

Have no confidence in the flesh!

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- [0 : 00] Yes, may He have His way. Thank you for praying. I was just so blessed today with all the songs that were sung and what was shared already in the children's class.
- ! I think the children were blessed. Thank you, Aaron, for singing with them. They're the special little people in our midst.
- God is good. He is faithful. I want to just proclaim that He is faithful always.
- In Him we have our strength, our being, our life. And without Him we have nothing. Without Him there is nothing.
- Worth while. I want to turn our Bibles to Philippians chapter 3. I've just been thinking this week about, I guess, what we are in Christ and what we are when we're not in Christ.
- [1 : 23] The title of the message is, Have No Confidence in the Flesh. We'll get to a verse that says those words.
- Have no confidence in the flesh. May that speak to us today. It has to me. It has to me.
- Sometimes we put confidence in ourselves, don't we? Philippians chapter 3, verse 1.
- Paul writing, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you.
- To me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs. Beware of evil workers. Beware of concision.
- [2 : 18] Paul here is referring to the law. And he calls them dogs. Those that are evil workers.
- During this time, the Gentiles, many times, or I believe the Gentiles, or people that were not of God's people, were often referred to as dogs.
- They were kind of outside of God's kingdom, outside of God's chosen people. But here it seems like Paul is referring to people of his own background that were pushing false teachings.
- He referred to them as dogs. Now, today that would be very offensive. If I would just say, well, if you're here so and so, and you're not really 100% with us, or you're teaching something false, and I would just call you a dog.
- That would be offensive, wouldn't it? I don't know how he mend it back then. You know, maybe we would call somebody like that a wolf.
- [3 : 32] The Bible talks also about false teachers as wolves. In the church. I don't know how that was. But it's interesting how it's just written, you know.
- Beware of dogs. Evil workers. People that were bringing and pushing the law and not Christ. Basically, he was considering them deceivers.
- Verse 3 says, For we are the circumcision which worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.
- Therefore, the title, Have No Confidence in the Flesh. Here we see what true circumcision is.

Paul is saying here that we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus.

[4 : 36] We that have no confidence. We've been cut off from the flesh. We've been cut off from the old nature. And we have no confidence in it anymore.

It's the exact opposite of what the other people were saying. The ones he called dogs. That is that circumcision of the heart.

The change of heart is what makes us God's people. Nothing else. The stuff we do that we can do without that means nothing.

In fact, we're deceived if we're going off of those other things. But with a changed heart, we are the circumcision. We are God's people.

I think we understand what the circumcision was for the Jews. It was a separation. A separation unto God, right?

[5 : 42] That's what it was all about in the Old Testament. It was God's people being separated unto Him. But when Jesus came, we worship Him in spirit.

And it's a spiritual circumcision. A spiritual setting apart for God. Verse 4, it says, He says, Though I might have the confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.

How often do we trust or we begin to trust again in our flesh? We trust in ourselves, our own strength. When will I ever learn not to walk in the flesh, but in the spirit?

If we could ask ourselves that question. Paul here is saying that if any person thinks that he has something that could be trusted in the flesh, he's saying, I am more.

Like, if any person was qualified, Paul was qualified. Let's read on in verse 5. Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, and Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law.

[7 : 23] A Pharisee. He was trained. He knew the law. He had memorized the law. He had zeal. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.

Anything that was not of the law, he condemned. Touching the righteousness which is in the law. Blameless. Paul says he had everything that would have made a man righteous in that time.

He was perfect and blameless according to the law. But he was on his way to hell. He did everything right.

But he did not know God. He is saying that if anyone had the background and all the right credentials, he had them.

He could have trusted in the flesh. And he did. But look at what he says next. Is this our heart? Is this who we are?

[8 : 28] But what things were gained to me. Those things that were, that put him way up here. Those things that were gained to him.

Those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.

And do count them but dung that I may win Christ. Jesus is all. He is everything.

