

Colossians #8 - Enjoying Your Relationships

- Pastor Mark Driscoll here at the Trinity church in Scottsdale, Arizona, really excited to provide for you the series of sermons based on the book of Colossians. It's an amazing book of the new Testament, where the apostle Paul is writing from prison to a newly planted church. And we took a few months here at the Trinity church to go verse by verse through this book of the Bible. I've had the honor of preaching and teaching, perhaps a few dozen books of the Bible in my career. And this is the first time I've ever been through Colossians. And I'm really excited that you can join me. Well, every day we wake up and evening is concluded day begins. So what do we do? We take off our pajamas. We put on our clothes and we make that transition from what was to what is, and thank you for doing that by the way. What we understand is that once we are done with that particular season or time transition requires a change of clothing. And so Paul, he's the author of this book to the Colossians today in this section of scripture, he's gonna use this cross cultural kind of universal experience. People wake up every day, take their pajamas off, put their clothes on. And what he's saying is, as we dress our body every day, we also need to prepare our soul. We need to dress it in the character of Christ and what he's gonna use this analogy of put off your old way of life before you knew Jesus put on your new way of life once you meet Jesus, put off earthly ways of doing things, put on heavenly ways of doing things. What he's saying there is that life is to be lived kingdom down, not culture up. He said it a little earlier in chapter three, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. And in context today, he's gonna deal with relationships. How do we treat each other? Well, let's not treat people the way we used to treat them. Let's treat them the way that God treats us. Let's not treat one another here at the Trinity church or with other brothers and sisters in Christ. The way that culture treats people and conducts relationships. Let's think of kingdom down when we're all together in the presence of Jesus eternally forever. How will we treat one another? Let's start to work on those kinds of relationships today. And that's the big idea is relationships. And so he jumps in and the first thing he tells us is to be who you are to be who you are. This is your identity. Once you know who you are, then what to do and need to understand that your identity is not achieved by you it's received by you. If it's achieved by you, you have to earn it. You have to perform. What that means is if you do very well, you get proud. And if you fail, you get depressed. And for most people, this is their emotional spectrum. There's no consistency in their identity if their identity is predicated on their activity. So we don't conduct ourselves to receive an identity. We receive an identity from God, and then that informs and directs, how we conduct ourselves. So he's gonna tell you who you are. And this is really important because maybe parents, family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, critics, Satan, and demons whispering in your ear. People that have sought to harm you, maybe you've not really been told who you are. Well, he tells us who we are, Colossians 3:12-13, "put on then as God's chosen ones, Holy and beloved," we'll just unpack that chosen, chosen Holy and beloved. Before he tells you what to do. He tells you who you are when who you are, then what to do. He tells you you're chosen. Now, how many of you feel like you get chosen? But it's only for bad things, right? Hey, you're unemployed and you're gonna have less hair and your dog ran away. Yeah, you're chosen.

Okay. We tend to feel like we get chosen for bad things. God is one who chooses us for good things. Some of you have been rejected by people in authority, maybe even your own parents, maybe even your own father. Some of you have lived under sort of an orphan heart and a rejected identity. And the concept here of being chosen it's as if there were kids or a kid who was an orphan and didn't have a parent and they were chosen to be adopted, to be taken home and loved and given the family last name and then to enjoy all the blessings and benefits of being part of the family. When you become a Christian, it's like that, that God becomes your father. He chooses you. You get the family name of Christian. Jesus becomes your big brother and the rest of us become your extended crazy family. That's the church. Amen. But you're chosen. I want you to understand that. I want you to receive that. It's not that you have earned it and it's not that you can lose it. It's that God has chosen to love you. He's chosen to adopt you He's chosen to have a relationship with you. Now, sometimes Christians will ask questions like, why? I don't know. I'm just glad. Amen. I'm glad. Like how many of you you're married to someone you're not sure why they married you but you're glad they did and you don't need to figure it out. You just need to work it out and enjoy it. We don't always understand why God chose us, but we just need to enjoy it, appreciate it. Live in light of it and say, thank you, God, I receive it. Just like a child that's adopted may not ever understand why the parents chose them. Maybe there isn't any other reason other than they're loving, gracious, good parents. And they were just looking for a kid to pour their affection into. And that kid was chosen and all they need to know is that they're loved and secure and that their family cares for them. You have been chosen and you're Holy. Now, how many of you don't have this on your LinkedIn page right now? Holy. What does it mean to be Holy? Well, part of it is being connected to chosen when you're chosen by God, you're adopted into a Royal family. It's interesting. We don't really have Royal families here in America, but over in great Britain, they have Royal families. And if you're part of the Royal family and a child is brought into the family, a big deal is made of the child, amen. God is your father that means you're adopted into a Royal family. And by Holy, what that means is you're special. You're sacred, you're significant. You're valued. You're treasured. You're important. Some of you have never heard these things about yourself. Holy means set apart. The opposite of Holy is profane it's to take something that is sacred and treat it common, something that is special and treat it as ordinary. I'll give you an example of something that is profane versus Holy. There are certain days and moments that are Holy. We call them holidays. They're called Holy days. They're special. We set them aside. There are windows of opportunity that once missed, cannot be replicated, right? So I'll give you an example of one. As a young pastor, I was officiating a wedding. It was a small wedding. There weren't a ton of people there. And in the middle of the wedding, I don't know if you've ever experienced this. The phone start someone's phone starts ringing. And everybody's looking around like really, really, really, really, and it keeps ringing. And then the person with the ringing phone answered it in the middle of the wedding, right? Here's the bride. Here's the groom. Here's me. There's grandma down there loading her Glock like she's not happy about this in the back is some single guy who doesn't understand this is that lady's true or false. This is a sacred moment. Afterward I go up to and he answers the phone. He's like, "Hey, what's up, man?" This is not an emergency, right? This is a bro emergency. This is just, two dudes talking on the phone. Yeah, I'll be free. I don't know about an hour. He looks at me like about an hour. No, bro. We're gonna have the funeral and then the

