

## Romans #35 - Real Ministry: People

- Well, howdy, gonna be super fun, hey, we only got two sermons left in the book of Romans. I hope you've enjoyed the book of Romans. We've been going through it for about a year, super fun, we're in Romans chapter 16, it's a great book in the New Testament, and if you're brand new, this sermon is gonna change your life, this will be the best seven hours you've ever spent, it's going to be incredible, all right, and so let me start as you're finding your place in Romans chapter 16, I was out to dinner recently with my wife, Grace, when it gets a little hot in the valley, we like to head up to the mountains, and so we we're up in the mountains and it was dinner time, so, we drove in and we went to this restaurant it was around six or 6:30 and a young girl at the hostess stand is, I walked in, I was like, "Yeah, table for two." She said, "I'm sorry, we're closing." I was like "Closing, it's your restaurant, you do one thing, food. And it's like 6, 6:30 it's dinner time, it's food time." And she said, "I'm sorry." She said, "We don't have enough staff to stay open for dinner." She said, "We can't." She said, quote, "We can't get anyone to show up to work and serve." I was like, "I'm so sorry, it's all right." I found the manager, I was like, "Are you gonna make it?" He's like, "I don't know, we can't get anybody to come to work and serve." And it's a problem nationally. If you're an employer you know, right now, if you're an employer you're like, "We're gonna pay you lots of money, we'll pay for college, we'll come wake you up, we'll rub your feet." I mean, you're putting in all these incentives just to try to get 20 somethings to show up to work. Meanwhile, the government's writing checks, and so, we've got ourselves into this situation, and so, this is a national problem and it's playing itself out locally. So after this restaurant, we started driving around, next restaurant, closed, has a big sign that says, "Help wanted, now hiring." And over and over and over, we couldn't get dinner, because people don't wanna show up to work and serve. Meanwhile, compare, contrast that, with the church of Jesus Christ, the largest movement, of any sort or kind in the history they were billions of people a day, are Christians, churches are open, and what you'll see when you show up at a church, is a bunch of people that are unpaid volunteer serving. Can we just take a moment and thank them? Amen, yeah. And if you're new to Christianity, you'd show up at a church like ours and say, "Wow, they must have a huge staff." Actually, most churches don't have a very small staff, and it's a bunch of people who love Jesus and love you, who volunteer to serve, they're doing things for free that we can't incentivize and pay people to do, and that is to serve, because our God is Jesus and He came down, not to be served, but to serve, and he sets in motion for us, an example of servant hood, and that is the value of our King and his kingdom. Well, what this ties into is Romans chapter 16, what he is going to do, the apostle Paul, we've looked at is his theology, now we're gonna look at his relationships. We've gotten into his head, now we're gonna get into his heart, and he's gonna give us a list of people that he honors and he commends and he publicly thanks for volunteering to serve Jesus Christ through local church ministry. So what we're gonna do, if you can believe this, we're gonna go through a whole list of names, that's it, that's what we're doing. Now, I'll be honest, when I first started reading the Bible, when I hit the list of names, I skipped them, in the Old Testament like, "Great, I'm gonna just fly, right." That's the Hebrew phone book, "I don't need that, I, I'm not gonna call any of those people." Get to the New Testament, "Oh, adorable." Roman phone book, "Don't need that

either." Now that I've been a pastor 25 years, what I find is that the names of people, are some of my favorite places in the Bible, because these are people that God loves, these are people that God saves, these are people that God pursues and He works in and through, these are people whose lives and legacies and destinies were altered, and they're part of our spiritual family. If they belong to our God, we're gonna see them, we're gonna, this is what's so crazy, you're gonna meet these people in heaven. They're gonna be like, "Hey, did you read Romans?" "Yeah." "Did you read the names?" "Yeah." You know, yeah, so, these are real people that are with Jesus right now, and we're gonna learn about them, and so, we're gonna start right into Romans chapter 16:1-2 how God does ministry through real people. He says, "I commend to you our sister, Phoebe." She's right at the top of the list, "A servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you." Paul saying, "I give her a blank check, I trust her." "For she has been a patron of many and of myself as well." So the list starts with Phoebe. Her name means bright or pure, she's the girl When she shows up, things, get brighter, things get better, when she shows up, it's gonna be a good day, she just that girl. In addition, it says that she is from Cenchreae, so, what is probably happening here, most believe that when the apostle Paul writes this letter to the church at Rome, he is in the city of Corinth, and Cenchreae is just a bit south of Corinth, and what Paul told us previously in chapter 15, he's collected a special offering financially, that he's going to take to Jerusalem. He talks about this in 2 Corinthians 8-9. And that as he's taking the offering to Jerusalem, then he's going to go to Rome. His hope in Rome is to spend time with the Roman Christians, he's never been to that city or church, to have some people join his ministry, pray for him and financially support him, so that then he can move into a region called Spain, where he can do more church planning, Bible teaching, and telling people about Jesus. And what he is saying here is that, "She is coming from the region of Cenchreae." So what this means is, he is sending Phoebe ahead of himself, she's living near him at the time, and she is going to prepare the way. She is probably single, her husband is not mentioned, the couples are mentioned in the remainder of this section. She is either a widow or a single girl, but she is probably very affluent. She's probably a wealthy, wealthy woman, she's called the patron, that's somebody who writes checks, that's what the Greek word means, they write checks. This is a person who funds things. She's, it says that she's funded a lot of ministries, especially Paul's, because when there's a vision, there needs to be provisioned. If somebody is on the frontline doing the work, somebody needs to be on the supply line, funding, the work. And so, she is generous, she's probably a business owner or a leader, a very successful and competent woman, and he's sending her ahead, I believe for two reasons, number one, to prepare for his coming, "Hey, Paul's coming, they're gonna need this kind of housing and how can he help and love and serve." And so, she's functioning as an adversary for him. In addition, here's the crazy thought, just think about this for a moment, so, the book of Romans is written, and so now we got one copy and it's really important, that when we deliver this, we don't lose it. How many of you have recently moved to California, and you lost some stuff? We don't wanna lose the book of Romans in the move. So he's gotta hand it to somebody to deliver, it's most likely Phoebe, that may be why she's at the top of the list. She's a very dependable, very honorable, a strong, competent, successful affluent woman of God, and she is serving in Paul's ministry as a volunteer. And it says that she is three things, she's a servant of the church. It says in the Bible