He is all. Remember how when in Acts we read how Paul was on the road to Damascus.

He was almost there, I believe. Or not too far from there. Maybe he was a little ways yet. We'd have to read that again. But he was on the way to Damascus and when the bright light came out of heaven and remember his question when he was knocked to the ground, he said, Who are you, Lord?

- [9 : 39] That tells us he was doing all this, all these credentials, all this knowledge and all the law. And then when it came right down to it, he didn't know who the Lord was.
- Who are you, Lord, that I'm persecuting? And then, people can do so much good. We can do so much in the flesh in our own strength and not even know Jesus.
- And that was Paul's case. Now he's saying, I count it all loss. It means nothing. Less than nothing. If I don't know Christ.
- He wants to win Christ. To win people to Christ. Verse 9, And to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law.
- Here we go. About the righteousness. But that which is through the faith of Christ. The righteousness which is of God by faith.
- [10 : 51] I found or find so much peace and comfort in those words. That it's not by our righteousness.
- It's through faith. It's through faith in his righteousness. Right? Through faith.
- Can we say through faith? Through faith. Do you believe that this morning? Through faith in his righteousness. Being found in him.
- Verse 10, That I may know him and the power of his resurrection. And the fellowship of his sufferings. Uh oh. Fellowship of his sufferings.
- I thought this was supposed to be an easy life. Being made conformable unto his death. Death.
- [11 : 52] First of all, it's death to ourself, right? Death to the flesh. But what about physical death? Are we willing to die and face actual death?
- Like many of the apostles and disciples did? They died for Christ. Many since then have been martyred for Christ.
- Are we willing to go there? Or do we have rights? Our country teaches us we have rights.
- I'm not against taking advantage of that. But are we willing? That's the question. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.
- Not as though I had already attained. Either were already perfect. But I follow after. If that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.
- [13 : 02] Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.
- I press toward the mark or the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Can we forget this morning those things which are behind?
- Those things that have tripped us up. Those things that have haunted our past. Maybe there's things of unforgiveness or just a past of filthiness, of defeat.
- Are we able to forget those things? To put them behind and press forward to the mark of that high calling. That high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
- I'm just taking the words here of Paul almost 2,000 years ago and can we just apply them to our lives? Can we just say, yeah, that's what I need.
- [14 : 24] I need to put those things behind and press on toward that mark. Verse 15, let us therefore as many as be perfect.
- Are you perfect this morning? As many of us that are perfect. It's indicating that we are if we're in Christ.
- Not perfect in every action. We make mistakes. Sometimes we make human errors because we're in a human body and we don't know everything and we make mistakes.
- But are we perfect? Are we, I think the word is, are we complete? Are we complete?

If we are, we should be thus minded. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, where to we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

[15 : 40] Let us mind the same thing. Let us walk the same rule, the same vision, the same purpose. Brethren, be followers together of me and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.

And sample. I want to talk a little bit about ensamples or examples. That's another word for ensample. Paul is saying to be followers of Him.

I thought we weren't supposed to follow men. We have that thing, right? Oh, we don't follow people. We just follow God. You know, the interesting thing is we follow people, don't we?

Let's just be honest. There's men that are examples in my life that I want to follow. And I don't think that's wrong. Paul is saying it's not wrong. He's a humble enough man to say, follow me.

Today we, you know, we'd say, wow, that's... I'm not going to say that. Right? But if men and women are examples of following and teaching Christ, what if they are?

[17 : 05] We can't follow their ways? I believe that it's God's heart that we follow after godly examples. It doesn't mean that you follow after everything a person does or says.

But if somebody is a godly example, it's okay to follow that example. And it's right. Otherwise, think about it.

Otherwise, what's the purpose of being an example? Why are you a good example if nobody should follow your example? I think we've erred in that area.

We've erred in saying, oh, don't follow man. Just, nope, don't worry about what he does or she. We need to get back to the Bible and what the Bible says about that.