reception side of think you're gonna be making it to your bro emergency, right. So he looks me. He's like about an hour. I'm like, I'm not, don't put me in this. I'm out, I'm Switzerland. I'm just here to sign the paperwork. Yeah, okay, cool. I'll meet you guys there. Yeah, it'll be fun, okay, cool. He's talking, everybody's looking at this guy and he's looking at everybody else. Like, what's your problem? Let me say this. If everyone has a problem, you're the problem. Just so you know that's the way this works. I talked about the reception like what you doing answering the phone. He's like what? It's not a big deal. Yes it is. This isn't every other day. This is her wedding day. This is a Holy day. She's been dressing up since she was a little girl getting ready for this day. This is a sacred moment. This is a special moment. This moment is set aside not to be treated like every other moment of every other day, amen, you are God's Holy people. You're set aside for kingdom service. Your Father is royalty. You're part of His family. The way we are to conduct ourselves is not the same as everybody else, because we are to live in light of the kingdom, not the culture, but God tells you you're Holy before He calls you to act holy. So He says that your chosen your Holy and your beloved, what that means is that God has great affection and devotion toward you. Some of you ladies will immediately receive this, right? A lot of ladies like beloved, you you're like, I like that. Some guys will be like, I don't know. Okay. Beloved, nobody calls you beloved, right? How many of you guys, your buddies don't call you beloved, okay? Your former buddies do, but none of your current buddies call you beloved. Okay. What I want you women to understand is received that very affectionate, heartfelt language of beloved for you men. This is your father telling you he loves you. Some of you never really had a father who told you that he loved you. This is God the Father telling you I've chosen you. You're sacred, special, important to me because I love you. I love you. When my kids were little, I would, I'd look them in the eye and I would tell them I'm your dad and you're my blessing. I'm your dad, you're my blessing. And I love you. So when the kids would get home, they'd walk in the door, they'd be playing outside. They'd walk in the house. I would ask the kids when they were little. How's my blessing? They'd be like, "we're good," Then come here and I would kiss him on top of the head. Okay. Just so that they knew that they were a blessing to me. They were beloved by me. They were important to me and that their father's affection was devoted to them. Now my kids, I still do it once in a while. My boys are so tall, they have to stoop down so I can kiss them on top of the head, or I need to get a ladder by vertical so bad. I can't even jump up high enough to kiss one of my sons on head. But they still know that they're my beloved that I love them. This is the father's heart and the father's devotion and the father's affection. Now here's why you need to receive this. So you can be healed up. Some of you, your life has been marked by rejection, not being chosen. Holy, just treating it treated as if you're insignificant, unimportant, and just supposed to shut up and just be off to the side because there were more important people and things than you. And some of you don't get told a lot that you're loved. This is the father's way of healing you giving you an identity and then that'll transform your activity, okay? So once who you are, God's chosen ones Holy and beloved. Then you be who you are. You be who you are. So then you can have compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience bearing with one another. These are the things that we put on in the morning for our soul as we put clothing on our body, this is the character of Christ. So let me unpack these compassionate hearts. A compassionate heart is one that is considerate of others. And the heart is really the seat summoned center of life. About 900 times the Bible talks