that Jesus Christ loves the church and gave himself up for her. The Bible says that Jesus loves the church so much, that he's like a groom and the church is like a bride. You can't love Jesus and hate his bride. You can't love Jesus and slap his bride, you need to love Jesus and serve his bride, and what it says is that she served the church. So often our motives are selfish and not serving, "What's in it for me, what benefits me?" This woman, it's what benefits you, "How can I help you?" It also says, in addition to being a servant of the church, that she is a saint. What this means that, not that she's perfect, but she's loved by a perfect God, and let me tell you this, if you are a Christian, your identity is saint. It doesn't matter what you've done, it matters what Jesus has done. It doesn't matter about your failures, it's about his successes, it's not about the things that you have done that are dirty, it's the things that he has done to make you clean. I'm telling you, once you meet Jesus, you are not who you were, you are a brand new you, you're not yet perfect, but the perfect Jesus has a plan that ends with you being perfect, and so, he names you in advance what your destiny will be, no longer just sinner, but now beloved saint. And she is a saint, she is a great woman of God, and it says that she is a patron, so she's also very generous. There is a principle in the Bible called the principle of first and in the principle of first, when there is a list of names, oftentimes, the person named first is given that position of prominence and preeminence, there's a particular regard for them. Well, give you an example, so there's 12 disciples that Jesus picks, okay? Who's the human leader of the 12, who's the leader?

- [Woman] Peter.

- Peter is, and then there's a dirt, spoiler alert, if you've not read the whole New Testament, Jesus does have a dirt on his, he always got one dirt on your team, so, who's His dirt? Judas Iscariot, so when you read the list of the names of the 12 disciples throughout the New Testament, Peter is always named first because he's the leader, Judas is always named last 'cause he's the dirt. Here, Phoebe is named first. I believe that this is a particular honor to her as an incredible woman of God. And so it starts by saying that she is coming, she will be helping organize and architect the ministry, she will be helping the fundraising and the prayer meetings and the ministry planning and the church planting, Paul is sending her with, I believe the book of Romans, and full authority and what he says is, "When she speaks, hear my voice, whatever she asks for, that's a request from me." Massive honor, to this incredible woman of God. The story then continues and we're gonna meet some more people. The next couple is one of my favorite in the whole Bible, Priscilla and Aquila, he says, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila." Romans 16:3-5, 'My fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life.' How many of you, if you see somebody and he's like, "I think they're gonna die." You're like, "Oh, I'll be praying for you from a safe distance," right? These people actually get in the action. If Paul is in it, they're in it with him. "To whom not only I give thanks, but all the Churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church that meets in their house." This is a tremendous power couple. They serve with Paul in the city of Corinth, they move and then relocate, serve with him to the city of Ephesus. I've been to both and the archeological digs, it's an amazing journey they would have taken, and now it says that they're going all the way to Rome, which is an incredible relocation. Priscilla and Aquila are one of the great ministry couples in the entire Bible, they do everything

together. They are one, they're probably successful financially, because if you can afford to volunteer full-time and move city to city, you're doing pretty good, right? And so some of you, we're here in Scottsdale, Arizona. We're down the street from a place called Paradise Valley, which probably means, they're doing good, and what it may mean, is that God has given some of you money, affluence, wealth, business experience and margin, not to retire, but to invest in the kingdom of God. And that's what happens with Phoebe, and that's what happens with Priscilla and Aquila, they take their money, they buy their margin and time so they can serve and do and fund ministry. Wherever Paul goes, Priscilla and Aquila go, whatever their, whatever he's doing, they're doing, and sometimes Priscilla is listed first, sometimes Aquila, and some then we'll debate. And they will wonder, "Well, does this mean that she was the leader or he was the leader?" And not to get super technical, but among the theologians, this ends up in a bit of a fight, now don't worry, nobody's ever gotten hurt in a fight between theologians. they throw syllogisms not punches and they never leave the keyboard, so nobody's going to the hospital it's gonna be fine. But the point is this, they're both equally strong leaders and Bible teachers, and as a result, one day, he's really helpful, the next day she's really helpful. But together they get an incredible amount of ministry done. They are a tremendous inspiration to me personally, and I love doing ministry with my wife, Grace. So when we first started doing ministry, we didn't have kids, then we had kids and we had five kids, I know she can't keep her hands off me, pray for me, we're working it through and then I shouldn't have said that, but she's not here, so don't tell her, so, so what happened then we start having five kids and Grace is really, really busy, so we didn't get to do a lot of ministry together. Now that our kids are a little older and grown, they're doing ministry with us, and Grace and I are like Priscilla and Aquila, we kinda get to do everything together, which is really, really great and it builds the marriage. Here's the big idea, the couple that serves together stays together. Sometimes, what you're looking for is, "Well, what can we do to bring us together?" How about serve the Lord Jesus? And if you put ministry and others, and life in the spirit, in the center of the marriage, I promise you, you will grow closer together as you serve together, that's been our experience. What I love about Priscilla and Aquila is well, they're both strong Bible teachers, they raise up one of the greatest Bible teachers and preachers in the New Testament, a man named Apollos. He's one of the three guys who is incredible at preaching. It says in one section, that some people prefer Peter, some prefer Paul and some prefer Apollos. That's quite a category, that guy got saved, trained and raised up, by Priscilla and Aquila in their house. They're getting some serious work done, let me just say this, we have some Priscilla and Aquila couples in this church. There are some amazing epic, godly, incredible, couples that serve together there, I, it's one of the great joys of being your pastor. I see couples walk in holding hands, and they serve Jesus together. You will see that in every area of our ministry, husbands and wives, doing life, and serving in ministry together. It's just one of the great joys, and when you see those couples, could you do me a favor and just thank them? When you see them, could you just honor them? Could you appreciate them? How many places can you go in the world, and see happily married couples serving Jesus together? That is a supernatural miracle that we wanna honor every single time we see it, and that is the life and legacy of Priscilla and Aquila, and it says that they have a church meeting in their home. So, when Christianity first started to spread after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians met in various places, sometimes they met in homes because they

