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He'll be able to direct you with that being said Philippians chapter number three And we're going to pick up our reading in verse number 12 Philippians 3 12 and the scriptures record for us Not that I've already obtained this or I'm already perfect, but I press on to make it my own Because Christ Jesus has made me his own Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own but one thing I do Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upper call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way and if in anything you think otherwise God will reveal that

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also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you, even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross. Their end is destruction. Their God is their belly and their glory, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

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But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Father, we just thank you for your word this morning. And I'm not capable at any point to really speak to your truths,

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but as the Holy Spirit indwells me, I pray he speaks. Please move me out of the way. Allow your word, Father, to take root in the hearts of the men and women who are not only before me, but who will continue to carry this word outside the building. Lord, our desire is growth, maturity, to grow in you. So do a work in us that we cannot do. And we ask this in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. And be seated. So we're gonna pick up where we left off last Sunday as

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Paul declared to the believers in Philippi, the spiritual maturity isn't an arrival, isn't an arrival, but a constant pursuit. I'm going to repeat myself multiple times throughout the sermon this morning, and so the only thing I ask is that you just slow your thinking down and really ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding into that in which you already understand. The whole purpose is that we continue to grow and we continue to mature in what we read and what we have learned. So Paul is making it clear we don't arrive. That doesn't mean we don't mature. It just means that during the maturation process we not

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only realize how far we are from Christ's likeness, it continues to motivate us to press on. Now Paul's aim in every way was to be like Christ, to be perfect just as our Heavenly Father is perfect, and that means mature, not merely in word but also in deed. This is God's divine purpose for mankind and Paul's aim for himself. It was to be like Jesus. I don't know about you, but the more I've contemplated Paul's focus, the more I began to question my own pursuit of Christlikeness. I don't know if you've asked yourself the question, what does it mean to be a follower of Christ Jesus? I don't know how you would answer that. Does it simply mean to believe in him? It is true that a genuine follower of Christ must place his faith in Jesus, but is that all there is to being a follower of Him?

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Reminds me of Luke 640 where Jesus says, A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. To be a follower of Jesus is not only to believe in Him, but also pursuing to be like Him. This is what Paul has been saying. He's been linking spiritual maturity to Christ likeness. They're synonymous with one another After Paul met the Lord on the road to Damascus. He had one pursuit. It was Jesus

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He counted everything as loss as he reached forward with every fiber of his being in order to be like him Remember he said this one thing and the commentators at I do This one thing I do it didn't mean it was the only thing he did. Paul preached to those who were already saved, but he also evangelized to those who were still lost. He served the body of believers. He provided for his own needs while ministering as a tent maker. He penned letters. The point I wish to make is Paul's pursuit for one thing was not one-dimensional.

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And so his pursuit in Christlikeness encompassed many things. Think about it like this. Jesus proclaimed the gospel. He evangelized the lost. He served. He washed the feet of his own believers. He worked as a carpenter. It's clear Paul's desire to be like Christ was the aim of his heart. It's the Father's desire for all of us, after we come to saving faith, to be like Jesus. When we come to saving faith we're justified, then as we grow in that faith we're being sanctified, and then one day as we learn from the Apostle John we will be glorified. That is, we shall see him as he is and we will be as he is. And John describes the glorified bodies believers will one day receive. But

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between justification and glorification, we as believers begin the process of sanctification. That's just another way of saying we're being conformed into the image of Christ. Remember, Paul said, I press on to make spiritual maturity my own because that's what the Lord desired for him, for us. He wanted what Jesus wanted for him. Sometimes I wonder, is that where our mind goes? Sanctified and are being sanctified by faith through grace meaning the call to be holy Just as our Heavenly Father is holy described as a process by which we become more and more like Christ Paul's goal for living so we even you've said that about 20 times already. I'm probably gonna say it 50 more by the time I'm done

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Paul wanted what the Lord wanted for him That's your question this morning? Do you want what the Lord wants for you, or do you want what you want from the Lord?