about our heart. And the summary is in Proverbs. It says, guard your heart. It's the wellspring of your life. That ultimately your life, your words, your motives, your desires, they come out of your heart. They come out of your heart. That's why when you become a Christian, Jesus gives you a new heart. So there's an old Tennessee farmer. He once said, "what comes up in the bucket "is usually what was down in the well." In our relationships what comes out reveals our heart. And when we're in relationships with one another, if we have put on the identity of being a loved chosen child of God, then it allows us to start to put on compassion and this is the character of our big brother Jesus. Compassion is I care for you I'm worried about you. I consider you. I have empathy toward you. And this is, let's just say that this is lacking in our world. This is not something that is common in the culture, but it is common in the kingdom. So we wanna live kingdom down, not culture up. Compassionate hearts, kindness. Kindness is a consideration of others. How do you feel? What do you want? What do you need? And this is incredibly lacking in our age of the selfie. It's very interesting that for a long time, we had cameras and it was to take a photo of you 'cause you mattered, to take photo of you 'cause you matter take photo of you cause you mattered. And then we figured out we could flip it around me me me more me me me me me me me me me me, more me, oops one of you delete me. Mistake, right? That we live in a world where we're the center of it. And all we do is look at ourselves. Kindness is understanding there are other people considering them being emotionally present for them, caring for them, trying to be life giving for them. That's what kindness means. Humility. Humility is not a virtue in our culture it's a vice. Pride is a virtue in our culture. In the Bible pride is vice humility is a virtue. For the moral education of children. Some years ago, a large thick book was put together and it's a good book. And it's got a lot of the sacred quote, unquote "tales of Western civilization and culture." And it tells all the fables and folklores and some of the moral stories that we use to raise children. And it includes all the different Western virtues. But one thing that's missing is humility because in the Western world, humility is not a virtue. Pride is. But in the Bible pride is a sin and a problem. And humility is a virtue. This is kingdom down, not culture up. Jesus is humble. The Bible says that he came not to be served, but to serve. The Bible says in Philippians two, that he set aside his rights and he humbled himself taking the posture of one who came to serve. Humility the root of which literally means to know your place, okay? So the Bible tells us that we're not gods and goddesses. We're not animals. We're under God. And we're over lower creation that's our place. Knowing your places. If you're a little kid it's honoring your father and mother, because that's your place. If you're the president of a company, this means when you go to work, you're humble enough to accept the place that God has positioned you. You have a lot of responsibility and you need to be humble enough to accept that assignment. Similarly at the company, if you're the janitor, you need to be humble enough to know that you're not the CEO and that you're under authority and that God has given you important work to do and you need to humbly accept your position. Humility is knowing your place. It is accepting your place. That allows a culture of respect, that allows a culture of order. This brings order into the home. This brings order into relationships. The reason why we have so much conflict and discord is because that's what happens when proud people have relationships. I've been doing ministry 20 plus years. I've seen a lot of really angry, nasty public mean conflicts, but I've never seen one between two humble people. I've never seen that. What happened? Well, humble Sally and humble Tom they lit each other on fire. That's what they did.

We're really surprised. Humble people don't escalate conflicts. They don't escalate problems. They don't bring as many difficulties as they do solutions because a humble person knows their place they respect authority and they accept God's assignment for them without trying to ladder climb by take others down, jockey for position and be all about themselves. How many of you, this is counter-cultural to everything we've ever been taught. This is kingdom down not culture up. Meekness. Now, when we think of meekness, many of us automatically translate it toward weakness. The person who is easy to control, easy to roll over, the person that's sort of an even jellyfish, right? No spiritual vertebrae, right? That kind of person. Somebody who doesn't have any or backbone, that's not what the term means. Jesus was meek. The Bible says that Moses was meek. What this means is somebody who's very tough and also very tender. It's power under control. It's strength under direction that's what it is. And so if you're only tough all the time, you'll be a domineering overbearing for some personality. If you're only tender you're gonna get run over. You're gonna enable people. You're gonna be a victim. And you're going to allow other people to be harmed. Meekness is knowing when to be tough, when to be tender. And it's being tender, even though you are tough. I'll give you an example. So let's say there's an army ranger or a Navy seal they're assigned for deployment. They go overseas. They fight bad guys. They liberate women and children. They cause safety. They bring peace and order. They're tough. They come home. They're tender. This is the soldier who let's say it's a dad then goes home and his little boy says that I wanna wrestle. Well, then dad gets down on his knees and the little boy runs at his dad and hits him. And the dad falls over and lets his son pin him true or false the dad could have won. He could have won, but he was meek. Though he's tough. He chose to be tender for the consideration of the one that he loves. That's what meekness is. That's what Jesus is He's tough and tender. When he needs to be tough to protect his people, He's tough. But most of the time he's tender. So he's tough for his people, he's tender with his people, for you and I meekness is understanding that most of the time we're tender, but some of the time we need to be tough. Does that make? And that's great strength that's what that is. That is great strength under control. The next one he says is patience. Each one of us, let's just be honest and say, we should probably flag at least one and say, okay, that's the one that needs work, right. Me it's patience, I'm not patient at all. In fact, I should have gotten a speeding ticket on Friday. I'll tell you about it. I believe that the speed limit is a really good idea for those who can't drive. I believe that those who can't drive need that kind of loving protection. Some. Yup, so, okay. All right, couple of guys support. We're gonna collect another offering here. There's a lotta, there's a groundswell of support for this point, okay. I believe that laws are good to protect people who can't drive. For the rest of us we don't need the old covenant law. We need the new covenant of grace, okay. Which means that we're not held to the letter of the law. Okay. So I was driving where I was going to my son's state baseball playoff game. I had the family in the truck and so we're driving and there's a guy in front of me driving even slower than the speed limit, okay. And there's a lot of traffic, not my fault, I'm a victim. And so as a result, we are going to be late for the beginning of my son's state playoff baseball game. And I didn't want to miss his first Tibet. So I'm driving behind this guy who's going too slow. And so then fine and I can't get around him there's traffic. So what it is, there's this demonic plot to prevent me from being free. And so I'm stuck behind this guy and we finally get to the place where we take a left to go into the baseball stadium and he takes a left, okay. So he's probably one of the dads on my son's

