sick, am I dying? A few hours go by, oh my gosh. Is this irreversible? A few days go by and you realize I'm blind. This is my new reality. Open your eyes. He was blind for three days. You know why? He had physical sight but spiritual blindness. Our whole world is filled with those people. You say, oh I see. No you don't. You don't see who Jesus is. You don't see what Jesus does. Your soul needs to see things that your eyes can't. So he had eyes that could see and a soul that was blind. And so God blinded his eyes to show him the condition of his soul, that he needed God to open the eyes of his understanding. So for three days it says, he doesn't eat or drink. You know what that is? That's a person in total shock. How many of you've gotten just hit with cataclysmic news and you're just like... I don't even know what I did. I don't even, like, I was gone. He's in shock. God gives a vision to a man named Ananias in another city that he's supposed to go share the good news of Jesus Christ with Saul of Tarsus. God also gives a vision to Saul that Ananias is coming. Here's the good news. Even if you're blind, God can give you a vision. That's amazing to me. And so God goes to Ananias and he tells him, all right, there's this guy named Saul of Tarsus. You heard of him? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. He's kind of a Bin Laden meets Hussein situation over there. He's like, well go talk to him. Go, what the... How many of you are like, Lord, send an angel. Send a bulletproof angel. Because what God wants



is he wants Ananias to be a means of grace. God could just pour out the grace on Saul. But he wants to pour it into Ananias' bucket, have him carry that grace to Saul, and then pour that grace out on Saul because he doesn't want just Saul to be blessed. He also wants Ananias to be blessed. Because when God pours out grace, there's blessings for everybody. So Ananias goes, prays over him. Saul receives the Holy Spirit. His eyes are opened. His heart is changed. His life is renewed. He goes from Saul to Paul. He goes from a persecutor to a preacher. He goes from a church destroyer to a church builder. Here's the good news. It doesn't matter what you've done. There's grace for you in Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what your past looks like. There's hope for your future because of the grace of Jesus Christ. If God can save Paul, y'all just come to this conclusion. Apparently there's room for me. If God can use Paul, there's room for us all, amen. And what he's gonna talk about is the difference between a calling and a job. So he says it this way. In order that I might preach him among the Gentiles. Him is Jesus, Gentiles is the audience. Previous to this, how did Paul, how did Saul feel about Jesus? He hated him and now he loves him. And he really hates Gentiles. And now he's gonna bring Jesus' love to the Gentiles. The God that he hated loves him and is sending him to love the people that he hated 'cause that's the gospel. I did not immediately consult with anyone. He took some time off, solitude. He'll explain that in a moment. There's a difference, my friend, between solitude and isolation. Isolation is very dangerous. Sneaky, withdrawn, hidden, private. Solitude is I need to get some time carved out just to meet with the Lord. So I've got a day of solitude carved out this week. Felt like it was time and there are questions I have for the Lord. There are thanks I want to give to the Lord. There are things I want to unburden and give to the Lord. So I've got a time of solitude scheduled with me and the Lord Jesus this week. It's on my calendar. I know it's on his. You know, God'll meet with you. Did you know that? I mean you probably can't even get into your dentist, but you can always meet with Jesus. He says, before I met with everybody, I went and met with the Lord. Let me just tell you this. Before you meet with everybody, meet with the Lord. Before you ask everybody, ask the Lord. Nor did I go up to Jerusalem, that's the mother ship, the big church, to those who were apostles before me, the 12 that Jesus chose. But I went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. That's solitude. Then after three years. That's a lot of solitude. But here's what Saul is probably doing. Like okay, I memorized whole books of the Old Testament in Hebrew. But I apparently had no idea what they were about. Because you can know the word of God and not know the God of the word. This whole book is about the person and work of Jesus Christ. And you could study the whole thing and say, I understand everything from circumcision to first fruits. And if you don't know Jesus, you missed the whole point, amen. So Saul is like, okay, I thought I knew the scriptures and I was a teacher of them and persecutor for them. And then I met Jesus and he's like, start over. I think he spent three years in the Old Testament tryin' to figure out okay where's Jesus in all of this? Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas. That is Peter. Cephas becomes Peter, Saul becomes Paul. Remained with him 15 days. That's a long time. I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. Here's what you need to know. Jesus' mother Mary and his adoptive father Joseph did not consummate their marriage until after Jesus was born. But then they had a normal marriage and they had a lot of kids. Sons and daughters. So Jesus had half brothers, half sisters. When he kept saying he was God of doing miracles, his family thought he had lost it. And then when he died and rose, they realized he was onto