For many walk of whom I have told you before and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

[18 : 23] Now Paul turns it and he says, but there are many that you should not follow. Their end is destruction. They're selfish.

How often do we see young Christians follow the wrong crowd? How often does a young person start out and they give their life and their heart to the Lord and somehow there's somebody right there leading them the wrong way or getting them right back to where they used to be?

It's about examples. It's about following after and wrong examples. Paul said he weeps over those because they're the enemies of the cross.

These are very likely considered good people or even church people that are minded on earthly things.

They're earthly minded and not on heavenly things. If someone has a vision for earthly things without the purpose of the kingdom, we should not follow them.

[19 : 44] If the earthly things are just an end to itself, they're just, I'm not talking about sinful things, I'm talking about just being earthly minded, money minded and business minded and there's no real purpose.

That's just all it is. We shouldn't follow after those people or that example even. What are some examples that we should follow after?

I have a few questions here. We can just have a dialogue about it maybe. How has this affected you in both a positive way and a negative way?

Have you ever followed an example of a person that brought you closer to Christ?

Does anybody have an example of that or a testimony? I mean, I can think of men that have been a good example to me and when I think on their life and meditate on their life, it makes me want to be more like that.

[21 : 08] Does that make sense? Like, I won't mention them maybe right now just because there's so many, but over the years, some aren't even living anymore.

Several that I think about that are dead and gone. But they were very influential in my life. And I thank God for them because it made me more Christ-like.

Can you think of anybody like that? Anybody want to share? Just an example, somebody that you listened to or that influenced your life.

I can think of one there. Laverne. I see him smiling back there. But I'm sure there's many. But I know Aaron had a huge influence in your life, right?

That's what I'm talking about. Men that have influenced, women that have influenced your life. It's okay to say, I want to be like that. Or I want that part of his life at least.

[22 : 19] Maybe it's somebody that spends a lot of time just with the Lord. That's a good example. And even us here as a church group, as a body, we're examples one to another, aren't we?

Is it safe to follow your example? I've asked that before. But is it safe? Verse 20, Paul says, For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look to the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, that's who we look to. Today we sang that song. To look to Jesus. I was blessed and touched by that.

Ultimately, Christ is our example. He is the ultimate example. But sometimes we see Christ in somebody else and we're like, that too is an example, right?

That's the point I want to make. What about us as parents to our children? Are we the example they should follow?

[23 : 40] Verse 21, Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself?

You know, I believe that one of the greatest dangers in the Christian life is to either be led astray by our own selfishness, our own selfish thoughts, thought life, or by how we follow wrong examples.

Maybe it's just in little things. It's usually how it starts. I believe that this has destroyed millions of people's lives.

People spiritually. Their spiritual life. And if only they would have made right choices with whom they fellowship with, with whom, what group of people they, who their friends are, who they hang out with.

It would have changed the course of their direction. The change, it would have been a different outcome in their life and ultimately changed their destiny.

[25 : 12] When you think about that, you go, no wonder Paul said, beware of the dogs that deceive you. We might more likely say, beware of wolves.

False teachers. You know, these examples can be, they are either positive or negative. They can be positive influences in a believer.

Very positive. We already mentioned, somebody that prays a lot. Somebody that reads his Bible and spends time with God. Someone that loves the things of God.

Someone that loves God's people. Think with me this morning about the modern day preachers in America that are deceiving millions.

That's what I'm talking about. Not just preachers, but people that deceive. People that teach falsely with smooth words and easy believism type of preaching.

[26 : 19] Paul, we just read where Paul is talking about suffering with Christ. You don't hear that very much. Come to Jesus and you stop suffering, right?

Come to Jesus and have an easy life. Become wealthy in Jesus. The prosperity gospel is one of the biggest deceptions in the world today.

Smooth words. They don't even care about what God says, what God thinks. And then the blind people just follow the blind teachers.

And the Bible says they both fall into a ditch. Both the teacher and those that listen. Does it matter who we follow as an example?