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Because sometimes they're not the same thing

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There's things that we want from him, but do you want what he wants for you as a parent? There's certain things you want for your kid and your kid doesn't always want what you want for them Unless it's money Then they want what you want for them, okay? But other than that they don't want what you want for them, right? It takes a minute for them to realize that. This is the point he's trying to make, is that I want what my Father wants for me. Remember Romans 8, 28, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Those who he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to

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the image of his Son. The Father's desire is that we increasingly become more and more like Christ transferred into his image. Believers can get sidetracked because they lose sight of the goal which is to know him so as to be like him. Remember the word know speaks to knowing by way of experience. So Paul was saying his desire was to know him, the power of his resurrection, to have fellowship in his suffering. He's saying, I want to experience his way of thinking. I want to experience his power. I want to experience his suffering. In other words, I want to live like him so as to be as he is in every single way. That's why Paul said early in the letter

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Philippians 121, for me to live is Christ, to die is gain in his mind that is the only purpose I want to be like him it was his pursuit in every way sometimes I'm wondering I wonder are we forgetting that Christ being the perfect God man is now inhabiting eternity.

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Here's what I mean.

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Man has entered heaven, and we've talked about this before. And one day, we will be as he is. Now, we don't become little gods. Being like him doesn't make us him. So you understand that. Being like him does not make us him. However, one day, we'll no longer be susceptible to disease, to the failings of this world, to sin. In other words, one day when it's

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all done our sanctification will be complete. Can you think about that for a minute? Sanctification is complete. This is the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus to be perfect just as our Heavenly Father is perfect. Paul's declaring, I'm not what I will one day be, but I will with every muscle, every fiber of my being, every brain cell, pursue being like Christ to the exclusion of everything else in my life." This was his singular focus, the one thing he pursued. Is it the only thing that you think about? Love, you heard the phrase, like father like son,

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but to be like the son is to be like the father. So often I hear people ask the question, I wonder what does God want for me, what's God's will for my life? I love him and I want to serve him and I just want to know what does he want for me in my life? And I think the reason sometimes we ask this question is there's this desire to be used by God, to be called to some task, maybe some great task. But the greatest thing that we could ever be called to as believers is that of conformity and to the image of his Son. Paul said in 1st Thessalonians

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4.3, for this is the will of God. You want to know what it is your sanctification Your sanctification is God's will it's what he desires for you Remember, this is the process by which we become more and more like him He is perfectly mature. We are pursuing that Think about what Paul says in first Thessalonians 434. This is the will of God your sanctification But then he continues that you abstain from sexual morality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God, that no one transgresses in wrong his brother in this matter because

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the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly warn you, for God has not called us for impurity but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this disregards not man but God who gives his Holy Spirit to you. Think about the things that he listed there because it's gonna tell you sexual morality is rampant in the church not outside of it. I'm not concerned what it's like outside the church because that's the expectation but it shouldn't be inside the church. Or how about pursuing our own passions like verse 5, not of the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God, we know God. Transgressing against one

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another. Listen to what he's saying. See, when we are going through this process of sanctification, when we are becoming more and more like Christ, these things begin to fall off. I didn't say that you become perfect and that you never sin. I said you begin to grow in holiness. That's the pursuit. This is what Paul has been talking about. This is what we're called to. And this wasn't, Paul wasn't the only apostle who said that this was our aim. Many, you read through scripture,

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you see time and time again, we're called to holiness. Paul labored to see Christ formed in every man. He wasn't just thinking about seeing Christ formed in him. He wanted to see Christ formed in every believer. This is why it said in Colossians 128, him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ for this I toil struggling with all his

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energy that he powerfully works within me so what he's saying it's his toil it's my aim to present everybody in this room mature in Christ not because I'm maturing you but because the Word of God matures you so many people are going through so many different things and I and I have the answer not because I'm smart but because I just simply know who to point you to because if we continue to look to him and continue to mature the many other things that we find ourselves struggling with which are the bad decisions we make because we're not thinking about God actually don't take place and we begin to mature in this

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thing called life and we see God at work so the answer is the scriptures but we have to be looking at him this process of sanctification is not something we can just blow by. My preaching every Sunday is for one reason, so you can mature. Hold it, so I can mature. I've said to so many different people over the past couple of weeks and my wife as well, sitting there with a pen in my hand, just tapping my desk, what's wrong with you? This letter is kicking my butt.

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Because it's really making me think how far away from the finish line I really am. Galatians 419 Paul speaking again, my little children for whom I again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. He says listen I'm laboring I have one desire so if people want to know why I'm outside my mind sometimes for the church it's simply because I want to see you grow in Him because as you grow in Him then others will see Him.