were persecuted and they were underground. Some of these homes would be very large, I've been to the archeological digs in ancient cities like Corinth and Ephesus and places that the New Testament mentioned, some of these homes are very large, so they could have had large gatherings. In addition, sometimes they would meet in a synagogues, because Jesus was Jewish. He fulfilled the Jewish prophecies, and the synagogues were kinda like our local churches, they were buildings in communities for believers to gather. So, when many would meet Jesus, they would meet at the synagogue. In addition, some would meet in Jerusalem, and these large areas called the Temple Courts, and sometimes they would use civic buildings and other buildings as well and sometimes even the houses were built in a rectangular fashion, so that they had a large courtyard that you could get hundreds of people in. When we think house church, we think, "Oh, it's a couple of people." Well, it could be a couple of people or a couple of 100 people, but ultimately, what they did, they opened their home for ministry, and let me just say, that this is one of the greatest ways to create healthy marriage and family, is to bring ministry home. We're so glad that you're in God's house, but we want God to be in your house. We're so glad you're in God's house, but we want God to be in your house, and in our ministry, this would be what we call life groups. These are people who open their home, have people over for dinner, prayer, maybe a little bit of worship, Bible study, friendship, relationship, it's following in the legacy of Priscilla and Aquila. And then he goes on, he's gonna keep doing the list of names, 16:5 "Greet my beloved." Now this is the point, where I don't know how to pronounce the names going forward. Because I went to public school, and so, I mean, you homeschool folks, you would nail this, but not me. So what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna do what I always do, and I would recommend if you ever get to teach the Bible publicly and you hit names, fast and confident, that's how you do it, 'cause nobody else knows, okay? So just fast and confidence. So that's what we're gonna do, and if I don't know how to say it, I'm just gonna, I'm gonna make something up, okay? So, "Greet my beloved Epiphen who was the first convert." "To Christ in." That's just the first thing that came to mind, all right. "In Asia," and so, what I love here is, "Can he do that?" "He does it all the time." Okay, so, there's also a principle in the Bible called first fruits and that is the, when something is first, there is more to come. So when you pick the first apple, there's a harvest that is coming and that first apple is the first fruits. What it's saying here is, in this entire region of Asia, this was the first person to become a Christian, and in his wake in, his wake and legacy is going to be a lot of other Christians, so, in life, there are certain days that are very sacred. The day you get saved, that's a significant day. The day you get married, in the history of our church, we had our first informational meeting about five years ago, that was the first. We had our first, and many of you are still here. We had our first work party around five years ago. This place looked like an episode of church orders, it was rough, and we've thrown out, I don't know, 60 or 70 semi sized dumpsters. So if you have the gift of picking things up, we are the ministry for you. And so, we had our first work party about five years ago, and many of the people who showed up for the first work party, they're still here, and now God's added to them, a lot of other dear faithful saints who are also serving. We had our first service five years ago, we're gonna celebrate that here in September with our birthday. We, I remember our first wedding we had, it was up in the mountains, that couple is still here, apparently getting along 'cause they have children, and that's how you know you're getting along, and so, they're still here and they were our first wedding, the first wedding in the building,

I still remember it, that couple is still here, loving and serving Jesus, doing the Priscilla and Aquila plan. I still remember the first baptism, that was our youngest daughter Alexie. And I got to kiss her on the head, and it was one of the great days of my life, and the principle of first is that, there are things that are once, and then, they become patterns and habits. We just had our first ever student camp, and the Holy Spirit showed up in a significant and powerful way in the lives of the students, and so, what he's talking about here is this principle of first and first converts. So let me say this, if you're here and you don't know Jesus, you may be asking yourself, "Why am I here?" You're here to meet Jesus, that's why you're here.

- [Woman] Amen.

- [Man] Amen.

- I'll just tell you some great news, there's a God. As you look at this world, isn't it nice to know that there's a God over it?

- [Congregation] Yes, yeah.

- That's the only hope for it.

- [Man] Amen.

- In addition, that God made this world as a gift for you and I, and He made you in his image and likeness, He loves you. He knows every longing of your heart. He knows every breath of your lungs. He knows every hair on your head, now this God is good, and He has laws and rules by which He governs, and you and I have violated those laws and rules, and the Bible calls that sin. And God knew that that sin would separate us from Him, because He is holy and He can not have a relationship with us who are unholy, but in his great affection and love, He didn't give us something to do. He sent his son to do everything, and so, Jesus Christ is God, become man, your creator entering into creation. And he came because he loves you. He came because you need Him. He came because apart from Him, there is no forgiveness of sin, there is no conquering of death, there is no eternal life, there is no hope beyond the grave. I'm very happy to report that everyone named in this list is with Jesus right now. They're still alive, and I'm telling you right now, this is a very good day for them, and every day is a very good day for them, because once you meet Jesus, your eternal life begins, and once you die, you see Him face to face, and all of this promises become reality. This God who made you, Jesus Christ. He lived without any sin, the perfect life, the only perfect life in the history of planet earth, and then He did the most incredible sacrificial act of service the world has ever seen. He went to the cross and He suffered and died in your place, for your sins, that He took your place, so that he could put you in his place. He took death, so you could have life. He took condemnation, so you could receive salvation. He took separation from God, so that you could have reconciliation with God. His name is Jesus, He loves you, He has a plan for you, He has a destiny for you, and He has a heart that is open to you right now. Not only did Jesus die, He rose. And he conquered