team. And so I didn't say or do anything so that, so there you go. And so what happens though in the Providence of God, there are now two lanes one for him to go slow and one for me to pass him. And so I jumped over into that lane. I hammered it and I got pulled over by the cops, with my kids and my wife in the car, okay. And I said, it's my fault, I've earned it, I should get a ticket. I was not being patient. I am literally, it's I'm a hundred yards from the stadium passing this guy. Okay. I drove an hour to the stadium. It's the last minute I gotta shave 30 seconds, okay. The cop comes up, I roll down the window. He's like license and. Here you go. He's like, "where are you going?" I was like, right there. That's right there. Like, we could see it. It's like, why are you going so fast? I was like, I was wondering why that guy was going so slow. Now in God's grace I did not get a ticket, okay. He comes back. He's like, "okay, thank you. "Have a good day." I was like, okay. But here's the point I was already there. It had nothing to do with anything other than me being impatient, okay. And I tell it in a funny way, so that you'll still respect me. But how many of you are impatient? How many of you are like, okay, enough on this point, please move along. This is taking too long. Patience. And all of this together means that we can then be bearing with one another. That's what relationships are all about. Bearing with one another says that we will allow our relationship to continue in spite our differences sometimes even over issues. And so let me say this. You're not biblical unless you're relational. Some of you you're like me. I'm a Bible guy. You get me that. I'm a nerd. I read footnotes. I like dead guys. I have a large library. I've just spent on a verse and a half for 15 minutes. Okay. I'm a Bible guy. I believe truth matters. I believe theology matters. And I believe that if you read the Bible clearly and correctly, the point is to be loving and have healthy relationships. So some people will read the Bible and they'll say, well, the reason we keep just fighting with everybody, 'cause we're biblical, I read the book and said to love them. You're not biblical unless you're relational, you understand that. Some of you say, well, I'm not very relational 'cause I'm very biblical. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. The Bible says that when we understand our relationship with God, it causes us to treat others the way that God treats us. And if you're biblical, you'll be relational. Now some of you ask, does this mean that issues don't matter? Truth doesn't matter. It does. Before we planted the Trinity church, I flew around and met with some pastors of churches that I admire and respect and appreciate and wanna learn from. And I asked him, please pray and see if God burdens you with anything that I could learn from you that would be helpful for us. And so I'd meet with her board or staff or family or take notes or whatever, go to prayer meetings. Whenever they'd allow me to go to. And there was one particular pastor of a church that I hold in very high regard. And there's a network of churches that he leads. And he said, "yeah, as I was praying for, "I feel like for the Trinity church," this is before you guys showed up, before we even started, he said, "there's something that I feel like God's burdened me "for you and I wanna share it with you." I said, okay, let me grab my notepad and my pen. What is it? He said, "there's relationships and there's issues." He says that, "the Trinity church issues are important, "but relationships are most important." I said, "okay, explain that." I said, "well, what about truth theology?" He said, "if somebody is wrong, "you won't be able to help them unless you love them." The relationship, if you'll invest in the relationship, the relationship will be strong enough to deal with the issue. If the issue is more important than the relationship, then all the relationships will blow up anytime any issue comes into existence. How many of you have noticed this in parenting? Maybe parents notice this. If you don't have a good relationship

with a kid, you can't influence them and work it out. The issue blows up the relationship. And I received that and I felt that was a real gift from the Lord. And I said, there's a lot of wisdom in that. He said, "loving relationships are the mark of good theology" and loving relationships allow us to deal with our issues. "And if people know that we love and care for them, "they're more likely to listen to us and "to allow us to help influence them." Was he true or not? He was true that's really wise counsel and instruction. And that's the big point of where Paul is driving here, who you are as a child of God, how you conduct yourself as a child of God, every morning as you prepare your body physically, you need to prepare your soul spiritually so that you can live your life relationally. And then it gets into four marks of Christian maturity, Colossians 3:13 and 14. And if one has a complaint against another, have you ever experienced this, right? Any of you married? Any of you had a complaint, I love the fact that he doesn't even necessarily say sin 'cause there are things that are simple. And there are things that are just really, really, really annoying amen. And when do you have a relationship, there'll be certain things. You're like, it's not in the Bible but you're driving me crazy. It's a complaint. A complaint can include a sin, but sometimes it's just a difference. It's a quirk. It's an oddity. It's, there's just something that doesn't work in this relationship. He says, when a complaint comes, when there's a conflict, when there's an issue, how do you resolve it? This is true for your friends, your coworkers, your family, your spouse, your kids. This is all your relationships. Complaint comes. Grievance comes, hard times come. Some sort of friction occurs and offense is taken. Something is failing where do you start, start by forgiving each other. And here's the real caveat as the Lord has forgiven you so you must forgive. Here's what he's saying. When someone has frustrated you, annoyed you, grieved you, offended you and you have a complaint. The first thing you need to remember is all the things you've been forgiven of. Now, let me say this this kingdom down not culture up, right? This is supernatural not natural. You're driving me crazy. Let me stop and think about all of my wrongdoing. Most of the time, it doesn't go like that, amen. It's like, no, no, no, no, no. Okay, let me tell you about all your wrongdoing. Before we talk about their wrongdoing, you gotta think about your wrongdoing. So you pause and you say, "okay, Lord, "here's the sins I've committed against you. "And Lord what you chose to do was forgive me." See, that's that's the mission of Jesus. He lives the life we've not lived. He dies the death we should have died. He pays the penalty we should have paid. So forgiveness is the canceling of a debt. It's the forgiving of a debt. God doesn't punish you. Jesus was punished. God isn't angry at you. His wrath was poured out on Jesus. God is not holding a grudge against you. He's let it go at the cross of Jesus. Before you think about what they need to be forgiven of. Think of all you've been forgiven of. And here's what I want you to know. You're forgiven. If you belong to Jesus, you're forgiven. I want that burden off of you. I want that demonic torment off of you. I want that haunting off of you. I don't want your worst day to infect and affect every day. You're forgiven once you you know, just breathe that it'll heal your soul. You're forgiven. You don't have to pay God back and God's not gonna beat you up. All of that was taken care of by the sacrifice of Jesus. How does it feel to be forgiven? Do you like that? Then share that gift. Forgiveness is a gift to be received and shared. And what he's saying is, as forgiven people, we need to be forgiving people. Forgiven people are forgiving people. That's the way this works. I can't get into this in total detail. I think I'm gonna do a four part series on forgiveness at the end of the year, right around the holidays. 'Cause you're gonna go see your relatives And I wanna help, but let me say a few