something. So they joined him and James his brother becomes one of the... He's gonna call him later in Galatians one of the pillars in the church. He writes a book of the Bible called James. He is preaching and teaching the good news of his brother Jesus. Here's the question. What would it take for you to worship your older sibling as God and co-found a religion in their honor? See, most of you are like no my older sibling was the devil. If anyone knows how sinful you are it's your younger, your family, but your younger siblings. 'Cause you do stuff to them when your parents aren't looking that are nefarious, nefarious things. But what James is saying is, I actually shared a bunk bed with Jesus and he was perfect, and he is God, and he did rise from the dead, so I'm in. If you love Jesus, you get to be also a brother of the Lord. Good news for you, my friend. And what I'm writing to you before God, I do not lie. Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. So he talks about that God calls him to Jesus and then he makes his whole life a calling, calling. So next slide please, let me look at the difference between a calling and a job. A calling is what you were made to do. Paul was made to be a preacher to the Gentiles. A job is what you have to do, right, to make ends meet. In a calling, God calls, man confirms. So with Paul, Saul, he says, Jesus called me and then I met with the leaders in Jerusalem. They confirmed my calling. So if you feel like God has called you to some ministry, you better have godly leadership who confirms that calling. You need both. God's calling and the confirmation of God's leaders. In a job, man calls, man confirms. A calling is about what you get to do. It's what you're excited about. He gets to go out and preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. He's excited about that. He's beaten, shipwrecked, homeless, stoned, left for dead, adrift on the open sea, spends time in prison. If you follow the maps as he is preaching the good news of Jesus, he walks upwards of 20 miles a day. How many of you would not do all of that for a job? If your job was like, all right, we're gonna flog you today and you gotta walk to Tucson. Like, this is officially my last day on the job. A job is what you have to do. And a calling is life-giving and a job is life-draining. What he's talking about here is the calling on his life. Let me say a couple of things. Let's start with Jesus. What did Jesus do before ministry, carpentry. 90% of his life, carpentry, 10% ministry. Which was his calling, both. He was called to be a carpenter for 90% of his life, 30 years. And then he was called to be a minister for 10% of his life, three years. He wasn't ungodly doing carpentry and godly doing ministry. He wasn't junior varsity doing carpentry and varsity doing ministry. Your goal is just to walk in God's will for your life. That's your calling. Let's use another example. This man the apostle Paul, he spends his time preaching the gospel, the good news of Jesus, and to make ends meet he also makes tents. If you read the New Testament, he makes tents. Is this his job and this his calling? Or are both of these his calling? Paul, I have called you to preach the gospel and I've called you to make tents to pay for the ministry to preach the gospel. Here's what I want you to know. The difference between a job and a calling has very little to do with what you are doing. And it has far much more to do with who you are doing it unto. It's not what you're doing. It's who you're doing it for. It's who you're doing it for. I'll give you one little verse. It just is beautiful. It's from Colossians 3:23-24. Whatever you do. What do you have to do? Mom, it's your calling. Mechanic, that's your calling. Administrative assistant, that's your calling. Real estate agent, that's your calling. Some of you just think, man I wish I could be in ministry. If you belong to Jesus you're always in ministry. Everywhere you go you want to bring grace. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. If it is, I'm doing it for you so that you will approve of me, that's a job. I'm

doing it for him because he already approves of me, that's a calling. You might be doing the same thing for a totally different motivation. Knowing that from the Lord you will receive an inheritance and reward. You're gonna get a bonus. I'll just tell ya, in heaven, your retirement account is awesome. It's awesome. It says that you will never get sick. So guess what, you don't need medical. You'll never be hungry. So guess what, there'll be no grocery budget. It says in fact that the streets are lined with gold. I know some of you are saving up for retirement, but not at that level, amen. Yeah, I found this neighborhood. We pave with gold. That's how we roll. No, that's how Jesus rolls. Heaven is a place of grace. And the inheritance and the reward is in the place of grace. And he closes with this line. I'll share it with you. You are serving the Lord Christ. You're serving the Lord Christ. That's a calling. You may not need to do something different. You may need to do the same thing for someone else, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. And what Paul is talking about here, let me just say this. I have been honored to teach God's word now every week literally since I was 24, I'm 48, been a senior pastor since I was 25, it's crazy. I am still learning things about the grace of God that blow my mind. I have studied dozens of books of the Bible verse by verse. I have a library that's big enough that would keep my great grandchildren