Absolutely it does. Yes, we want to be free from the bondages of the law. But do we think that we have to prove that we're free?

[27 : 31] We have to do things that prove that I'm not under the law so we start using or how would you say we start living in the flesh and doing fleshly things to try to prove that you know what I'm saying, I think.

Like, we don't want to be under the law so we're carnal. You know? We'll do carnal things. We'll please the flesh to prove that I'm free of the law and we forget that that is the law.

Now you're under the law again. The only thing that we need to prove, brothers and sisters, is God's will. The Bible says to study to show thyself approved unto God.

Let's turn to that. 2 Timothy 2. So 2 Timothy 2. I would like to read some of that chapter at least.

Maybe not all of it. Let's start in verse 7. Again, Paul, I believe, speaking here. He says, Consider what I say and the Lord give the understanding in all things.

[28 : 50] Remember that Jesus Christ, the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel. Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.

Paul's saying he suffers as a Christian, as a follower of Christ, even in bonds, but the word of God is not bound. Isn't that amazing?

He recognizes that, yeah, I'm bound. I'm in prison or jail or whatever, and I'm suffering, but not the word of God. Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. That's the glory about dying with Christ.

If we're willing to be both dead to self or even physically dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.

[30 : 03] If we suffer, we shall reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us also. If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful.

He cannot deny Himself. Of these things, put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This is what I'm talking about when I said that our responsibility, what we need to prove, is the will of God.

Study to show thyself approved unto God. Verse 16, But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

Wow, what a warning. We are to shun. A lot of people shun people, shun Christians.

[31 : 18] Right? Some of you are shunned. But you know, what is to be shunned is vain and profane babblings. Things that aren't true.

Many things that we are to shun. Verse 17, And their word will eat as doth a canker of whom Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.

You know, there's many that err today. In our day today, there are many that err, that say things that are, you know, they might sound good or they might be close to right, but you know, there's something that just doesn't...

Is that true? Does that have a little bit of a ring that... That's not... You know, even sayings and things on social media. I'm just having some thoughts about that.

But there are sayings that, well, it's true, but why doesn't it sound right? You know what I'm talking about. Like it's just off a little bit.

[32 : 47] It's just people's thoughts and ideas. I think we should shun them. I'm not talking about the people, but those vain babblings, things that men come up with.

Men and women. They come up with and then they advertise it and they put it out there. It's just, you know, first of all, what does it do? Does it edify?

Does it help you? I think the Bible, I think Paul would say shun those vain babblings. At the very least, don't repeat them.

If they're questionable, if they're something that doesn't quite line up with Scripture, it's not really the heart of God. And just consider them profane and vain.

don't waste your time on them. Their word will eat as does a canker. Paul is actually here calling out two men concerning the truth.

[33 : 57] They were deceiving people. Then he says, Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure. Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.

And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. That you could put on social media. Hey, you're naming the name of Christ.

Have you departed from iniquity? That's what it says. That's a truth. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

If a man, therefore, purge himself of these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared for every good work.

flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

[35 : 12] But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. These questions that don't take you anywhere, they don't have any real value.

It says, to avoid them. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, preadventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive at his will.

we are called to walk in meekness and not to fight each other, but to teach, to be patient, to be gentle.

You know, it reminds me of the fruits of the Spirit. I think we should look at those. Let's turn to Galatians 5.

the fruit of the Spirit. We are to walk in the Spirit, to not trust in the flesh, having no confidence in our flesh.

[36 : 35] Our flesh is ugly, evil, and wicked, and will deceive us as soon as we put our trust in it. in Galatians 5.

In Galatians 5, I won't read all of this, but some verses, we'll pick out some verses here. It says, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Paul says here that if we're circumcised, if we are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. What is he saying?

He's saying that if we put, again, faith in the flesh, faith in what we can do, faith in religious acts, doing things for religious reasons, like being circumcised, that Christ will profit you nothing.

