

Peace and Relationships

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[0 : 00] God is good. It's good to be here. Greetings to each of you. Thank you, Tim, for what you shared this morning. For those of you that, just to be sure,!

that if you send out that link to somebody, there's a second one, in case you didn't know it. Right, James? Thinking of Joe this morning being sick.

And hopefully he's feeling better by now or will soon. Been blessed to be here this morning and want to speak, if I can, my throat is scratchy today.

Want to speak about peace. And it might be different than we think. It's probably a touchy subject. And if you're like me, it might step on your toes. But hopefully it goes deeper than just our toes and touches our heart.

[1 : 13] Not because I'm preaching it, but I think we need from time to time to be challenged with this. And it's one of those things that also has two sides to it.

Jesus said, I came not to bring peace, but a sword. Right? He brings a sword that cuts and it separates and it can be painful and it's not peaceful.

And people are hated and evil things happen many times when people accept Christ.

It's a beautiful thing when a young person can be saved in a Christian home and there's rejoicing and there's love and there's recognition that Jesus is coming to your heart.

But many times it brings a sword and it divides families and that's why Jesus said, I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. And yet we're supposed to walk with all men peaceably as much as is possible, the Bible says.

[2 : 26] So I want to talk about that and I'm recognizing right away that there's two sides to this thing of peace. in Romans, if we want to turn to Romans 12.

Romans 12 is a chapter that's a very good chapter for churches in the body of Christ. And I won't go through much of this chapter today, but that's where we find that one verse that I just referred to.

Romans 12 verse 16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

Be not wise in your own conceits. I wonder what are high things. I wonder what Paul was referring to when he wrote this.

Mind not high things. verse 17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

[3 : 41] Verse 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.

For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Isn't it wonderful this morning that we don't have to revenge ourselves?

We don't have to get even. You know, before we're saved, we had to get even, didn't we? We always had to play the get even thing. Okay, you did that to me.

Wait, it's your turn's coming, right? But, after Christ, that's not how it is. It says, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

And so, what I mean by after Christ is after Christ is in us, then that's changed, and we don't seek revenge anymore.

[4 : 47] Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him to drink. For in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

I think that was maybe the first, or one of the first Bible verses I learned in first grade in school. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

And I understood it. I remember understanding what that means. Maybe the teacher taught us, I'm not sure, but to not, if there's evil, to not respond with more evil.

How is it with us? As much as it is possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. You know, that as much as lieth in you, as he may be referring to as much as God has given you grace.

[5 : 56] As much of God that you have in you. That's how much we can live peacefully. If there's little of God, it won't be very peaceful, actually.

And then what about the first part where it says, if it be possible. I believe Paul is recognizing that it's not always possible.

It's not always possible to be peaceful, to have a good or peaceful relationship with everybody. It's just not.

some people just won't accept it, number one. And we can't control what happens in the other people's hearts and in their minds. But as much as possible for the Christian, and as much as God has given you grace, live peaceably with all men.

It doesn't even just say with Christians. It says, with all people. Now let's look at Hebrews 12.

[7 : 13] We had Romans 12. Now we'll go to Hebrews 12. Similar. Similar verse.

Chapter 12, verse 13. And make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

I want to come back to this verse later. Verse 14. Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Something stood out to me this morning as I read that verse. Here it says to follow peace with all men. and holiness. You know, we always tend to say holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

But what about the first part of the verse where it says follow peace. It's in the same sentence.

Follow peace with all men.

[8 : 23] Let's just leave the word holiness out for a minute and see what that sounds like. Follow peace with all men without which no man shall see the Lord.

It's follow peace and holiness. They're together. And that just stood out to me today for the first time. I never saw that before. I always focus on, oh yes, we have to have holiness or we won't see the Lord.

But it also says follow peace. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness bringing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.

Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for the morsel of one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For you know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.

For he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears. We know that Esau, and we're going to talk about him a little bit, but he cried, he regretted that he had sold that blessing, that blessing, that birthright for a bowl of soup, something that he was just selfish about.

[9 : 52] He was hungry and he wanted something now and so he sold it so cheap. And he sought it back carefully with tears.