busy. I have a master's degree in Bible. I have written a systematic theology with a thousand footnotes. And even this week, I learned something absolutely revolutionary about the grace of God. So let me just tell you. The word of God is living and active. It's eternal, it's not old, and it never grows old. It keeps us young. Here's what I learned. There is grace and there are means of grace. When you do things unto the Lord, not only do you receive God's grace, you get to be a means of God's grace. Because let me tell you what God's grace is. God's grace is Jesus' work for you through his death, burial, and resurrection. The grace of God is Jesus' work in you by the person, the presence, and the power of the Holy Spirit. And God's grace works through you. Let me say this. As I preach grace, there are always people who say, we have so much to do. If you just give 'em grace, and love 'em, and give 'em mercy, and be nice to 'em. Law people always look like that by the way. If you just give 'em grace, and love 'em, and be nice to 'em, and forgive 'em, and bless 'em, and tell 'em that God loves 'em, how we gonna get all the work done? Need to give 'em some law. Let me tell you this. Grace outperforms law, always. 'Cause you'll do things for love you would not do for duty. Let me tell you this. God is not obligated to you. He owes you nothing. Everything he did was out of grace. When my kids were little, if they were going to a birthday party, or Chuck E. Cheese, or a Great Wolf Lodge, and there's one goin' in down the street, I would give 'em money and I'd give 'em extra money. Dad, I don't need that much money. I know you don't, somebody else might. If there's a kid that forgot their money, or lost their money, or blew their money, give 'em money. You know why? That means my child has an opportunity to be a means of grace. Why does God allow us to be a means of grace? 'Cause God wants them to be blessed, but he also wants us to be blessed too. Because it's more blessed to give than receive. So if you've been forgiven, that's a grace to you. And then you forgive somebody. You're a means of grace. If God has forgiven you and you tell 'em about the work of Jesus, it's a means of grace to them. If you've been through a hardship in your life and God has been gracious to you, and you share the lessons you've learned, and it encourages someone in their dark season, you're a means of grace to them. Do you know how awesome it is to be a means of grace? Do you know how life-changing it is to say, God is a God of grace. Every day I get up and I'm called to be a dispenser, a distributor of grace. I'm lookin'

for my opportunities. Who can I love? Who can I forgive? Who can I bless? Who can I pray for? Who can I give to? Who can I impart grace to? And here's what happens. You will run out of time. You will run out of money and you will run out of energy. But the only inexhaustible source in all the universe is the grace of God. You just give it away, share it, love people, serve people, be generous. It's like the little boy that gave his lunch to Jesus. It just kept multiplying. That's how the grace of God works. And I'll just, I'll tell you this. For you law-based parents, law barely works when the kids are under your roof. And it causes rebellion when they move out from under your roof. Grace, and love, and mercy, from God, through you to the kid, will then hopefully train the kid to go out and give grace to others so that they become a means of grace. Because being a means of grace is the most awesome thing in the whole world, amen. How many are like, I got to bless somebody. That was awesome. I got to give to them, that was amazing. I told 'em God loved 'em and they believed it. Woo-hoo, I like that, amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Ah, your wood's wet. I'm all fired up, come on, right. God's grace... So there's a little line. We're way off the notes and I don't really have notes. But 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, I worked harder than anyone. I got more done than everyone. But it was not I, it was the grace of God with me. The grace of God gets things done in a supernatural way by the power of God. Let me give you one bad analogy 'cause it's all that I got. Even for those who are not Christian, the receiving of grace stirs in them this longing to give grace. So have you seen these drive-thru pick up your coffee spots? Okay, you been to one of those recently? I have, I pulled up, they couldn't hear my order 'cause my Jeep was makin' so much noise. Okay so, what do you want? I would like a coffee and a Jeep. That's what I would like, okay so. But what happens is sometimes the person at the very front of the line, what do they do? They pay for their coffee and the one behind them. Then the person drives up. How much do I owe you, nothing. Well I'm getting something I didn't deserve or pay for or earn. Well that's awesome. Let me pay for the person behind me. I looked at it on the internet. I'm not saying that things on the internet are true. I'll just preface that. 