And then he goes on, he says, I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law. You could put just about anything of the law in there.

[37 : 59] For example, there's many, especially here in our area, that would say we need to keep the Sabbath. Or we have to abstain from certain needs.

It's not just circumcision, it's the law. You can put the law in there and say that if you do these things, then yeah, then you need to do the whole law, all of it. And even then, Christ will profit you nothing.

for we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness again by faith. Remember we said earlier by faith.

That's our righteousness is through the Spirit, through knowing Jesus. Verse 6, for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision.

Did you get that? Nor uncircumcision. But faith which worketh by love. You can just put in the blank there.

[39 : 12] Doing this thing or not doing it. Putting your confidence in the things that we can do or the things that we don't do. Is that where your confidence is?

Or is it in faith in Jesus Christ? Ye did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? Verse 9 says, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

There's another verse to enforce that thing of examples. A little wrong example does a lot. I'm going to skip through some of these and not read all of it.

I don't want to go late today. Let's look at verse 13.

For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty. Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. But by love serve one another.

[40 : 25] You know, we have so much liberty. I don't think we sometimes realize the liberty, the freedom that we have in Christ. And we need to love that, to enjoy that, to embrace that freedom that we have in Jesus when we have been born of born again, born of His Spirit.

There is so much freedom. Freedom from sin. Freedom from the law. Freedom from having to try to please Him in the flesh like we used to.

There's so much liberty in Christ. but He warns us and He says, but use it to serve one another. Use it to love one another.

And to not use it for an occasion to sin or an occasion to be selfish. We can take that freedom. That's what most people today do in Christianity, in so-called Christianity in America.

I think it would be fair to say that they use that liberty to do whatever they want. And that's not liberty. Liberty, freedom, true freedom is to please the Father, is to please God, and to know in your heart that you're doing what you can to please Him.

- [41 : 51] I know that sounds almost like, but you get the meaning, I think. It's not in doing, but yet it is to be able to have the grace of God upon your life to be able to please Him.
- Does that make sense? It's through faith. It's by faith through grace. And then He puts it in a nutshell.
- He says that to fulfill the law in one word is this, to love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you may not consume one of another.
- This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit. It fights against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
- And these are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you be led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. See, there's a law of the Spirit.
- [43 : 00] When we are led by the Spirit, we are pleasing God. We are walking right. We are walking faithful.
- But if and then we're not under the law. And He goes on and He talks about the works of the flesh. we could read those too.
- All those evil things. But here's what I wanted in this chapter. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering.
- That means a lot of patience. Gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.
- You know, if we walk in the Spirit and do those things, and that's how we live, that's freedom. There's no law.
- [44 : 06] And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
- I don't know totally what He had in mind in that verse. What's the difference between living in the Spirit or walking in the Spirit? Do you know?
- How do you walk in the Spirit if you're not living in it? And how do you live in it if you're not walking in it? But there is something to that verse. I take it as that if we're living in it, we're experiencing that, then let's move forward with that.
- Let's walk. let's get up and do something about it. Walk. Go forward. Putting those things behind. Forgetting those things.
- No envying. No provoking one another. No vain glory. Trying to get glory out of this. Are we filled with the fruit of the Spirit?
- [45 : 11] Is it evident in our life? Or is there still a level of confidence in myself? That's, I believe, the burden of the message this morning.
- That we have no confidence in ourselves. I want to just meditate a little bit on John 15 where Jesus said, I am the true vine and my father the husband.
- You know, I read an article recently that brought a lot of discouragement to me. I didn't know quite what to do with it because it was challenging us in this thing of not being individuals.
- We know that there is a thing of being overboard or extreme in individualism. and this article was basically challenging that and to me it went way too far the other way where it's all we're just part of a church.
- We're part of, by being in the church we're part of God's family and it kind of threw me a little bit and I just remember feeling depressed when I read it.
- [46 : 40] Have you ever read articles like that that has a truth but something's off? And I think that both sides of that ditch missed the thing, missed the truth.