The burden I have this morning is to live in peace with everyone as much as possible. And we know that not everyone wants peace, but our hearts should be for peace.

peace. I already covered this, but Jesus said, I came not to bring peace, but a sword. And how that often brings division.

If Christ's truth brings a separation and a division and the opposite of peace, then so be it. We can't help that. We can't. That's because people, other people make bad decisions and bad choices.

many reject Christ. Many reject this peace. And that is not our responsibility. If there is division and strife, it should not be coming from those of us that have Christ Jesus in our hearts.

[11 : 17] Strife and division should only come from those that reject Christ, those that reject the truth. And it should never come from within the body.

And I want to talk a little bit about Esau and Jacob here in a minute. The opposite of following after peace with our fellow man is bitterness or a root of bitterness.

I really believe that many times we underestimate how powerful that root is, how deep that root can be, how destructive it can be.

Bitterness is usually a result of unforgiveness and pride. You know, I think personally, I think we need this reminder many times in our lives.

I think there's a reason that it's mentioned many times throughout the scriptures. But we need that reminder. Even the thing about pride and the need to forgive.

[12:36] Jesus said that if we don't forgive others their trespasses, God will not forgive us. Can you imagine this morning the horror of standing before God one day on judgment day and him telling us that he wanted to forgive us but he couldn't because you didn't forgive.

You refused to forgive. That would be a horrible thing, especially for those that thought they were Christians. Jesus, because his word says, I mean, Jesus said it.

The other day I was having lunch with a friend and he pointed to that verse about forgiveness and what Jesus said that if we don't forgive, he can't forgive us.

I was like, thank you. I needed that too. But that will be the fate of many who call themselves Christian because they refuse to forgive and at some point, at some point, that unforgiveness turns into bitterness.

I don't know where that is and how that works, but that's how it is. And it defiles not only you, but many around us. Looking at a few examples, we already mentioned Esau because it's there in Hebrews, but think about Joseph and his brothers.

[14:20] And how many times this is within a family, with people that we love the most. I imagine that Joseph probably played with his older brothers when he was a small child.

They were probably friends. He was probably their little buddy. Very likely. There was many sons, and he was younger.

Maybe one of them was his best friend. Jacob was the father of Joseph. He got his blessing and also God's favor and God's blessing was on Joseph's life.

When that happened, and they saw that happen, they became jealous. The Bible talks about their jealousy. And I believe that jealousy grew in their hearts.

And you know, I'm not saying and advocating that Jacob did everything right as a father. I mean, today we would say, yeah, I don't have a favorite, you know.

[15:47] I mean, I have a favorite son and daughter, but they all know that it's all of them, right?

Kind of just an inside thing we have, but you're my favorite daughter, but they know that I say that to all three of the daughters and all three of the sons.

But to actually have a favorite and to make that known and to bless him with a coat of many colors and to, you know, in our day we would say, wow, that's risky stuff.

I mean, probably not wise. We'll just leave that. But that's what happened regardless of that. You know, that's not my point this morning.

The point is they allowed that jealousy to spring up and to turn, I believe, into bitterness. Otherwise, how could they have done what they did?

[16:51] They wanted to kill him. It was that bad. It was only the mercy of one or maybe a few, but I think Reuben was the one that said, no, let's not do that.

I think, was he the oldest? And he knew that if that happened, boy, that would really be something to deal with. So he's like, let's just put him in this pit over here.

With the intent of later, I believe, getting him out and sending him home. We know the story. And then when he wasn't around, there come those traitors that they sold Joseph to.

They agreed to sell him for what, 20 pieces of silver. So they sold Joseph into slavery. And you know, if ever there was a person, I mean, this is one of the saddest stories in the Bible that I can think of that ended well.

But if ever there was a person that could have become hurt, rejected, and bitter, it would have been him. He went into a foreign land, a place he didn't know, and he was young.

[18:08] He was so young. Went into a place as a slave, and then, you know the story, he ended up in prison, innocently put into the dungeon, far away from home.

It wasn't like he could call or text anybody. He had no communication, zero. All those years that went by, and then God raised him up for his glory.

When he was tempted, he ran, he fled. Always kept God first in spite of that. In spite of his condition, in spite of where he was, he kept God first.