'Cause internet's the Greek word for demon. I read on the internet that there were, one of 'em, it was 1,000 people in a row paid for the person's coffee behind them. Do you know why, it's like oh I got grace, I'm gonna give grace. You drive away goin', I don't even know God, but for some reason getting something and giving something feels awesome. Maybe that's what I was created for. And then I read the story. One guy at the very end said, this needed to stop so I stopped it. If that guy's watchin' on Facebook, read Galatians okay. You need to be saved from yourself. You're a problem, okay. But the whole point is that when we receive grace, we learn to give grace. There's something in us. Let me just say this. Your body needs water. Your body needs food. Your soul, the energy it runs on is grace. And when you receive grace and you give it to others, that's when life works. So let me close with this. And I always say that not because I'm closing but just because I want you to pay attention. So full disclosure, that's where we're at in the sermon. God's grace creates your testimony. See this is the difference between a biography and a testimony. A biography is here's what I did. Here's what they did. Here's what we did. A testimony is, here's what Jesus did. So Paul told us previously, I, I, I, but God. That's a testimony. Our world is filled with biographies. Awesome people who pull themselves up by their

bootstraps. The story of the Bible is, nobody has boots let alone straps. You're not pullin' anything up. Jesus has come to get you. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. He hadn't made it to life group or church yet. Can you imagine why? Can you imagine you got your life group and you're like everybody's welcome. Come on over to our house. Huh? What are you doin' here? You murder us. Yeah, let's have a prayer meeting. Everybody close your eyes, bow your head. No, no, no, no. I believe in heaven but I don't want to go there today. They only were hearing it said, he used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. You know the difference between persecuting and preaching is grace. That's how powerful grace is, God's grace. And they glorified God because of me. Because he is a trophy of grace, because he has a testimony of grace. Who needs to hear your testimony this week? Who do you need to share the work of Jesus in your life with? There are people that may not believe the word of God until you share with them the power of God in your life. So here's what I want to do. I want to close by giving you a testimony if I may. Just give me a few more minutes. I want to share a testimony of God's grace. 'Cause I want to encourage you and put courage in you in a world that discourages you and takes courage out of you. I want to give you good news in a world of bad news. And it's how we got here. See you guys don't even know it. You guys are a means of grace to us this morning. We're honored to have you. So thank you for being here. When my family and I, I'm married to a woman named Grace. So this is a lesson I'm always learning, right. I love her. We have five kids. We were considering where to move. And one of the places that we were considering was Arizona. We had been here a few times and liked it, and were wondering if maybe it would be a place that God would have us to be as a family. And we were wrestling through that decision of God's calling. And so I was in Florida at a pastor's conference. I was not part of the network, but these are wonderful people who love Jesus. And I went there. I literally felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to go there. It made no sense. But I felt like God said go, so I went. And the whole time I'm hangin' out, I'm seein' friends. And it was very good and it was nice. And then just a few hours before my flight out, I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me and say, you know, that we needed to have a meeting and I needed to get out of the meeting and to meet with him and to have solitude with him before the flight. Okay, so I punched in a coffee shop and I got in the rental car and I drove there and it was like some weird high school. I was like, well that's not... Maybe they have a coffee shop in there. I plug it in again. Well now I'm drivin' around, I'm confused, and I realize okay, I'm running out of time. My flight leaves soon. So I'm driving away. Okay, Lord, where should I go? And I see a Mexican restaurant and I felt that was the word of the Lord to me. Okay, if you want to meet with Jesus, go to a Mexican restaurant. That's what I'm telling you. So I pulled over. I'm like well, you know, carne asada. You know 'cause if you know me, the answer to every question is Jesus or carne asada. Those are the answers to all the questions. So I pulled over and I walk into the Mexican restaurant in Florida, place I've never been. I've never been to this city. And the waitress asked, is it just you? I said yeah, it's just me. She said, well I'll seat you over here. I said great. I'm gonna go wash up, I'll be right back. Way over on the other side of the Mexican restaurant, there's a table. Most of the guys have their back turned to me. One guy turns around, he goes, Pastor Mark? I said yeah. He said, I recognize your voice. How many of you know that's a possibility? And he said, what are you doin' here? I said, well I was here for the conference. He says, I was too. I said, well I left early 'cause I felt like I was supposed to meet