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I pray that you're understanding that what we're pursuing is what we will one day be. What you're pursuing is what you will one day you want to be a doctor then I notice the classes you begin to take show me what you're pursuing because that's what you hope to one day be. So if your desire and your goal is to one day see him as he is and be as he is, I hope you're not waiting till that moment before you begin to strive for it, but that that's your striving right now today. In everything that you do, that's the direction that I'm going in. Can I tell you something? Christianity struggles because so many people

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have gotten comfortable and nobody moves anymore, because everybody who's saved has arrived. Except everybody who says they're saved isn't saved. Beloved, I really want you to think about what's being said here. Paul's not suggesting that we become sinless this side of heaven. He's simply speaking about spiritual maturity that recognizes the Christian life as a constant pursuit after Christ's likeness. The same thing we said last week, a pursuit not an arrival. It's the goal we strive for This is why he said again in Philippians earlier in the it is why it says continuing in Philippians 3 verse 15 Let those of us who are mature

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Catch that That those of us who are mature think this way and if anything you think otherwise God will reveal that also to you only let Us hold true to what we have attained The goal of the Christian life isn't be all you can be is be all that Jesus is. Say it again. It's not be all that you can be. You're not trying to be a marine. Okay, that's the few, the proud. Chad, give me a hoorah. There we go. All right, so I want to make sure that we understand this, okay, because we need to make sure we know the direction that we're moving in conformity to the image of Christ. It's not holiness. It's holiness, not happiness. Say it again. It's not holiness, it's not happiness, it's holiness. Remember,

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it's joy you're seeking. Happiness has everything to do with circumstances. Joy has everything to do internal. It abides. Can I tell you joy is so much better than happiness? Because you can have it when things are bad. You can't have happiness when things are bad. You can have joy, but happiness is elusive. So understand that conformity to His image is it's about our holiness not our happiness. So when he says let as many as are mature or as some versions say perfect, remember we've already discussed the word perfect speaks to maturity not sinlessness. He's saying those who are mature and this is relative. So you grasp this here's what I mean you have to read this in light of verse 12. Remember, Paul said,

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not that I have already attained or I'm already perfected, mature, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus had made me his own. What he's saying is that relative to being perfectly mature, there are levels of maturity we continue to reach as we pursue Christ's likeness. And it's in that maturity that we realize

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our goal is God's will. It is our sanctification. It is His holiness, holiness, conformity into the image of His Son who is holy. I'm going to keep saying it, into the image of His Son, into the image of His Son. This is the attitude we're to have, a mind that pursues the holiness of God. Beloved, when God saved me my personality didn't change, but my attitude towards the things of the world did. See, that's growing spiritually. It's beginning to understand that I haven't arrived, but I set my goal and my gate

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on being like Him. 2 Corinthians 3.18 And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed to the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. If as the believer your aim isn't to be like Christ, your walk is going to be one long walk. And to be honest with you, I'm not sure what you're pursuing. We have to make sure we take this step back and really begin to look and examine ourselves

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in light of what the scriptures constantly teach. Paul's letter to the Philippians is challenging. It really makes us take a step back and really ask the question, is that my chief aim? Yeah, I'm saved. Yeah, I have a relationship with Christ, but is that my chief aim? Is that the one thing that I'm focused on to the exclusion of everything else had a conversation I think it was after Bible study last Wednesday evening and I was talking with Joyce and I was saying you know I sit back and look we're talking about Philip how he immediately responded when the Holy Spirit told him to overtake the

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chariot where the Ethiopian eunuch was sitting and it's so hard to immediately respond when God tells you to do something we got a hundred questions and that level of obedience is sometimes hard for us to find and you sit back and you look, but I want. And Kim asked the question that at the time I answered it, but I'm always thankful when God gives you a better answer afterwards. I would have liked it during the time, but she said, well how do you do something you don't want to do? Like what do you do? And the answer is, we need to obey it, as Chad said.

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But it can't be void of the heart. And so, as I was driving home, I thought about our question, and I thought about myself. There are many things that I don't want to do, but I want to want to do them. And therein lies the answer. You see, the Christian wants to want to, even though what they're saying is, I don't want to.