things just quickly. Two things forgiveness is it's not trying the case. It's saying we've disagreed. We can't reach consensus or conclusion. I don't think I need to take this to a counselor or a mediator. I'm gonna let this go. I'm gonna release this case. Number two, it's handing the case to a higher court saying, "Jesus, judge Jesus, you try this case." So by you getting off the bench, getting the gavel out of your hand, you're allowing Jesus to sit on the bench and hold the gavel in his hand. You see, perfectly, fully, you deal with them. You deal with this, you figure it out. You straight it out, all submit to your verdict. It's literally handing the case to the court of Jesus.

Three things forgiveness is not. And I apologize I'm a little sick. Forgiveness is not trust. Forgiveness is free. Trust is earned. Forgiveness can happen in a moment trust takes time. So give you an example. I was dealing with a couple some years ago, the husband committed adultery on his wife. And, she worked through the very hard process of forgiving him. But trust was broken because he had been unfaithful with a coworker and he wanted to continue going back to the job and working closely with this coworker. And the wife said, as one of the wives just said here, know if you heard that that was prophetic? And he said, "hey, I thought you forgave me. "If you forgive me, you need to trust me." No, those are two different things. Those are two different. I can forgive you but I don't trust you. Forgiveness and trust are not the same.

Number two forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same. You can forgive someone and part ways. You can forgive someone and part ways. I knew someone some years ago, they were in a business dealing with a good friend and the friend literally emptied the accounts, crashed the company, stole everything. Now the person who was robbed forgave them, but wasn't going to go open another company with them. They're not reconciled back to their previous relationship. Things have changed. And I remember meeting with these two men and one man looked at the other man and said, "come on, man if you forgive me, "we need to be reconciled and we need to work together." He was like, "I'm not going to do that. "I forgive you, but I can't reconcile." Meaning I can't go back to the exact same relationship that we had. I'm not doing that again.

And thirdly, forgiveness is not something that happens one time only. It happens one time and then it can happen over time as well. They come to Jesus and they ask how many times we've got to forgive somebody. He says 70 times seven that's a lot. What he's saying is you can forgive someone. And then a little while later, the pain of the hurt comes back. You need to forgive them again. Or maybe you forgive someone, but then later you find out more information. You're like, I didn't know that now I'm hurt again. You need to forgive again. Or maybe you forgive someone and then the consequences come back down the road and you feel the pain of that and you need to forgive again. Forgiveness is handing it to the Lord Jesus. Forgiveness is canceling the debt, not seeking vengeance and making them pay. But forgiveness is also not trusting them, not a full reconciliation of the relationship and not something that just happens once. Sometimes it needs to happen over and over and over.

That's what forgiveness is two reasons I want you to forgive 'cause I love you. Two reasons I want you to forgive. Number one, it will free you from demonic torment, mental health professionals, love and serve and help people. But even if you go to the diagnostic manual, it says nothing about Satan and demons. And they're real. What happens is that Satan and demons, torment people who are hurt, they torment them. Some of you live tormented lives. You can't stop thinking about what was done to you. You're haunted by it. It's like a deep, dark cloud has settled over your life and you can't escape it. And it entered at that moment of offense or