Satan, sin, death, hell and the wrath of God, and He proved His claims to be God, and He's the only founder of any major world religion, who has ever claimed to be God, and He proved it by walking away from his grave, defeating death. And if you're here, Jesus loves you, and it's time for you to respond to Him. And all you need to do, is just in your heart or in your mind, just say, "Jesus, I'm a sinner, I receive you as my savior." And you can join this list of dear people who are beloved of God, forgiven of God, chosen by God, secure by God, and for those of us who are Christians, we will tell you this, it's the most important decision we've ever made, and it's the only decision we've never regretted or second-guessed. Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- I've never met anybody met Jesus said, "That was the problem." Everybody who's ever met Jesus realizes that that is the greatest thing ever happened to them, and that's why you were here, and He was, this man was the first convert in this entire region, we'd invite you to join him today, the story continues, "Greet Mary," I can read that one, Romans 16:6, "Who has worked hard for you." Now, what it says about Mary, is she worked hard, but for who? For you, there are oftentimes people that have mixed motives. They're often, so, "Okay, I'll serve, but what's in it for me, okay, you owe me, how, this is a favor, I'm gonna call in later." There's strings attached, Mary is pure hearted, she's steadfast, she's loyal, she's hardworking, she's godly and she has pure motives. You know that she's in it for the best interest of others. What I like to say is that there are two kinds of people, there are burdened givers and burdens lifters, okay? A burden givers, we love you you make it hard, but we love you, but the burden givers, when they show up, you could just hear the truck backing up, Poo, poo, poo, poo, poo. You're like, "Okay, here comes the load. Here's all the things that they're gonna make me do." Okay, and if some of you are like, "I don't know anyone like that." That's you, okay, so, just a little spoiler alert. Now, in addition to burden givers, there are burdened lifters, when they show up, they're, "How can I help? Where can I serve? What value can I add? How, what can I take off of your plate?" Mary is, she's a burden lifter, she's not a burden giver. What it says is that she worked hard for you. What that means is, she's not dumping things on you, she's removing responsibilities from you. In addition, goes on to talk about a couple other guys, "Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They're well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me." Romans 16:7, one of the big debates here is, are these guys or girls? Because these names in the ancient world, they could be male or female, like all Pat, right? If your name is Pat, I apologize. So, it's like, "Is that a guy or girl?" It's like, "I don't know, Look for the Adam's apple, it could go either way." Right? I'm gonna be careful what I say here. And so, naughty mind. And so, with with these names, the debate is, is it guys or girls? If it's two guys, they think, "Well, it might be friends or brothers." If it's a guy and a girl, they think it's probably a husband and a wife, that's my assumption, "This is probably another husband and wife, ministry in marriage serving Jesus together couple." And what it says about them, it says that they are kinsmen. That means that they are Jewish, they are Jewish as is Paul, that they are fellow prisoners, they were willing to go to prison with Paul. When Paul got harassed, attacked, maligned, he starts a few riots, he spends time in prison, his life is complicated and there's so devoted to him that they go to prison with him. That's an incredible commitment. That's an incredible commitment, what he

says is, "They went to jail with me." The point is this, you've gotta figure out where your line is, what you're willing to endure for suffer for your Christian faith. For some people, it's like, "Well, they said something bad about me, therefore, I'm going to not talk about Jesus." Or where is that line for you? For these people, it was, "We'll go to jail for Jesus. If Jesus is willing to go to the grave for me, I'm willing to go to the pen for Him." The price of Christianity is gotten higher. The culture is not trending in our direction. I'm telling you that throwing people in jail, because they are loyal to Jesus, is not something that just happened in the past, I'm telling you it's going to happen in the present and in the future. And we don't need to pick a fight, but if a fight is picked, we need to make sure that we know who our loyalty is to, and be willing to pay whatever price that might be, to remain loyal to the one who is loyal to us. And these people demonstrate this by going to prison with Paul. In addition, it goes on to say, that they have been Christians longer than Paul, he says, "They were in Christ before me." Sometimes you meet people that they've been walking with Jesus longer than you, so they're further down the road, and as a result, you can learn from them and you can follow them and Paul seems to indicate, "They've been Christians longer than me, so they're a little further down the road and I can even learn from them." And then it says that this couple, I believe it is a couple. That they are well known among the apostles, some of your translations will say, they are apostles. And this leads to some confusion, we'll get into this in the next series on spiritual gifts, I just wrote a 35,000 word book, I'll give to you, it's got a whole section on the gift of apostle. There are small apostles and big apostles, big apostles are the 12, chosen by Jesus, eye witnesses to the resurrection, the lowercase apostles, it's a gift, for church planting, missions, evangelism, spiritual parenting, pastoring pastors, leading leaders, convening, writing, those are apostolic gifts, and I believe what Paul is saying here is that this couple they're gifted. So, he is sending them ahead, they have been ministering with him, hence their time in prison, and he is sending them to the Roman church, and what he's saying is, "These people know how to raise money, they know how to architect plans, they know how to scout out culture, they know how to plant churches, they know how to raise up leaders, they've been with me a long time. They're seasoned and skilled in their apostolic gifting, and I'm sending them in advance, and they're going to help prepare for my journey into Spain." Let me say people like this are incredibly helpful. They help everyone use their gifts so that the mission of God can advance and continue. And they do so as a married couple, which again, I think is absolutely incredible. Now, from this point forward, we're gonna deal with a bunch of other people, but what is said about them is much shorter, and oftentimes, all we get is there their name, and then maybe one word about them, and for some of these people, either the name is a nickname or the one word may be a nickname, here's the big idea, we give nicknames to two kinds of people, the people we love the most, the people hate the most. Then you laugh 'cause you're guilty, okay, I got you. Because when we love someone, we give them a name or a nickname to personalize, when it's someone that we hate, we depersonalize. We no longer have to treat them as a human being, they're a caricature frozen in time, and there is no opportunity for them to escape the sort of cemented identity, what Paul's gonna do here, he's gonna give us names and nicknames, and they're all positive, they're all encouraging, they're all building people up, they're not beating people down, and it's a good model for us all, and so, we'll start, 16:8 "Greet Amplifier, my beloved in the Lord." I probably could have said that, I'll try, Ampliatius, maybe that's it, I like the Amplifier, so we're call him,

"Greet Amplifier, my beloved in the Lord." All it says is, here's his name, one thing we know about him, what is it?

- [Congregation] Beloved.

- He's beloved. God loves him, let me just tell you, that's enough. Unlike other religions, you need to be good. In Christianity, you just need to be loved, that's it. That God loves to see you, that's it, that's everything, that's the end zone, that's the finish line. And what's amazing is, in most religions, love is at the finish line, not at the starting line. You gotta perform, you gotta work, maybe you gotta die, you gotta reincarnate, you gotta do something, love is at the finish line, if you make it. With Christianity, love is where? It's at the starting line. God says, "I love you, now go live your life." We live from his love, not for his love, because love is never conditional, if it is truly love. And what it says is, he is beloved, now think about that. This letter is written to a church, Paul, has not yet visited this church. So the letter arrives prior to his arrival. "Hey, we got a letter for Paul, might be a book or the Bible, come check it out." Everybody gets together, they're sitting there, imagine you're sitting there and you read Romans, you're like, "That's incre, wow, this incredible teaching." And then at the end, pastor's reading is, "Okay there, we're down to the last chapter, says greet Ampliatus." All of a sudden, you and Ampliatus, you're like, "I wonder what he's gonna say. I wonder if he's gonna talk about my DUI, or my high school girlfriend, or my high school girlfriend's DUI." You know, "I wonder what we're gonna talk about." How to be like a anx, imagine that's you, imagine right now, I'm, and I'm not gonna do this, but I'm reading a list of names and there's yours. And I, we, I gotta pick one word to describe you. Imagine that, imagine your whole life comes down to one word, and then he hears this, "Beloved." Oh, that's good to hear. You know what? You can't be told too much that God loves you.