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But I want to want to, and the only reason why you want to want to is based on this relationship right here And so that's the heart part this part still might be struggling, but I want to want to therefore I'm going to do it Which means my heart is still present even though I'm working on God to change the way I feel about the situation as believers We have to want to want to and this is how we're to continue going So when I look at scripture, and I see everything that's taking place with Paul I begin to ask myself the question over and over and over again do I always

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want to want to is that my goal is that my aim when you read what Paul writes some of the things that he says give you room for pause so why it says, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. He's basically saying some of you have matured in understanding this truth, while others may not quite see this as their chief aim as of yet. Paul says with confidence that the Lord will reveal it. At some point God will open our eyes to see it. My prayer is if you don't agree with some of the things Paul has penned, like counting everything as loss so as to gain Christ, and that everything isn't relative.

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Paul literally means counting everything that is advantages and disadvantages, the good and the bad as loss, so as to know Christ in such a way that you become like him. If you struggle with these truths, I pray the Lord will reveal to you that only as we develop a single-minded focus on Jesus Will we become like him? McDonald writes Paul's willingness to suffer and die for Christ and to bend every effort in the quest for Christ's likeness to the Lord Jesus is the mature view of the Christian faith Now some may call it extreme Radical fanatical but Paul states that those who are full-grown will see that this is the only sane logical reasonable response to the one who shed

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His lifeblood for them on Calvary God's will for us as I keep repeating as our sanctification This truth isn't hidden from us. His truths aren't hidden from us John 7 17 if any one will is to do God's will he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority. As we set our minds to know truth and to have an attitude of knowing, it's there we realize there's much we don't know. I'm confident that while many of you are hearing me, I'm confident that some of you may be struggling with what I'm saying. Well, allow the

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Word of God and the God of the Word to continue to minister to your hearts That you will think about what's being said I love how paul says only let us hold true to what we have attained The word hold true. It speaks to walking in a straight line to follow in a footsteps Figuratively, he was talking about behaving according to a certain standard conforming to something Paul's instructing them to walk in light of the integrity They've already been walking on in terms of the light. They've already received the integrity They're now walking in to continue walking in that until God reveals to them even more

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In other words God reveals certain light God gives certain light and then he gives more light we get more understanding Spurgeon says let us keep all the good that we have received. Let us not give up the truth that we have learned let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far and let Us keep together that perfect unanimity proved that the work of grace is going on in one as well as in another He's urging them as they mature Spiritually to continue walking what they've already learned to follow the standard of life that has been revealed to them And he says it in such a powerful way brothers verse 17, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. The Christian life Paul has

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been describing isn't as common as you think. This is why Paul called them not only to imitate him, but to keep their eyes on others who walk according to the same example. Now we know the word walk speaks to our manner of living. And the example Paul is referring to is that living that pursues Christ-likeness. Now some of us, we read this and we think that Paul might be sounding a little full of himself. Arrogant, imitate me. But as we read the words in context, it's clear he isn't making himself

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out to be more than he is. But he's also not making the Holy Spirit's work less than what it is. Make sure we understand that. He's not making himself out to be more than what he is, but he definitely doesn't want to make the Holy Spirit's work in him less than what it is. Paul was a true man of God, not because of anything he did, but as a result of God's grace in him. Remember what he said in 1st Corinthians 59, I'm the least of the Apostles unworthy to be called an Apostle why because I persecuted the Church of God he puts it right out there this is who I was this is what I did I persecuted I was an enemy of Christ but

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by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace towards me was not in vain on the contrary I worked harder than any of them though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me." Paul was under no illusion as to who he was, but he was equally aware of where God's grace and his sanctification had taken him, onward and upward to the high calling Christ Jesus. All Paul was saying to the Philippians was the same thing he said to the Corinthians, 1st Corinthians 11 1, be imitators of me as I am of Christ Here's what he's saying Imitate me and lowliness of mind as I long to give thought to

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Christ in Worshiping God in the Spirit imitate me there In placing no confidence in what I think I can do to merit salvation Imitate me and putting that off Imitate me in pursuing and pressing on towards spiritual maturity, imitate me in perfecting holiness out of reverence for the Lord. Everything Paul was saying, imitate me in, was what Jesus did. Therefore when he called them to imitate