And let that be an encouraging thing, an encouragement to young people, that it is possible, no matter what happens, no matter where you end up, to serve Jesus, and to follow him, and to walk in victory.

It is very possible. How Joseph did it, I don't know, but with God, only with God.

[19 : 27] And then God used him in a mighty way. But just the way that, you know, the strength that he had, and even in that, even in the dungeon and the worst place probably on earth, he served God, and he served his fellow man.

He didn't become bitter. He must have forgave as he went. He forgave. And he did not allow that bitterness to rise up in his heart.

And then at some point, he was at the place where he could have destroyed all his brothers. He was the master. He was the governor of the whole country.

And there were his brothers. They didn't even know him. But he knew them. No bitterness.

He just wanted to know if they were bitter. He wanted to know if they were changed before he revealed who he was. I believe Joseph guarded his heart of this kind of bitterness and unforgiveness.

[20 : 52] He was willing to be treated very wrong, very wrongfully, and to not become bitter about it. Now let's look a little bit at Jacob, his father, years before Joseph.

Jacob was a conniver and a deceiver before he was changed. There's a lot that could be said about his life. In fact, his name means cunning, I believe.

He was a cunning person. He got his way. He figured out how to make things work for him at the expense of others, his father-in-law especially. And he got the birthright.

Maybe his mama helped him a little bit in that. You know, if you think about it, she wanted him to have it.

And, you know, we say that and we see the picture there in the family, but yet, through it all, that was God's plan. Isn't that amazing? It was God's plan for Jacob to have the birthright.

[22 : 07] How they got it, sometimes you wonder about. You know, the lies, right? Yes, I'm your firstborn.

Well, let God be God. But, you know, it says there in Hebrews how that Esau sought after it later. It grieved him or repented him and he wanted to have that after all and he sought it with tears and I believe that he allowed it to become a bitter thing in his life.

He became very bitter at his brother and he came to him with 400 men and I believe he was going to destroy him.

I don't fully understand or know claim to know everything about the battle that went on that night with Jacob and the angel.

[23 : 16] I believe personally that it was Jesus. I don't know if we have solid proof of that but I just believe that.

that he met Jesus that night that he wanted a blessing. I believe he wanted answers. He was in a terrible place.

If his brother's over there with 400 men as soldiers he was going to lose. And his brother was all those years he had that bitterness he was carrying.

and so God changed the man that cunning conniving selfish individual Jacob God changed him that night I believe and it was in desperation that he came to God that way and it says he wouldn't let him go.

I'm not letting go of you until you bless me. He wanted God's blessing, his touch. There's something about when Jacob and Esau met that is very touching.

[24 : 38] It says they fell on each other's neck and kissed each other. And it says and they wept. Did Esau see that change in Jacob perhaps?

Is that what happened? Because he came with a hard heart. He came ready to have war. But something of God came in between them and changed one of them.

That's the picture that I get there. Think of all the years that were lost and all the good memories that could have been with those two twin brothers.

They were twins. But I believe God salvaged it and changed that relationship. we could read about that and go into that story.

But it is a very amazing story to see how God brought them together and they forgave each other and gave each other gifts and so on.

[25 : 50] Are we following after peace? Is that our heart that we follow after peace? Or are we so stubborn and maybe full of pride?

And we're concerned about our own image, about being right. And we actually neglect relationships. and again, the thing of compromising biblical truth, we can't do that for a relationship.

We see people do that too. Where they just compromise and they just say, well, I want to be a friend so I'm just not going to worry about it and I'm not going to say anything. I'm not going to stand on truth because it offends somebody.

You know, you get the picture. So there is a thing of, no, we can't go there. I can't go against God. Even Joseph didn't. I can't go against God.

Or truth. But do we do as much as is possible?

[27 : 05] As much that lieth within us? that we have peace. Last week, this past week, I had lunch with a brother, the one that told me about Jesus saying that we need to forgive.

You know, and we agreed together that we're not the same on everything and not always walk in the same path. But we agreed that we can still love each other and we do and we don't dislike or hate or despise each other.

I believe that we can walk in truth. This is the point. We can walk in truth with God's help and still love other people that are maybe not all walking in that same truth.

in fact, if we can't, there's just something wrong with our religion. Otherwise, I had wrote down otherwise, our truth is vain.