- [Woman] Yes.

- Because every day the enemy says he doesn't or we do something that tests whether or not we believe He will continue to love us. I tell my kids I love them all the time. God's our father, He tells you, he loves you all the time. He's gonna use this word over and over in here, to talk about his people, beloved. God loves you. He can't love you any less, He can't love you anymore. He's given His whole heart to you, and He will never take it back. I know that some of you have been betrayed, but God's not a betrayer. I know that some people have said that they've loved you and they've used and abused or abandoned you, God is not like them. The love of God is the most secure thing in all the universe, you can build your whole life on it you can build your marriage on it, you could build your family on it, you could build your business on it, you can build your ministry on it, you could build your legacy on it, forever. The love of God is the most secure thing in all of the universe, God loves you so much. He adores you, this is what's crazy, God likes you, He's chosen for you to hang out with Him forever, and He didn't have to, but he wanted to, because He adores you. And His love is so powerful that His love will receive you, where you are, but it will change who you are. It's not in my notes, it's just in my heart, I'm just thinking about it, I just feel like I'm supposed to tell you something, and the Holy Spirit can

confirm whether it's true or false for you. We live in this world where it's all about tolerance and just accepting people, and let me say that God loves you so much, that He'll take you as you are, but He loves you too much to allow you to stay as you are. God's love is greater than tolerance, because tolerance says, "Nothing needs to change." And love says, "I accept you, but I adore you so much, I want the best for you, so my love is going to make you like my son, Jesus Christ." And so, the love of God begins where you are, but it doesn't end until you are with and like Jesus, the beloved, the beloved. I want you just to, to just grasp this please, and just hold this as your treasure, you're beloved. This is the language that a groom uses for his bride, beloved. This is the language that a grandparent uses for their grandchild, beloved, this is the language that God the Father speaks over you, beloved. It's incredible, we get a guy's name, and God says, "One word, I love him." Let me just say, if were in Christ, Christ is the beloved, if you were in Christ, you are beloved. Let me just pray for you, Father, I just ask that the Holy Spirit would just absolutely, sow this amazing, simple word, beloved, into the hearts of all of your people, that Holy Spirit, I just think of Romans 5 that we learned a while back, that God pours out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit whom He has given us. God, these people are beloved, and you've poured out your love into them, Holy Spirit, would they sense it now. Would that love wash out shame, would that love wash out guilt, would that love wash out anger, would that love wash out fear, would that love wash out loneliness, would that love utterly flood these dearly beloved people. Holy Spirit, would your love bring to them refreshing and renewing, encouraging blessing and life in the spirit. And Lord, I just thank you so much that, that the Bible says that God is love. And so God, we have this inexhaustible, inexpressible, indistinguishable source of love, and that is our infinite God who is love, and God I thank you, that there is love for all of your children. I thank you that in your family, all of your children are beloved, and unlike some broken family homes and systems, you don't play favorites, you love all of your kids with the fullness of your love. You speak blessing over all of your children with the fullness of blessing. Holy Spirit, we ask right now that you would rain down, supernatural love upon your people and into their hearts, and that they would know that they would know, that they would know, that they would know, that they are beloved, in the name of the beloved we pray, and we ask this in the strong name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Just felt like you need to be prayed for, all right, next one, "Greet Urbanus." I wonder if this guy is Australia and I wonder if it's Keith Urbanus, that's kinda my thought. "Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys." So two people here are mentioned, and within this, I really love the fact that they are called a worker and beloved. How many of you, if one word was chosen by God, it would be that, you're a faithful servant, you get things done, people can count on you? And some of you, God gets a lot done through you, and for this other person here Stachys it is called, also beloved, you're gonna see this word used many times. And what it is saying is, that these two people together, perhaps they're friends that maybe why are listed in the same sentence, and it may be that this person is more practical, and this person is more relational, this person gets a lot of work done and this person, they understand love. Some of you are more practical, some of you are more relational, and sometimes when you work

together, you multiply your effectiveness. Nonetheless, when we have relationships with people like this, these are people that it's very easy to do life and get along with, I like to say that relationships are like cars, some get good gas mileage, some get bad gas mileage. Okay? And now, if somebody works very hard to serve, and another person is very secure in their identity with the Lord that they are beloved, those are people that relationships with them get good gas mileage, this person, they're not taking a lot, they're giving a lot, and this person doesn't need you, because their deepest, emotional, spiritual needs are met by their relationship with God, sometimes the reason that people are hard to have a relationship with is that, they don't have a really healthy relationship with the Lord, let me say this, even the best friend is still a bad Jesus. That ultimately, you and I, we need to be loved, we need security, we need dependability, and ultimately, if our love relationship with God is secure, it meets our relational needs to such a degree, that we're now able to love others without needing them, just simply loving and serving them. This is why the two most important things I believe you can learn as we study the Bible, is who God is and who you are. And once your relationship with God is solid in cemented in the beloved, now you can serve others because you don't need them, because those needs are met by God. How is your relationship with God? Do you know that your relationship with God is secure, that you are beloved? If so, you're going to be an easier person to do life with. He continues by naming some others, Romans 16:10 "Greet Appelles, who is approved in Christ." This is incredible. How do you get approved? You get tested, we have this language, blank and blank tested and approved. You take a test, if you pass the test, then you're approved. He's approved, what does that mean? He's been through hell. Some of you, you're not going to hell, but it feels like hell has come to you. Some of you, you have had a torpedo hit the whole of your life. There are people in this room that have battled tremendous, physical ailment or injury, there are people that have been betrayed, there are people that have been divorced, there are people that have been abandoned, there are people that have been rejected and disowned, they've been gutted financially, they've been wrecked and ruined. And here you are, he honors them, I honor you. You still love God, you still trust God, you still serve God, you may be crawling or limping, but you're moving forward, and what it says is, "He's approved." Do you know what it means when you're approved? You got nothing to prove. I'll have to, if you've been approved, you don't need to prove anything to anybody, if you've already been approved by Him. God's like, "They love me, they have nothing to prove. They trust me, they got nothing to prove. They've been through it, they're still in it, they got nothing to prove." Some of you, I just want you to know, how do I say this? I'm not really preaching today, I guess I'm just kinda speaking but... You don't need to prove anything. You don't, who cares what they think?