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him, it was only in pursuit of Christ's likeness because he was saying imitate him. Love it. Sometimes we get caught up in admiring Paul's walk instead of imitating it. We look at it we say, oh I want to be like the Apostle Paul. No you don't. Think about what you just said. And so the desire is, we should desire to be like Paul because Paul's desire was Christ likeness. But we like to admire it from afar. But we don't want to bring it upon ourselves because it would require something. All of you. All of you All of you we think that that was well that was just for Paul and that was just for those days

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Only then because people don't need the gospel today People aren't rejecting the gospel today and I blast him in the word today and not treating it with contempt today Beloved it's no different today than it was then and we need the same men and women then today So he's saying don't admire me. Can you just imitate me? This is what he's calling them to Imitate what you see in me But this is a very strong statement One that we as believers need to take a step back and really begin to ask ourselves That word imitate is where we get our word mimic or mine

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What Paul is saying is that listen, I'm a sinner who's been saved by grace. So mimic me as I mimic Christ. It's exactly what he's telling us. This is what we're called to. Don't just look at me. He says, listen, mimic me and hold it, not just me. Observe others whose pattern of living is like that of Jesus. That word observe is where we get the word scope.

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Basically, what he's saying is that, listen, it is a mental consideration. He's saying scope it out Fix your attention on what is in front of you. This is what he's telling them to do in other words Look out for those who live according to the pattern set by Jesus when John the Baptist Said I must decrease

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So he can increase He was showing us the pattern He was saying this is the pattern. Beloved, are you walking according to the pattern? I must decrease so he can increase. Jesus is the example. Do you remember what Paul penned earlier in his letter? Philippians 2. I'm gonna read it again but I'm gonna read it from J.B. Phillips paraphrase. Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be for he who had always been God by nature did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal but stripped

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himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as a mortal man and having become man he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience even to the extent of dying and the death he died was the death of a common criminal. Jesus' attitude was that of complete surrender and humility. It's the very attitude Paul and countless other men and women joined in following. Can I tell you it's the attitude we're called to have today? Let me ask you, is that your attitude?

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Are you willing to count everything as loss, hold it, including your own life, for the sake of Christ. So as I was writing, I was like, well, how do I preach this in a way, Lord, to where I don't get mad? First, it's me. Am I all in? Am I all in? Is Christ the pattern? pattern. The Greek word for that word pattern is tupos. And it speaks to a visible mark, like a dent. Can people see in your life those visible marks of being wholly devoted to Christ? Pattern, right? Observe those who walk in the same pattern, example, depending on your version. Tupos, it's a visible mark. Can you see it in Galatians chapter 6 verse 17 Paul says from now on that No one calls me trouble for I bear on my body the marks of Christ if you remember our city Galatians

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Paul was battling the Judaizers who kept trying to say that it's Jesus and faith plus everything else And these guys were coming in and they kept taking a shot at Paul as an apostle and they kept saying the mark of true Salvation was that of circumcision and Paul was saying the true mark are the ones that come upon us as we continue to live out for Christ. The Christian, as a result of walking out his Christian life, that is going through the process of sanctification, there are marks to the body. In Paul's case these marks were physical but he also bore those marks in another way. You see, again, are you willing to bear the marks? I don't get to spend that much time with my family. Mark. I don't

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really have any hobbies. Mark. I'm not talking about being beaten, because that's where we go. But in our culture, right, where we are, you want to bear the mark? Put all your hobbies on hold. All of them. Every time you think about going to do something for you,

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pick up the Word of God and ask God

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where he would have you go do it for somebody else, Mark.

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You think about the money

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that you wanna spend on your family, you know, that nice vacation that you feel you owe yourself. Take all that money and allow God to use you to use it on somebody else, Mark. See, there's a lot of ways we can bear the mark. We don't like that mark because we justify in our mind that that's not the gospel and I'm wondering what Bible people are reading. Because again, Paul said, I count

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everything as lost. Paul wasn't hatched, which means he had a family somewhere. No, he had a nephew. And that's, we're talking about a sister. I want you to think about this for a minute because see these are the marks, right? So I you know, I'm willing to I'm willing to do whatever it takes and if they come and they start telling us We can't have the Bible. I'm just praying that the Lord will have me ready. You can't sacrifice your free time But you want to bear the marks of persecution on your body beloved come on Can we just be real?