There are many in the kingdom that are not all living, or how should I say, that are not all maybe walking out the same exact convictions that we are, or that you are.

[28 : 33] Some of us have convictions in our homes, maybe with our small children and others. They vary. Our homes vary from each other, even in this church, I'm sure, and even as individuals.

but that doesn't mean that the one is saved and the other isn't, or the one is a child of God and the other is not.

Hopefully, we can learn from each other's convictions and how we raise our families and so on, rather than despise each other.

But we can still love and appreciate one another. Yes, there is that separation against evil and impure things. We must take a stand.

I'm in no wise saying that we don't take a stand against evil, against things that are not right. But, if my heart is full of pride, I really can't walk in truth.

[29 : 45] I want to share a few things of my family, some of my family history, just for your all's benefit.

Hopefully, it will speak or minister to you. but, I want to turn to John, chapter 2, just for a couple of verses.

John 2, verse, wait, I think it's 1 John, maybe. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

1 John, chapter 2, verse 9, where Jesus is commanding us to love each other. And, in verse 9, it says, He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now.

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness has blinded his eyes.

[31 : 12] And that's the point I wanted to make there, where I said that, you know, if our heart is full of pride, or bitterness, or any such thing, that we really can't walk in truth, because our eyes are blinded, if I don't receive you because you're a brother, or a sister, and because I'm better than you, or whatever, you fill in the blank, or I have bitterness toward you, or whatever it is, the Bible says that I can't see and I'm blind.

I want to share a couple things about my family, just to point out this thing about relationships, not this family, but my extended family.

So I had an uncle that lived in the same house as my grandfather. He was an uncle by marriage. church. And they never, as long as I can remember, got along. I have no idea why, never heard. mother. But they became very bitter at each other. And my aunt, the wife there in the home, she was so sweet and such a servant.

[32 : 46] She served both of these men for years and years, took care of them. My grandpa turned 96 years old. And for whatever reason, they couldn't stand each other, lived in the same house.

So sad. Absolutely a sad story. And I think of that sometimes, how that was. I just know it from hearing other people, the older people talk about it.

I wasn't very old. Never heard why. Might have had to do with a farm or money, probably. More than likely, something.

But you know, they both went to meet their maker. And as far as I know, they never resolved it. I never heard that they did.

I hope they did. Such a sad story. Such a miserable life. And then you think about how sweet it could have been.

[33 : 55] this wife that served and served and blessed both of them. And she must have had Jesus is all I can say.

I can If only they would have gotten that evil root of bitterness out of their hearts. Allowed God to pluck it out.

had another uncle on the other side of the family. Actually, he's still living.

He is at odds with his family. He's been in jail for a number of years and he's out now, but half the family thinks he did nothing wrong.

The other half accuse him. And it's divided the family and there's so much bitterness on the two sides. I just want to go back and help him somehow.

[34 : 57] But how do you? Other than talk about the bitter root. probably both sides are wrong actually.

If only he could acknowledge his wrong. And if only they could all forgive. You know, bitterness is springing up everywhere. You hear it a lot.

There's two men here in town that are brothers that haven't talked to each other. I don't know how many years, Tony, but we know them both and they refuse to talk to each other for years.

I've heard different scenarios like that over the years where men will refuse to talk to each other and yet they were little children growing up together, probably playing ball together and having a blast. How does that happen? outside of some root that God wants to deliver people from. It's the devil's tool.

[36 : 12] That seed, the devil's tool, it's his tool in a marriage, his tool in children, brothers and sisters, in the church, brotherhood.

Someday, when we are old, if we have not repented, it will be a grief that we can't handle. Can you imagine that feeling of knowing what it could have been?

What could have been? I remember when my dad died, and also other friends, I remember the sorrow of not only saying goodbye, but what we could have had.

That's a sorrow in itself. What we could have had if Jesus was on the throne. I remember grieving when Ellie's dad died to realize that why the children weren't grieving, or they couldn't really, really, because there was no relationship there.

And I thought, wow, what they could have had. And it broke my heart. How is it with us?

[37 : 51] How will our end be? What is our legacy? What are we leaving behind? regrets. And thankfully, because of Jesus, we can put everything, our whole past can be under the blood and we can be forgiven and we can forgive others and we can go on from here.