- [Man] Amen.

- They didn't make you, they're not gonna judge you, and when you die and stand before Jesus, they're not gonna be sitting on his lap, helping. It's between you and Him. Some of you need to, you just need to receive this, I just feel in the spirit that you need to receive this. God looks at you and he says, "You're approved. You got nothing to prove. You don't have to perform for anybody. You don't have to live up to expectations. You don't need to produce results. Who you are, is known by me." The father would say, you've been tested, you passed your test, you are

approved, you got nothing to prove. I hope you would receive that if that word from God is for you. It's so simple and so hard to just live for an audience of one. And sometimes, we need to just stop looking out and asking, "What do they think?" And look up and just ask, "What does He say?" "You're beloved, you're approved." Okay, then the pressure is off and the pleasure begins. It continues, "Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus." I just really like that name, it sounds, it sounds like a fighter, like, "It now, in this corner Aristobulus!" This I just like that, I don't know, I just, I just had to say that, it was in me, so, I feel like emotionally we're on a bit of a roller coaster today. What this means is, there's a family that loves and serves Jesus and who's leading that family? The father, his name is Aristobulus. This is one of the great passions of my heart. And we live in a world that is doing everything that it can to literally remove men from children and families.

- [Man] You're right.

- We, it's just, it is, it's a wholesale effort to eradicate masculinity.

- [Man] Right.

- And as a result, we're trying to replace fathers with governments, which never works. It just leads to brainwashing in schools, and addiction and abuse and confusion, and grief and dependency. And God's answer has always been that a child comes into the world, through a mother and a father, and to raise that child requires, in the best environment, a mother and a father. Now I'm not saying if you're a single parent home, that you're second class or anything like that. But the statistics bear out, that the father is the leader of the family, whether you believe it or not.

- [Woman] Amen.

- See, like, it, over at the university, they'll say, "Well, we don't believe this," I don't care. And I've not cared for 25 years, and I won't care for 25 years. Because if I drop this water bottle, what happens to it?

- [Man] Falls.

- Falls to the ground, because gravity is real, whether you believe in it or not. "So I don't believe in it," well, you will, drop something on your head. All right, so. And what happens is, we think that there's a better way to do marriage and family and parenting and child-rearing than God's designed, and there's not.

- [Man] Right.

- [Woman] Amen.

- [Man] Amen.

- And so, what it's talking about here, it's honoring a father, who's leading his family. I know outside of here, this won't happen, but in this house, we honor fathers, who honor their Father and love and lead their children to become His children.

- [Man] Amen.

- We do. And just to see He's honoring this man, I wanna honor you men, thank you for being here. And I wanna tell you the difference that a dad can make. This is not to in any way, disparage moms, not at all. I was brought into the kingdom by a spirit filled mom who was saved, when I was little, and she prayed me into the kingdom, and my mom was watching and I love her with all my heart. But there was a study done, I shared this with real men. With, there was a study done by the Promise Keepers, a men's organization in the Baptist Press. If mom goes to church and brings young children, but dad doesn't go, when the children become adults, they have a 2% chance of attending church regularly and being a worshiper. When dad goes to church, opens his Bible, praise, sings, all that's God. When the children become adults, there's a 66 to 75% chance that they will go to church and worship God. The Bible says that the man is the head of the household. It doesn't say that he could be or should be or might be. The question is not, is the man the head? The question is, is he doing his job or not? For men who follow the Lord, it is amazing, because statistically, the children are likely to follow them. Let me say this man, being here, opening your Bible, singing, praying, you may ask, "What am I doing?" You are changing generations and legacies.

- [Man] Yes.

- You are making an eternal difference, you men are legacy makers, you are difference makers, you are agents of change, and my hope and prayer and goal, is that there would be a parade of people with your last name, who love and serve Jesus for generations. I pray for your kids, your grandkids, your great-grandkids. I pray that one day in the kingdom of God, there is this massive family reunion, and people that are born long after you're gone, are still following, single file, in your footsteps, following, loving, serving the Lord Jesus, and I can't wait to see the tears in your eyes, and the hugs and the relationships that are built as this great family reunion in heaven occurs, because you are filled with the spirit, and the spirit of God decided to do the same for your family and your legacy for generations. See we, for our men, we're not looking to murder our children, we're looking to minister to our children, because we're God's men, and He honors this man, and so I wanna honor you men. Oh gosh, I'm not going fast enough. Okay. 16:11, "Greet my kinsman Herodion." Just tell you a little bit about him, really, really, really briefly. He's Paul's brother by birth, the new birth, he's Jewish and he loves Jesus. Sometimes somebody loves Jesus and you feel close to them, and then they come from your culture, your ethnicity, your background, maybe you're a first generation, second generation immigrant, and they understand your quirky culture. I mean, so these guys can be like, "You love Jesus, I do too, have you had a ham sandwich yet?" I mean, they're having, sort of those awkward Jewish