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Can we just be real? I sit back at my desk and I ask myself the question over and over and over again, does my body bear those marks? Am I pursuing to be like you? Is it the one thing I do? Is that pattern visible in my life? We're called to be like Christ. Paul's not the only one saying it. John says it. First John 2 6. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk That means live in the same way in which he walked that means the way he lived John is clear If you claim to truly know Jesus to truly be hidden in him then you're called to live just as he lived See, we're good with Jesus being our divine example because this is what we say he's God so we're good with that but can you

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say to the church follow the manner in which I live my life for Jesus that's what we get well you know we start pointing other men Hudson Taylor George Mueller Charles Spurgeon we point to other people and we say you know these men were completely devoted hey you need to go get this book how come I can't read you? I thought my Bible said that we were a living epistle to be read by men. Why are you pointing to somebody else when they're standing and looking at you? They should be able to read you. If this is real and this is true, can they see it in you? Is it real? Listen, I get it. I want to do stuff too. I want to hang out. I want to just kick back and just do whatever I want to do. I want to just drive up to the mountain and just spin in the Grand Canyon just because it's there.

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There's things that I want to do. I can't, but I could. What won't let me? I'm compelled to preach the gospel. It's a compulsion. It's a direct result of the Holy Spirit on the inside of me, but I'm not special I'm just an ordinary guy Who's housed by a perfect God So are you Beloved where are we at? We need to stop pointing people to other people and start saying hey you can imitate me. I Pose the question to myself as Hebrews 13 7 says remember your leaders those who spoke to you the Word of God

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Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith Sometimes I have to remind myself that my goal as a believer isn't success in ministry. It's Christ likeness It's not the church and the things that happen in the church It's being like Christ only then can I say to others consider the outcome of my life not because of what you see built But because you see the way I live Because I want you to see Jesus in me not a building Not ministries not that I don't care about those things. I care about Christ being formed in you Do those things help? Yes, they do beloved

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But can I tell you something? If you're on an island all by yourself and all you have is this book and you don't have a youth group a woman's group A men's group with any other type of group you could still know Jesus You can still mature in Jesus. You can still grow in Jesus. Why because the resident teachers on the inside of you the Holy Spirit The Word of God is in front of you and he's working to conform you into his image So while these things we can have and they're nice to have you don't need them to mature You have everything you need already on the inside of you. The Holy Spirit says I wrote I wrote the word I can teach you the word and I can empower you To live out the word. What else do you need?

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What else do we need?

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We need to bend our will to get to where he's asking us to go. Listen, this isn't an easy message Because it's calling for a level of maturity. I don't have it Remember not that I have attained Keep taking you back to verse 12 because I don't want you walking out here thinking that I think I've arrived. I Haven't arrived My kid got mad at me last week. She said hey the Niners are playing in that championship game Like what time we watch it a game? Where are you gonna be? Yeah, are you picking up food and I was doing something so you always mess everything up

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And I'm like, well, I mean, I'll be there in a little bit. Well, why don't we just come to my house? Then I ain't going to. I'm doing something in my house. You come to my house, but you ain't even going to be there. And so again, it was a dad always messes everything up. Dad always messes everything up. They're blaming the wrong person.

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Take it up with Jesus.

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Okay.

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Now, he is a 49ers fan.

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Just so you know.

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To put it out there, alright? Because if that cat's bouncing off that dude's head and got caught, if that wasn't a miracle, I don't know what is, alright? So I just want you to know, alright? My point in saying all this is that I have not arrived. That's the whole point. But there is a pattern. This is what I am pursuing.

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Christlikeness in every area of my life only then can I say look at what God is doing Invite you to join me Now do I know that there are people who think otherwise as Paul said back in verse 15 They struggle with the idea of counting everything is lost Some people come to me say that pastor. Well, I think you need to make all those sacrifices. I Think those things are a matter of preference You know when I read Jesus said foxes have holes and birds have nests but he had no place to lay his head. Jesus wasn't the only one. Paul wasn't the only one. There are

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other examples. Remember we looked at Timothy and Epaphroditus? Remember how he desired to send Timothy to the church in Philippi because he knew that Timothy would have the same concern for their welfare as he would? That the interest Timothy wouldn't be his own that he sought it would be the interest of Jesus How about a paphrodite us remember Paul said he almost died for the work of Christ The pattern I see in Scripture Doesn't match the pattern that I see a lot of us walk around with today including me. I Think one of the reasons is a lack of biblical literacy. Many aren't teaching the Word of God and even fewer are