with the Lord. He said, that's why we left early. He said, well we've been prayin' every day for you and your family in the next season of ministry and what God has for you. Said, so honored to meet you. Literally got up, gave me a hug. Hey thanks brother. Thanks for encouraging me. Thanks for praying for me and my family. Total stranger on the other side of the country. I go into the restroom. I come out, I'm eating. And they call me over to their table. He said, do you know what, could we just pray for you now? I said, yeah. So they bowed their heads, closed their eyes, prayed for me and my family. And then, one of the pastors opened his eyes. He said, Pastor Mark, can I share something with you? I said yeah. He said when I was praying for you, I feel like God gave me a vision. Do tell. He said, I saw you and your family pack all of your belongings, move across the country to a place where the sun always shines, that God would have a wonderful ministry for you, and that it's gonna be a great season. He said, does that make any sense? I said, my flight is leaving. I'm flying to Arizona right now. Grace and the kids are flying to meet me there. And we are asking the Lord if we can move there. And I'm meeting with some of the senior pastors and godfathers of the church in the valley asking if they would receive us. I said, so yeah, this makes a lot of sense from a total stranger at a Mexican restaurant in Florida. Do you know what that is? The grace of God. God could have just told me what his destiny was, but he told this man so we could both have joy. So I got on the plane, I landed, we toured. Grace is like, I love it here. Talkin' to the kids. They're askin' like, do we get a pool? We're havin' those conversations. And it was okay, where we gonna live? Where we gonna go to school? What are we gonna do? I don't know but if God's grace is there, if we just get to God's grace, the rest will figure itself out. The pastor said, we welcome you to the valley, we'd like you to come. So we packed up our stuff and we moved. And we only took minimal belongings with us. We left everything in our house up north. And then about maybe 100 foot cedar tree fell on our house. We are renting a VRBO waiting for our home to sell so we can get our equity in our belongings. Now I'm the father of five children. Elementary, middle school, high school, and college. All of our possessions are in a home that is now filled with squirrels and deer. I was there. Our equity is there. I have none of my possessions and none of my wealth. And the house that we're staying in smelled like Satan farted. It did. Some of you say, what does it smell like? That house, okay. So when the tree fell on our house, I jumped on a plane and I flew up. And it was the middle of the night and I hopped the fence, and the power is out and it's a storm. And I'm looking at 100 foot tree crashed all the way through the house. And I kid you not, it split the bed that Grace and I sleep in down the middle on an early Saturday morning. And in one moment I was thinking, God, what am I gonna do? My family's in another state. Our possessions are in this state. All my equity is in this house. I don't know what we're gonna do. I don't have a job. I don't know how this is gonna work out. And then I remembered, Grace and I would be dead. And our five babies would have no mom or dad. And I just thought, well, praise God I wasn't in bed. That was the grace of God. Now we had to find a school for the kids. How many of you are new to the valley and you've tried that? Oh, we didn't understand the charter school system. And so we're late. We're on the waiting list. We're tryin' to get all these kids slotted into schools. They had a great school up north. One kid kinda got into school. Another kid didn't get into their school. Wait-listed at this school. Two of our kids got into one school. We went to take the two kids to the school and one of the kids turned into a cage fighter. Literally he's in the back of the car. He's like I'm not goin' to this school. This is not my school. I will not

go. It was like, all right Lord, I receive that as a word. Okay so. I'm literally tryin' to... Hey, Pastor Mark here, welcome. All right, gotta give this kid grace. Back in the car, all right. So Grace is fillin' out forms and I'm freakin' out. We don't have a school for the kids. So then we found a school. We thought, well that could be it. They said sorry, we're full, wait-listed. No way, all of your grades are the biggest for all of your kids. There's zero hope. Well just please put us on the wait-list. All right, but you're like number 1,017 on the list. Okay, then they called 24 hours before school starts. Oh well, actually there's so many kids in this particular grade that we've opened an additional class. Your kid made it. That takes you from an inactive to an active family. You're now on the active list which was the grace of God. And then they called back a few hours later. They said, well you'll never guess what. Every age of your kids, somebody dropped out. Your kids all slotted and they can all go to the same school, start tomorrow. That is the grace of God. So we're tryin' to figure out, okay, Lord, what do you have for us to do? Kids called a meeting. Dad, we miss preachin'. Let's start a church. You started the first one before we were born. Let's do this one as a family project. Do you know what, when your kids love Jesus and want to serve Him, you know what that is? The grace of God. What do you want to name it? The Trinity Church, 'cause their grandma and grandpa planted a church called the Trinity Church and pastored it for decades. Okay, that's great. We made a list of things to pray for, people. So thanks for bein' here. And we prayed for a building. And I flew out to meet with one of my overseers, Pastor Jimmy Evans, one of our pastors. And he said, what are you gonna do for a building? I said, well I'm thinkin' about rentin'. He's like no, no, no. You're gonna buy one. I was like, I don't have people or money. Most of the time a bank would like to see people and money before they give you real estate. He said no, no. You're gonna buy a building. It'll be a historically