And I don't know what is more true than John 15. Just coming back, yes it is individuals, yes we are individuals, that need to be plugged into the vine.

And then let that become the church, right? It's our relationship with Christ as an individual that makes you part of the church.

It's not the other way around where you come to the church and now somehow that makes you part of Christ. And I wish people would get that straight.

Jesus' own words, every branch in me, and I think that's you and I, that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

[47 : 55] And I just think that what Jesus is saying, that is, if you bring fruit, your heart is right, as an individual, he takes care of that branch.

He wants it to bring forth more fruit. And there's a relationship, there's a connection that you and I have directly to Christ, and it's not through some organization or group of people that you have that relationship.

It is a direct connection. when Jesus died, that curtain was rent from top to bottom, that you and I can come in there by ourselves to Jesus.

And He is the vine and we are the branches. It's a glorious thing that we as individuals come, and I'm not, I don't think we're going off on individualism here, but if we!

if we don't come to Christ as individuals and personal, how do you come otherwise? Let me ask you that. How do you come otherwise to Christ?

[49 : 06] There are many that will come and say, yeah, we've went to church, your church, all our life, but if you didn't know Jesus, you're not part of the church. If He doesn't know you, you're still lost.

it's knowing Him. It's when people were saved that they were added to the church daily.

It says those that were added to the church, I can't think of the exact words, but they were added to the church by being saved. We read that in Acts.

Just read the book of Acts. That's how people were added to the church. Not by just showing up and coming through a door on a Sunday morning. But God wants to be glorified by our life.

In verse 8 it says, Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples.

[50 : 08] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

Jesus said, These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends. If you do whatsoever I command you.

May that speak to us today. Jesus saying, you are my friends. He says, I don't call you servants. He said, I've called you friends.

To me, it sounds to me like a personal relationship. a personal touch. Sounds like an individual touch.

[51 : 26] I know I'm getting back at the man that wrote that article, but I don't want to be depressed about that. It almost sounded like you couldn't really have a relationship personally with the Lord.

are you connected? Are you as a branch connected to the vine? Is that where life is coming from? Or do you have confidence in yourself?

Confidence in the flesh? Confidence that you're a good person? Paul says, if anyone had the right to have that confidence, it was him.

but he counts it all as loss for knowing Christ. May together our individual people, as individuals, may we together come together in unity as a body.

That, I believe, is the real body of Christ. And that, I believe, is power. we have so much strength, so much in the examples of one another.

[52 : 50] Following godly examples. Choose your godly examples carefully. Not what brings confidence to the flesh or gives license to the flesh, but that will draw you closer to Christ.

that's my encouragement this morning. I think that's what God wanted us to hear. Let's pray together. Father, we just thank you this morning for your word.

Thank you, God, that you are so faithful. We thank you this morning that we can know you. Lord, that you are our righteousness.

Lord Jesus, that you have set forth so many examples and ultimately you are our example. But sometimes we look at examples here on the earth of men and women that love you and follow you faithfully.

Lord, may we all become examples like that, that others can look to us and see that this is how you walk out the Christian life.

[54 : 12] Lord, forgive us for having failed in that. Forgive us for not having been always been a good example. Sometimes we've been bad examples.

And help us this morning to forget those things and to press on into the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

Lord, help us to realize and recognize this morning that our example matters. I pray, God, that you would put that burden on our hearts this morning, that our example matters in other people, and that many will go to hell because of bad examples.

Many will be deceived by false teachers and just false or bad examples in this life, and they will end up losing their soul because of it.

I pray, God, that our life would be before us and that we could see what you see, Lord, that we would see the importance of being a good example to our families and to these little precious people in our midst.

[55 : 36] Lord, I pray that not one of them would end up in eternity without God because of one of us others being a bad example. forgive us, Lord.

Teach us, Lord, and help us to take your word seriously. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless each of you.

Amen.