conversations for believers, and as a result, they're closer, all right, next one. Chapter 16:11 "Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus." And I bet he is like, "I definitely should have made it, I feel like I'm good enough to be there." So. And again, what it's talking about here, is it's talking about a father who's leading in love his family. So, he, and the family that's with him in the household. So we like to say here at Trinity church, we open our Bibles to learn, we open our lives to love, so the lives and legacies are transformed. Let me say this, the best way to have a healthy family, is to serve Jesus Christ together. Some families they, "We're the hockey family, we're the baseball family, we're the basketball family." That's all good, some families, "We're the ministry family, we're the team Jesus family." This is one of the great joys of my life, is serving the Lord Jesus with my wife Grace, and our five kids, they all love and serve Jesus, and now Grace's mom has moved down and I love her and she's part of our ministry. So now we've got three generations serving Jesus together, and I prophesy, this is not telling you any news, but I prophesy a fourth-generation will arrive at some point. I'm prophesying grandchildren, that's what I'm doing, and when they show up, we want them to love and serve Jesus, and that it would be four generations serving Jesus together in the same church. And that's what he's honoring here, his generational life and legacy and family ministry. He then goes, and he says, "Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa." And their names mean dainty and delicate, so they're like errantly little girls, who get a lot done, and they're friends or sisters and they work together. Sometimes people come together and they serve together, and that's just how they become good friends. Sometimes people are like, "I don't know how to get connected at the church surf." It's really simple, if they're doing something, and you're doing something and you do it together, eventually you're gonna be together. This is the easiest way to develop relationships, is just serving together, and these girls weren't big, but they made a big difference. I kinda see them as like college girls, petite, they love and serve Jesus and they show up together, and they get a lot done, they're super productive and helpful, and when you see them, you're really glad to see them. In addition, he goes on and he's gonna give a next one, "Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord." So there's two things about this guy, God loves him and he works hard. Let me say, if God was to put just few things on your headstone, when your run is done, wouldn't it be great that, "I love them, and they got a lot done." That'd be pretty incredible. God does love you, that's unconditional, you getting a lot done, that's your decision to make. See God works for you and in you, but then you're getting to partner with Him, so that he can work through you. And what it's saying is, that God loves him, and that ultimately, he is a, he's very, very productive. How about this one? I like this next name, Rufus, it's just fun to say. Prof, Ruf, Ruf, Ruf, Rufus, I just liked that. "Greet Rufus, Rufus." "Chosen in the Lord, also his mother, has been a mother to me as well." First thing I'll say is, this is incredible. What it says is, God picked him, she's chosen. We looked at predestination, Romans 9:10-11. We looked at this in depth. It's like, "What does this look like?" I was like, "Hmm, don't take him." Now, you know what? He may not have been a bad, he may not have been a great guy, he may have neck tattoos, and lost he driver's license for his DUI, and he may be a baby mama drama, I don't know what's going on with Rufus, with a name like that, he seems sketchy, all right? And what God says is, "I choose him." Let me say this, if you're a Christian, God chose you. And so you'll be like, "But I don't deserve it." He's like, "Yeah, that's why I chose you." Nobody deserves it. And what's about Rufus, we learned about

his parents, so it's, talks about his mom, let me talk about his dad. Now, we can't prove this, but in Mark 15:21, Jesus is going to the cross, to suffer and die in our place for our sins. He's straining and struggling to carry the cross. So, the government, the soldiers that are present, they assigned somebody to help him carry the cross. And it says that, it is the father of Rufus. If it's the same guy, his dad started ministry, by helping Jesus carry His cross, that's a thing. You're like, "So, tell me your testimony. When did your family start doing ministry?" "Well, when Jesus went to a dome for the sins of the world, my dad carried His cross." "We're greeters, you win," you know. "Rock, paper, scissors, cross carrier, you win." Okay we . That's incred, I mean, that's wow! And it says here, that his mom is like a mother to the apostle Paul, Paul didn't have a wife or kids, he was either divorced or widowed or never married, we don't know, but he's lonely, he's always alone. He's got a very lonely life, he doesn't have a great wife and kids to enjoy his idea, he doesn't have that blessing. But what happens is that, people become like family to him, and if you have a good family, praise God, we want church family to be the double blessing, if you don't have a good family, we want church family to at least be the blessing. And what he says is, "His mom is like a mom to me." Some of the older saints, you need to know that a lot of what you learned in parenting is really preparation for ministry. The lessons you've learned, the life you've lived, it's ministry. And some of you are like, "I don't know how to do ministry, I was just a mom." Let me tell you, the world needs a lot of moms. We all need a mom, and Paul gets a mom with this woman. And I just wanna publicly honor my mother-in-law, she's on vacation, she's moved down, and she's part of our church family. I hit the grand slam home run of the mother-in-law Derby. I love her with all my heart, we get along great, I know some people tell jokes about their mother-in-law, I don't, I love her, we're super close. She attends to church, a lot of people think she's my biological mom, they're like, "I met your mom." "Really? Oh, that's my mother-in-law." And they like, "Oh, I thought she was your mom." "Yeah, she's my other mom." I have a great mom, I love my mom with all my heart. But I tell you, there's something really great about a spirit-filled, godly, wise, helpful, kind woman that is loving you like a mom. There's something just beautiful about that, and I love that Paul says, "Yeah, that's his mom, and if that's his dad, what? That's pretty good parenting right there." You're like, "I also am Paul's adopted mom and dad carried the cross, so there you go." I hope they're teaching the, how to raise a child class at their church, all right? How about this one? "Greet." "Asyncritus, Phlem, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them." So, this is a group of guys, who are doing life and ministry together. Here's how women build their relationships face-to-face. How many of you women? You're like, "Hey, let's get together for coffee, and then I need to see you and you need to see me." How many guys are like? "Yeah, we're not doing that." Like, if you're a guy and you're like, "I just need to look you in the eye for a couple hours." They're like, "No, for sure you don't, for sure you don't, for sure you don't, no." "No, you don't." So the way guys build relationship is shoulder to shoulder. We go to the gun range, "You shoot it and I'll shoot it, see? Love language," okay, so, this is why guys go hunting, they go fishing, they work on projects together, they serve in the military together, they participate in sports together. The best way for men to build relationships, is to find common interests and to do shoulder to shoulder. And what he's saying is, these guys, they all show up together. Sometimes there's a group of guys and you're like, "They all show up, and they're all gonna serve, they're all gonna get stuff done." If you're a man trying to find meaningful Christian relationships, the moral of the story is, find a