transgression or hurt. I took a year and I did a long biblical study on forgiveness. And what I found was oftentimes where the Bible talks about forgiveness and unforgiveness or bitterness, which is the fruit of unforgiveness. What happens is in that same orbit, it talks about Satan and demons. And I came to this conclusion. If you wanna study, if you're somebody who wants to do a little further research, second half of Matthew, 18, second half of Ephesians four those are good places to start, but here's what I concluded. Satan and demons are never forgiven for anything. Jesus didn't die for Satan demons. He only died for men and women. Secondly, Satan and demons don't forgive anyone ever for anything. They bear a grudge and keep a record of wrong. So if you bear a grudge, if you keep a record of wrong, and if you don't forgive, you are doing that which is demonic. It's satanic, it's earthly and unspiritual. It's not kingdom and Christ. This doesn't mean that you're demon possessed. I'm not saying any of that, I'm saying what you're doing is you're saying I'm forgiven, but I won't be forgiving. What you're saying is I want God to treat me in a way that I won't treat anyone else. I want God to give me a gift that I won't share with anyone else. And when we do that, we're essentially saying what you have done to me is so bad that I can't forgive you. It must be worse than what I did to God. Okay? What we've done to God is worse than what anyone has done to us. And if God forgives us, we need to forgive them. And if we don't we're inviting demonic torments into our life. This is where people become despondent despairing, incredibly depressed. They become isolated. They become withdrawn. They become a shell of who they were. They lose their hope. They lose their joy. And all of a sudden their identity is not chosen Holy beloved, it's hurt wounded victim. Some of you feel this and I love you. And I'm glad to be your pastor. And it's an honor to teach you today. God would come and say, forgive them. And you would say, I can't let them get away with everything. And God would say, I want you to forgive them. Not so that they can get away with everything, but so that you can get away from everything. He wants to heal you. He wants to free you. He wants to unburden you. And if you're holding onto it, you're welcoming demonic torment into your life because Satan lives wherever there's unforgiveness. As you forgive, there's no home for him. An analogy, perhaps it'd be fitting. There's a place that we love to go as a family for vacation up in the mountains, the snow melts right at springtime. It snows all winter and when spring comes it starts to melt. And then this life giving water flows through the rivers. It ends up in the lakes. It comes down through the Valley and it brings life and healing and fruitfulness, wherever it goes. So there's orchards and fruit and trees and life, wherever this river flows. Forgiveness is like that. Forgiveness starts from on high in the presence of God. It flows down to you and me it brings healing and health and life. And God wants that forgiveness to flow through us downstream to others so that there is a possibility of them enjoying the life of God as well. Secondly, it allows all of the toxicity, the pain hurt the brokenness, the bitterness, the fears, the anger, the loss, the mourning, the torment to get washed downstream, to be taken away from us so that we can enjoy the peace and the presence of a God who forgives and heals. Right? Does this make sense? This is not how the culture does relationships. It's bitterness, anger, vengeance, venting, eye for an eye tooth for a tooth social media posts for social media posts, right? This is kingdom down. So forgiving each other that's where he starts as the Lord has forgiven you. So you must forgive and above all these put on love. Once you forgiven, you can start to love. Love is what you do not just what you say. Love is manifest in action. The Bible says, let us not just love in words but in deeds. Love is what you do. When all

is said and done lots lot of said and little is done. Love is what you do. Now, let me say this about love. What love allows in relationships. It allows us to stop using one another if we're loving one another, we do not live in a world where our relationships are predicated on love, but usury, you benefit me. You bless me. You generate income. You take care of my needs. You fill my empty spot in my heart. You meet some need for me therefore I'm using you. And if at any point you're not meeting that need or find someone else who can meet that need better. I will no longer be in relationship with you. And instead I will cease to love you. God's relationship with us is predicated on love. God doesn't have relationship with us to use us. God has a relationship with us to love us. And as we have that relationship with God, it transforms all of our relationships and we can stop using one another and start loving one another. He goes on love which binds all things together in perfect harmony. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. All right, this is a term from sports. How many of you are or were jocks, right? How many of you are parents that have kids that play sports? If you don't believe that people are evil, go to a youth sporting event. It's unbelievable what parents will say and do. I'll never forget one of my sons, my three boys play baseball. One of my boys, he had one of his first tee ball games, and we're playing in the Northwest. So it's like 30 degrees. There's like a kid on third base. He's wearing like galoshes boots, jeans, a little Jersey, his hat sideways. There's a bugger in his nose. He's got a plastic glove and he is not set up for any sort of success. The ball is hit right at the little kid. And he goes down and it pops up and hits them right in the face. Okay. What does the kid start doing? Crying. Here's what the dad says. "Suck it up. Suck it up, what? This kid is five. This is not a paid profession. And we could just tell by looking at your kid, they don't have it all together. The gloves on the wrong hand. For breakfast, they had a Korean like this kid's probably not getting drafted. Dad if it's at the point where your manhood rises or falls with a ground ball, you need a hobby. Okay. What happens in a sporting event is there are contested calls. Usually everybody knows what it is. And the, and the umpire, the crew chief, the referee doesn't have a lot to do, but there's occasionally a contested call. So in my son's sports, I've seen this. So let's say there's a bang, bang play at first base, all the parents on the one side, the safe is safe, is safe, right? Even the ones that were on the phone, not even watching they're all calling him right over in the other stands. All the parents are not at all. He's out, he's out, he's out. And then the coaches start yelling and then the players start yelling and the whole game grinds to a halt. And if there's not an umpire or referee, somebody is gonna die. Okay. That's what it is. The umpire, the referee. They are the death prevention mechanism that's what they are. Could you imagine an NFL football game with no referees? I would pay double the watch, but it would not be godly. It would not be godly. They disagree. We're gonna fight whoever lives they were right. Okay. The umpire makes the call and then everybody has to accept it. And then it can, the game can move forward. Here's what he's saying in relationships. There are things that you're gonna have a different call on it. That was me. No, it wasn't. You're too fragile. So this is your house too. Okay. You should have done that. You need to take care of yourself. That was not loving. Who are you to judge? Okay. There's there's somebody chuckling, right? Okay. It's a contested call. Have you ever had one of these in your relationship? We had one at our house this week. Okay. 'Cause Grace and I disagreed, we disagreed. I love Jesus, but Grace is not married to Jesus. I'll tell you that right now. If you ask Grace, she would say I was wrong. And if you asked me, I'd say that was wrong. And then I was right. We disagreed. Have you