designated church. You won't have to bring it up to code. Probably off the 101. I think it'll seat 800. It'll seat 800. That's very specific. So I go back, I tell the kids. Well here you go. So I call the realtor. He's like, that church doesn't exist. It's never existed. It's a new city, not an old city. We don't have old buildings. There's nothing near the 101. There's nothing that seats that many. This doesn't exist. Hey Jimmy, it doesn't exist. It will. It's coming. All right. Next thing I know I get a call. There is a building. Where is it at, off the 101. I'm gonna go look at that. So Gideon and I jumped in the car after baseball practice. He still had his uniform on and the eye black under. And we pulled over and looked around at night. And Gideon raised a hand and prayed. He felt like this was gonna be the building that God was gonna give us. The building couldn't be sold and there was a tenant renting it. It had had years of deferred maintenance and it was in really rough shape. The church vacated, gave us the keys. We got the keys the 50th anniversary, the grand opening Sunday of the building. And then it came available for purchase. It had not been available for purchase for many, many years. And we got to purchase it. And I told the denomination, I was like, well I don't have a down payment and no bank is gonna take us 'cause we don't have any people or money. And he said, we'll serve as your bank. You'll figure it out. That is grace of God from other Christians. And so we needed a certain amount for a down payment. A friend called, asked me what do you need? I said, I'm not gonna tell you. I said, how much can you send? And he told me the amount and it was to the dollar of what we needed to execute the purchase and sale. And he wired it. Next thing I know, dozens of churches, more than 40 from around the valley and world start sending things and money. And then we got to start working on the property. And we started with work parties on Sundays.

Some of you were here for those. And you know what, lots of wonderful people showed up and got their hands dirty. That was the grace of God. And now we have a church home. And it's filled with people who get to learn about the grace of God in a place that exists because of the grace of God. You know what was interesting, at Easter we set up every potential chair in the room. Pastor Brannon came up to me and he said, it seats 793. And then we looked up at the booth and he said, oh my gosh, there's seven seats in the booth. It seats 800. There's grace for you. There's grace for your future. What happens is we look into the future and we just have fear because we don't see God's grace. But we need to trust that the God of grace and the grace of God will be there. And that allows us to proceed forward in faith rather than just being paralyzed with fear. Okay, here's what I can tell you. God isn't showing you the grace he has for your future because he wants you to live by faith. And the faith is in the God who was gracious to you yesterday will be gracious to you tomorrow. And so I want to just tell you this. We love you, you're a means of grace. And every time I walk onto this property and see these people, I just feel overwhelmed by the grace of God, okay. And here's what I just want you to covenant with me, that the Trinity Church would always be a place of grace. When you walk on property just remind yourself, this is the grace of God. When you see people, this is the grace of God. When you see kids runnin' around in the backyard, this is the grace of God. We want to be a place where people are built up not beat up, where their burdens are lifted, their burdens aren't given, and where the grace of God is poured out. And for some reason uniquely on this ministry, and God pours out grace everywhere, but he's just been really generous with grace upon grace here. And I love you and it's an honor to teach you God's word. But I want you to receive God's grace. So we're gonna give you means of grace. We're gonna call the band forward. We're gonna sing some songs. You know why? Because it's a means of grace. It's good for the soul. It's a way of connecting with the Lord and giving burdens to the Lord, and giving needs to the Lord, and receiving the specific grace that you need from that same Lord. As well, we're gonna partake of communion, which is remembering the broken body and shed blood of Jesus which is the... That's the grace of God. When Jesus said on the cross it is finished, all the work was done and you just get to enjoy the grace. I love ya. Won't you just rise with me, stand up. I'll pray and we'll sing. Father God, we don't have words that are sufficient or magnificent enough to communicate just the overwhelming sense of awe that we have at the grace that has been poured out through Jesus Christ. So, God, as we come to sing, give us some measure of words to express in response just how we love this grace. We receive this grace. God as we sing, we send this grace back to you. As we sing, we send this grace out to each other. As we partake of communion, we receive this grace, and we acknowledge that we are forgiven and we leave here to share this grace, to be means of grace, to love, to bless, to forgive, to heal, to serve and unburden. Not because we have to but because we get to. Not because you make us, but because you invite us by your grace. Jesus, we love you and we just now invite you, Holy Spirit, to make this a time of grace and a place of grace where the people of God can experience the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.