And we can walk in peace. Thank you, Lord, that we can put those things in our past. And God looks at it as if it never happened.

He forgets how foolish I used to be. I lost something here.

Yes, what will our legacy be? What will I leave behind for my children? Sometimes I shudder at that thought because I know how imperfect I am.

Yeah. Pain I have caused. Or will we be a loving person that cared about relationships and treasured friendships and brotherhood?

[39 : 20] One that loved deeply and passionately like Jesus? Or will I become just another bitter old man? this choice is ours.

Will we be like Jesus? Will we be like Jesus? Will we be like Jesus? choice is ours? Like Esau? Or will we be like Joseph? In Christ, we are a new creation and old things have passed away.

But we are called to continue walking in the spirit. We're called to walk as Jesus walked. To walk with Christ in our heart.

There's a few verses here in Colossians 2 where Paul says to the Colossians, he says, As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk ye in Him.

So the way we have received Him, walk in Him, rooted and builded up and established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

[40 : 25] He goes on, he says, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

Because in Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells. It says, We are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Verse 12 says, Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead, and you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and taking it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, having spoiled principalities and powers. He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them. You know, we have a path to walk. This is the path to walk where Christ is everything and Christ, where we are complete in Him.

The head of all principality and power. Our path is one of peace and not of strife and envy. The one leads to life and the other path leads to death.

[42 : 05] I've seen that in my own family. I've witnessed it where it just seemed like forgiveness just wouldn't come. You know, it's just, it's so crazy to think about becoming old and having two men that over some little thing so many years ago they probably forgot what it was.

All they remember is that they don't like each other. That might be the case with the ones here in town. I don't know. I just, I don't know what their issue is.

It doesn't matter. They're not allowing Jesus and they probably both claim to be Christians. I'm not sure about the one. The other for sure does.

And he's probably the worst of the two. But, what a shame. If they don't repent from that, if they don't forgive, they'll meet God that way.

Let's look again. I had said I want to come back to that verse in Hebrews. I want to end with that verse where it says to make straight paths for your feet.

[43 : 27] Hebrews 12, 13. It's interesting where he's, what he's saying here, the Hebrew writer. says, and make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.

But let it rather be healed. And then he says, follow peace with all men in holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. And that straight, well, I'll just read the next verse, verse 15 as well. looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness bringing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.

These three verses go together. Verse 13, to make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.

But let it rather be healed. I don't know exactly what the writer here had in mind, but what I get out of this is that our path, our walk needs to be straight.

[44 : 43] And that there are others following. Someone is following us. Someone is looking up to us. Doesn't matter how old you are.

If you're a Christian this morning and you're here, actually, if you're a Christian or not, someone's following you, somebody is looking up to you.

The question this morning, is that safe? Are you safe to follow? If everybody would just do what you're doing, is that safe?

I especially think of fathers. We have a lot of smaller children here yet, too, and older, but especially small children.

We are setting a path. Is there holiness? Is there peace with all men as much as possible? Looking diligently, looking into our hearts with purpose and diligence and meditating about what's in our heart, diligently, to see if we fail the grace of God, to see if I have a root of bitterness that is troubling me, and thereby many that follow me are defiled.

[46 : 13] Can we put those verses together like that? I think so. will we repent early or do we wait until late?

Now is the time to make restitution and clear our hearts before God and each other. Today is the day of salvation.

Do relationships matter to Jesus? Here I am saying all this. And you might think, well, that's just your opinion. And if that's all it is, then you can throw the message out.

But do relationships matter to Jesus is the question. And you can find that answer in obviously many places, but the one I'm thinking about is in John 17 where Jesus is praying to the Father and he's telling God and thanking him and all that about the relationship that he as a son has to his father.

How that the father is in him and he is in the father and he's thanking him and praying about that, about that relationship.

[47 : 40] And then he turns in the prayer and he begins to pray for the disciples. There's a portion that he prayed specifically for the disciples, that they may be one.

And then he prays for all believers, that they may be one, that they would love each other like you, God, love me, the son, and how I've loved you.

And he's saying to his heavenly father, that's how it needs to be. That's his prayer for us here today. That we have that kind of relationship with each other. How? The way Jesus and his father had. Isn't that amazing? And that's so possible through Jesus.