ever had a relationship where an issue came up and it was a contested call and you disagreed what happens? It's just like a youth sports game. I'm gonna yell and you're gonna yell. And then I'm gonna put my foot down and then you're gonna put both feet down and then you're gonna to make the call, pretend whoop. You're gonna put a Stripe shirt on and a whistle. And I'm gonna put a Stripe shirt on and a whistle. How do you resolve it? Here's what he's saying. Let the peace of Christ rule. Literally the language is Jesus gets to be the umpire. Jesus gets to be the referee. This is not how the culture does relationship. This is how the kingdom does relationships. It's saying, okay, we disagree. We're Christians, Jesus, come in and be the referee. You get the Stripe shirt, you get the whistle, whatever you call it, we'll accept it. And then we can proceed forward and not live here for the rest of our life. How do you do that? Prayer praying for each other, praying with each other. Scripture, okay. What does the Bible say? Sometimes it's wise counsel, let's go get somebody who's godly maybe a counselor, maybe a therapist, maybe a mediator. They love the Lord. Let's let them come in on the behalf of Jesus and be the empire and make the call because then the issue can be dealt with but the relationship is not destroyed. Peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which you were called in one body. He's talking about the unity of relationships and the importance of relationships there. And then he closes with thankfulness. He says, and be thankful. What he's saying is when you have a relational conflict, it's very easy to be the critic. The Bible talks about a critical spirit. That's literally a demonic empowerment to find every failure, fault, and flaw with anyone, right? Sometimes when we're fighting, we're arguing, we're disagreeing we become archeologists. Let me go dig up the past. All right. And if I could get to your grandparents, I'll just, your grandma was like this and so is your mom. And just throw it on the rock pile, right? All the faults, failures and flaws get excavated. And what can happen is we forget the reasons we're thankful for them especially when there's conflicted moments in conflict. So he's saying in the moment for the sake of the relationship, you need to let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. And Jesus says, my peace. I leave you my peace I give you not peace as the world gives you. I give you my peace. So the peace of Christ comes in. And the first thing you need to do is ask, okay, what can I be thankful for? I appreciate this about you. I value this about you. These are the things that I admire. These are the things that I'm grateful for before we talk about all the things that maybe we need to correct. Let's talk about the things that already are correct. This is kingdom down relationships. The problem is we get emotional. We get hurt. We get fearful. And this is where we need to literally stop and say, Jesus, right now, I need to put on your character because if I put on your character things will go well. If I live out of my character this will end poorly. And so then how do you learn all this? Where do you practice all of this? Where does this experience come into being, he talks about five aspects of Christian worship and I'll walk through them quickly. I can't hit them too deeply. And it seems weird. He's talking about relationships and church. And it's like, well, what does relationships have to do with church. It's church where we learn how to do relationships. It's church where we work on our relationship with God, it's church where we work on our relationship with each other. And it's church where the presence of God is with the people of God. It's where the kingdom of God comes to be among the people of God. So that we learn how to be citizens of the kingdom. And we become more like our king. The key is you become like who or what you worship. So if we get together and worship Jesus, then we become more like Jesus. And we're able to put off who we were

and put on who we are in Christ. He says it this way. Let the word of Christ dwell in you, richly teaching and admonishing one another. One another language is relationship in all wisdom, singing Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the father through Him. The kingdom is a kingdom of worship. It's a kingdom of celebration. It's a kingdom with a king. It's a kingdom where we wanna be like our King, where we wanna be near our King, where we wanna be with our King. And when we come together, it's the kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The church is the beginning of the kingdom. The church is the outpost of the kingdom. The church is the place where Jesus is King. And when we get together, he gives some portions of gathered worship. He talks about scripture. The word of Christ dwell in you richly. My job is to feed you your job is to accept nourishment and take the time to digest it. Your body needs food. Your soul literally needs the word of God. Jesus says that man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That your body needs food and your soul needs to be fed the word of God. And so I would encourage you to pray for me. When we went to start the church, one of the pastors in authority over me, he said, "Mark, your job is to lead and to feed "at the Trinity church." I really, I thought "that's sums it all up right there. "That was really insightful to lead and to feed." I said, "okay, explain the feed." He said, "well, Jesus told Peter feed my sheep." He said, "Mark, that's your job. "Feed them the word of God." He said, "people become healthy "if they are fed the word of God." When you raise someone from infancy, if you feed them nothing but garbage and junk, they grow up to be unhealthy. And their palate desires that which is unhealthy that's how the world operates. This world is filled with lots of junk food teaching, both in and out of the church. Some people came to us not long ago. And our oldest daughter, Ashley is very, very healthy. She eats well, she's nutritious and their child just really, it's just junk food and not healthy and allergies and digestive problems. All dietary related they came to us. "How do you get Ashley need healthy food?" I said, it wasn't me. I grew up on frozen burritos and hot pockets. And pop. Closest I got to juice was orange pop. I mean, I didn't eat healthy. I was an idiot. Grace was the wise when I was the foolish one. So when the kids are little Grace figured out what food to introduce at what time, so that they wouldn't develop allergies 'cause it was introduced too soon she set their palate. And I said, the way it worked was Grace set their palate that they would eat healthy food. They would be healthy. They would grow and they would desire more healthy food. She set their palate. I believe that it's important for you to be fed the word of God. And sometimes the church will say, that's not what the people want. That's what the people need. And if we love them, we feed them what makes them healthy so that they can be healthy and grow. Because if how many of you parents would never look at your kids for every meal and say, "tell me what you want and I'll say, yes, "that's what you get to eat." She'd be like, I didn't know pop rocks was a dinner, right? That part of it is being fed the word of God. And so I love teaching you God's word. I know the sermon is going long. This is my way of excusing myself. Okay. In addition to the word of God, it's relationships. One another loving one, another, getting to know one another building. We're a brand new church. We don't know each other. We're a baby church plant. We're just getting to know each other. It's showing up a little early, staying a few minutes late saying, hi, getting to know you, you don't have to have all your friends or your best friends at this church. But as we're together, it's like a family reunion. It's getting to know