place to serve. He's got a few others then, "Greet Phie." It is where I wish I studied as a kid. "Greet Philologus," we'll call him Grandmaster P. "Greet Grandmaster P, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints who were with them." So it lists this guy first, and then it says that all these other people are with him. He's probably the leader of this group. His name literally means, lover of the word, it's probably a nickname, what Paul saying is, "Tell Bible guy." Okay, how many of you are Bible guy, Bible girl? You like studying and people ask you questions, you're like, "I've been training for Bible jeopardy my whole life. Thank you very much." All, right. And you like to teach classes and lead Bible studies and answer questions and you just love that, and the result is, that people that have questions or they wanna learn stuff, they just find you, and around you is a group of people, and you love the word and you love them, so you help them, learn to love the word. You're seeing here different, what I'll call spiritual gifts, Paul said in Romans 1, "I wanna come and impart my spiritual gift, and be benefited from yours." In chapter 12, he gave us a list of spiritual gifts. We're seeing here is giving and serving, and encouragement and helps and mercy, and here we see someone probably with a gift of teaching, and they've got a ministry, and then, I love this. This is how it ends, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." So, in just a moment, I want you to look at your neighbor, and we're gonna, don't just hearers of the word. All right, okay? If you brought your college roommates, gentlemen, it's a bad day, your bad day. So look at your neighbor, no, we're not gonna do that. Now, it was funny though, 'cause all the single guys were like, "Best day ever, I love my church, double tithe, double tithe, double tithe." All the girls were like, "CDC guidelines, six feet, six feet, six feet." Very interesting. There's a difference between principles and methods. God's principles are timeless and the methods are timely. The principles are unchanging and the methods can change. What he's talking about here is a warm, affectionate greeting. So, if you are in the Middle East, they still kiss on the cheek. If you're in the Far East, they bow, and if we're in U.S. or Canada or Europe, what do we do? Shake hands, fist bump or a three tap bro hug, you need to know this, this is important, if you gonna be part of our church family, four taps, awkward, five taps, suspicious, six taps, uncomfortable, two taps, not sincere, three taps, it's Trinitarian 1, 2, 3, Father, Son, Spirit. "Good to see you, bro," okay? So what he says is, he says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss and all the churches of Christ, greet you." What he's saying is this, it's a lonely world. Most people ignore you, until they wanna take advantage of you. That's the world we live in, it's a sad world. Now, in God's house, if He's our father and we're a family, then we need to behave in such a way that represents our father, so that we can extend His influence, which is love. And what he's talking about here is warmly greeting. We're in the fastest growing city in county, in America. We get an opportunity to put our phones down, and to lift our eyes up and to see, people that God loves, to welcome them, to greet them, and even when they come on property, if they, you're like, "They're new." Make sure that they're loved and welcomed. 'Cause you can even be lonely in a crowd, and he's talking about being a loving and welcoming people. Let me close with just a few thoughts on these people. Everyone has experienced the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and has the Holy Spirit, you know what? That's all that really matters. In addition, everyone on this list, is connected to and partnered with the local church. He writes a letter to the church, he, it seems all the Christians are in the church, and so, they're all in church. Everyone is a vital servant on team Jesus. They all have different gifts and abilities, but they're all doing something significant. Everyone is under the same Bible teaching,

all saints, Romans, and they're all listening to it. And everyone is striving for unity and love between all the churches. We want every church that loves Jesus to flourish. But they have diversity as well, some people are highly public, others are very private. There's men and women, but there's actually more women mentioned than men in the list, God honors them. There's married and single, young and old, slave and free, rich and poor, there are also Greeks, Romans and Jews. There's a lot of diversity in the list, but it's all unity around Jesus Christ. Let me give you a few closing thoughts, good news is public and bad news is private. Did Paul have anything negative to say to or about these people? Nothing, do you think that their lives are perfect, and there was nothing that he could have pointed out? No, but those corrective conversations will be private, the encouraging conversations will be public. I did this with my kids growing up, if it was good news, call a family meeting, tell everybody, if it was needed to correct something, pull them aside privately, put an around them, lay hands over them, pray over them, that's a private conversation, that's not a public conversation. Good news, public, harder, bad news, private. In addition, God's who's who list, is not the same as the world's who's who list. There in the great magnificent, epic city of Rome, still an incredible city. And if you were to walk into the city and say, "Okay, give us the who's who list!" Would have been the rich, the powerful, the beautiful, none of these people would have made the list. You walk into the church, it's like, "Okay, God, what's your list?" It's a totally different list, these are the humble people. These are the beloved people, these are the chosen people, these are the hard working people, these are the approved people, let me just tell you this, you're on God's list, you're on God's list. And honor is holy. He's gonna talk next week, last sermon about unity, honor proceeds unity, you can't have unity where people are dishonoring one another, and he's establishing a culture of honor by honoring them, my question to you would be, who do you need to be honoring? And even as you're walking around today and see volunteers, just to honor them and thank them. Let me give you the last two thoughts. So what Paul is putting over people, what the Holy Spirit is putting over people, is it a blessing or a cursing? It's a blessing. Some of you grew up in homes where you were cursed. "You're stupid, you're a failure, you're an idiot. You blew it again, you're never gonna change, there's no hope for you." Don't curse your family, Paul here's a spiritual father, he's not cursing his family, he's blessing his family. Don't talk about their worst day, have hope for their best day. Don't talk about who they were, talk about who they will be when Jesus is done with them. As a spiritual family, and myself as a spiritual father, let me just give you these words, beloved, you're beloved. You're approved, you're approved. You're chosen, you're chosen. And you're saint. You're gonna live up to that, because the Holy Spirit will help you live up, to the blessing that He puts over you. He then dwells in you and He pulls you up to live in light of that blessing. And I was thinking about as I was praying for you, and I pray for you all the time 'cause I love you with all my heart. There's another book that's written, it's got a list of names. It's called the "Lamb's Book of Life." It's mentioned throughout the New Testament, the book of revelation. We don't have that, a copy of that book yet, because it's in heaven with Jesus and He wrote it. And in that book, are the names of all of the beloved, approved, chosen saints. And guess what? Your name is in there. Just like we read this, He's gonna read that. I can't wait to hear the word He chooses to describe you. I can't wait to hear the nickname that He gives you, I can't wait to hear the approval that He speaks over you. I'm gonna bring the band out, we're gonna pray. I just feel like ending it there.

We'll finish Romans next week, then we'll do a series on the spiritual gifts, then we'll get into the James. I wish I had words to tell you how much I love you. I just feel like words aren't big enough. But God loves you with a father's heart, God, has good for you, God has blessing for you, God has legacy for you, God has ministry for you. God has greatness for you and He loves you. Father, thanks that I get to just share a little in my heart and have a little bit of fun. Thank you that this house is a house of grace. We can laugh, we can cry, we can pray, we can sing. And we just live in grace. Holy Spirit, would you just please send down that anointing of being beloved and chosen and approved upon these saints. Holy Spirit, would they just wrap their heart, their mind, their soul around whatever it is that would be the most precious gift from your word today, that they need to take with them, and as we come to worship we do so knowing that you love us, and just like, I could just see it Father, I could see a child looking up at a dad that they just love because their dad loves them and he cares for them, and he blesses them and he's saved for them, I could just see a child looking up at their dad and smiling and just trying to speak to him. God, as we come to worship, I pray for that spirit of son ship on the people, and I pray that we would look up to our Father, and we would respond, by just calling out and crying out, with enthusiasm and joy. And God, if people need to kneel, let them kneel, if they need to sit, let them sit, if they need to shout, let them shout, if they need to raise their hands, let them raise their hands. Let them experience the full freedom in Christ, and may their Father be honored, and may we be encouraged in Jesus' good name. Love you, thanks for letting me teach.