If we're all walking with Jesus, if we don't have that, then we're just not walking with him. It's that simple. Which will it be?

[48 : 47] Let's not harden our hearts to this. You know, I needed this the last few days. I was struggling yesterday afternoon with a message.

and I thought I knew what it was and all of a sudden it just came to me. Relationships.

How do we value each other? Do we value relationships? We could go on and on and talk about how it all practically works out and things that we do sometimes that hinder those relationships.

Things that are unnecessary or even wrong. That don't build. Don't, you know, I know for me as a dad I have to be careful with things that I say.

Even, I especially think back of when I was a young father with young children. and my heart goes out to you younger ones because it's important as our children are teenagers and older and even married that we walk right.

[50 : 04] But it's so important when we're young, when our children are little. And that's where probably most of us have failed, if we're honest.

we can look back and have some regrets. Maybe not everybody, but I know for me, that's, I have those. And, yeah, we can put them under the blood and we do, but we still have some regrets.

You know, we wish we could do a few things different. But God is merciful and He is a forgiving God. He changes us.

Through the changing power of Jesus, today, we can walk in peace. As much as lieth within you, as much as is possible, we can walk in peace.

And I think only pride will keep me from doing that. Maybe, maybe pride and bitterness, I don't know which, but reminds me of a number of years ago, I had a computer virus.

[51 : 24] I can't remember what they called it, but anyway, it was a virus that came into the computer and it just messed everything up. I think it might have happened several times over the years, but one specific time I remember and they said, you have to purge it.

You have to purge your computer, meaning you have to delete everything, purge the whole thing, just wipe the slate clean and start over.

It's the only way to get rid of the virus, lose information, whatever. Don't remember if we had backups back then or not, but I just remember that really speaking to me at that time.

God, you purged me. wipe that slate clean of the things that offend God, all the things that offend. Sometimes we need that. We just need a purging, right? You just step back and say, no, that thing in my heart is, yeah, when I go to pray, that person pops into my mind and it's not okay.

[52 : 38] So may God help us and show us our individual need. Let's not look at each other and think about why I'm glad that person heard the message today, but rather I'm glad I heard that.

What am I going to do about it, right? why don't you stand with me and we'll pray. Lord Jesus, we come to you at this time and we just thank you God for your mercy and your love, your mercy that endureth forever, even to this day, Lord, that mercy that can help us, help our hearts to be purged, to be clean if there's things that we don't even understand but maybe there's something there we know that shouldn't be there.

Lord, you want to purge that. You want to pluck it out and make the slate clean and give us a fresh start. Lord, I just pray if there's anyone here like that, that God, that you could just do that.

You could reach down in your mercy and touch us, Lord, and also that you would help us to forgive. Help us, Lord, to be forgiving families and to be a forgiving church where we are in our hearts, we wash each other's feet and we humble ourselves and we esteem each other higher than ourselves and every high thing that wants to exalt itself in my life or in any of our lives.

Lord, I pray that you would purge us from that. Lord, save us, redeem us from those things so that we don't have to just be another sad story, but rather that your redeeming power, the power of redemption would overtake us and overwhelm us and change us and make us a new person, Lord. [54 : 49] Father, I pray that your grace would be upon us and and yes, that we could have the wisdom in knowing how to walk peaceably with our neighbors and with those that might reject you and have rejected you or even just rejected some truth in the Bible, but Lord, that we would just be able to be vessels of honor and that we would walk peaceably as much as possible.

I believe that is your heart for your church, Lord, in this earth, in this life. God, help us, rid us of those things that hinder that.

And I just pray that things could be restored, anything that is broken, Lord, anything that is lame, like we read there in Hebrews, God, that is not in the straight path, that you would come, Lord Jesus, and bring healing.

Father, we need healing today in our hearts, Lord. And I pray that you would just bring healing. Help us to have open and sincere and honest hearts before you.

And may your grace be poured into each heart. Thank you. Thank you for the blood of Jesus. Thank you for being the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

[56 : 16] thank you that your word tells us that we are complete in you and that we can know that and experience that today. We worship you and thank you for your goodness and your mercy.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. Thank you.