the other members of the family. Singing Psalms hymns and spiritual songs. There's wars over those words. I think they're all saying the same thing. Sing singing is what we'll do in the kingdom of God. We don't do it much in the culture. Some of you ladies sing. Most of you, men don't sing right. Certain cultures like South America, you go to a soccer match. All the guys will sing for the whole soccer match in our culture they don't. Like all the dudes over at home Depot right now. Nobody's gonna be the song leader at home Depot. It's just not gonna happen. But when we get together, we sing because we celebrate our King and it's like cheering at the end of a sporting event when your team is victorious and triumph and in you're a part of it. When we get together, we're celebrating the great victory of Jesus and we do so through singing. We don't sing in the culture, but we sing in the church. And so one of the reasons we put singing after Bible teaching, we want you to receive the word of God. And then we want you to digest it and ingest the nourishment in the same way after you eat your body needs a recovery time to take in the nutrients. We want you to sing as part of God's way of the Holy spirit healing you helping you convicting you, whatever is helpful from his word, whatever the Holy spirit would highlight for you. It's in that worship time where you work it out with God, your soul receives it and it helps to strengthen you. And then he goes on to say, in whatever you do in word or deed, doing everything in the name of the Lord, Jesus, this is serving one of the great ways that you can grow spiritually is through serving, serving not just your family. And let me say this. It's also, if you have children, having them serve. One of the great things here at the church is my children serve. We don't make them but it's healthy and it's helpful. We live in a world where we exist to be served. We have an entire service economy. The kingdom is not about being served, but serving. And that's exactly what our King said. When he said I didn't come to be served but to serve. And so, as we serve that's one of the ways that we mature. Some people ask me all the time, what books can I read to become more mature? Well, the Bible is good they're all good books, but serving is the fastest path toward spiritual growth. It allows you to take all of these things and put them into practice as you're investing in the wellbeing of someone else. And then it closes with giving thanks to God the father through him. And I've told you previously, I used to think that there were bad seasons and then good seasons. So my thought was, well, it's a bad season, but I'll get through it. And then there was another bad season and then I get through it. And there was just like a different kind of bad season. And they get to the other one. I'd be like, well, this is like a new bad season and an old bad season. How many of you have experienced this in your life? Some of you have been waiting for the good season since you were in high school and it's been a long time. Okay. I now know from the counsel of another, that life always has good and bad things that are wonderful and things that are awful. Things that we can celebrate and things that brings sadness. And it's like train tracks always running together. And so what he says is when we get together to worship, it is this act of giving thanks. It's thinking in relationship with God, God what am I thankful for? My sins are forgiven. The culture will end. I will be healed. There is a resurrection of the dead. My King is coming His kingdom will exist forever. All of our relationships will be perfect. All of the strain and the pain will go away. You wipe every tear from our eyes. You've got a plan for us. You'll never leave us. You'll never forsake us. You have chosen us. You call us Holy. We are beloved. We are forgiven. The condemnation is lifted. Okay, I can sing now. There's some things to be thankful for. And then it's thinking about other people like, okay, what can I be thankful for them? What can I be

grateful for in them? What can I be encouraging of in them because let's just admit it there's no life in this world. There's no health in this world. There's no forgiveness in this world. This world in its wisdom does not know God. This world in all of its corruption in decay is coming to an end. This world isn't working and people are hurting and people are suffering and people are weeping and people are grieving and people are crying and people are dying and relationships are not helping. And we come here as the King's children and we ask the kingdom to come and His will to be done. And we look at our relationship with Him and we learn that we are forgiven. We learn that we are loved. We are. We learn that he is patient with us. And as a result, then we seek by the power of the Holy spirit, in the presence of God to treat one another, the way that dad treats us. Amen. And we get together, we worship. Okay, I'm gonna pray for you. And then guess what you're gonna do. You're gonna sing. That's what you're gonna do. Somebody say I don't sing well the rest of us will sing loud to drown you out. All right, let's sing. Father thank you so much that we get to open your word. Thank you that now we get to partake of communion and be thankful that we're forgive through the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. And then as a result of being forgiven, we can be forgiving and God, we come to sing. Holy spirit we invite you to bring your presence among your people so that we can sing the praises of our God. Lord the reason that a lot of people don't sing is they don't have any water, anything that is that amazing to stop, to celebrate Lord Jesus we do with you. You are great and a great King with a great kingdom. You've delivered us from a horrible fate and you've given us a tremendous inheritance. So we come now to say thank you to celebrate you and do so together as brothers and sisters in Christ, the family of God in Jesus good name. Amen.