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reading it. How can one be like Christ if they don't know what Christ is like? Beloved, you have to go to the Word. You can't be like Christ if you don't know what Christ is like. Listen, if I'm honest, I know many aren't trying to imitate my faith and I don't see that as, I don't say it as a means of boasting. What's interesting is they always desire me to imitate theirs. Pastor Will, you should do this. Pastor Will, you should do this. But when the church is in need of godly men and women who are willing to say,

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imitate me as I imitate Christ. My desire isn't for people to look and say, oh, there goes Pastor Will. Matter of fact, we're in here Tuesday night for prayer and I think I said to somebody, how'd you feel if I said, call me Will, don't call me Pastor Will. The person just looked at me and they said, I don't know, I mean I've always known you as Pastor Will. I said, yeah I know everybody knows me as Pastor Will, but that ain't on my birth certificate. My birth certificate says Will. So everyone says pastor will pastor and I get it. I get it. I get it. Trust me I get it. But let me tell you something. I won't be offended if

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You call me will now you call me outside of will we might have some problems But I won't be offended if you call me will because you want to know why listen Pastoring or being called to shepherd and teach is a gift as the example that I gave the friend of the young the man I was talking to I said I don't walk up at Intel and say engineer Bob I got a question for you Bob might be an engineer, but I don't call him engineer Bob Okay, and so I need us to understand We place all these different things to kind of show where a person is in his walk with Christ

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If you can't see the pattern calling me pastor will does no good for me at all. I Pray that you see who I am as a son of the Most High God, as a servant of the Most High God, as an under rower of the Most High God. And God might call me to shepherd, but that's not all that I am. That's part of who I am. All that I am is hidden in Christ, and that's who I need you to see. This has to be the picture, right? This has to be the goal. It has to be the aim. I must decrease so He can increase. This has to be the picture so that I can look and say listen imitate imitate my way of living Imitate how I live in Christ basically imitate him

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Those who are in Christ are to walk as he walked which means we need to live as he lives Paul's saying please imitate my willingness to suffer my total devotion to Jesus over everything, the selfless service for the cause of Christ, my devotion to the Word of Truth. That's the pattern for the life of the person who desires to look like Christ. Is that you this morning? Is it just your lips telling or is your life telling? It's not about perfection but pursuit. Our lifestyles are either confirming or denying our pursuit of Christlikeness. As much as we like to say I'm no role model, it's not my job to be a picture of Christlikeness,

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beloved, the Lord desires us to be men and women whom Jesus can be seen. Remember what Paul told the young pastor Timothy, 1 Timothy 4.12? Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity, until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of the scriptures to exhortation to teaching Christ's likeness is both our pursuit and our responsibility. First Thessalonians 1 2 we give thanks to God always for all of you constantly mentioning you in our prayers remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord

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Christ for we know brothers loved by God that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and the Holy Spirit and with conviction you know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake and you became imitators of us in of the Lord for you see the word and much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit So you became an example catch this to all the believers in Macedonia and Acacia Paul speaking about their work of faith their labor of love steadfastness of hope of the Lord Jesus in

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What they saw in him in those who served with him. This is why I said they became imitators of us and I love how he says this and the Lord We know that the Lord had already ascended He's clearly saying that it's not us. You're imitating. You're imitating Jesus. We always say imitation is the greatest form of flattery Please notice that their conduct became an example To all the believers in Macedonia and Acacia How about us? Our Christianity isn't to be lived in isolation. If we're to be examples worth following, then our Christian walk must be visible. It must be lived out in public. That pattern, not only because the

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Lord desires other believers to see Him and His progress in us, but so our example may shine as lights against those who are enemies of the cross Beloved we have to make sure that we are going and taking the gospel to the world Now it's at this point in Paul's letter his heart begins to break He desired to see men and women come to saving faith the knowledge of truth to know Jesus to mature spiritually But Paul wasn't ignorant to the fact that many false teachers would seek to lead them from the gospel of Jesus Christ Paul's heart is full He's saying follow my example observe the example of the godly men and women who seek after Christ likeness

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He wanted him know that their pursuit of Christ likeness following the right pattern is vital And as you study the word, you'll see the pattern and sanctification is vital. We're to be like Christ however, some teach otherwise we're to be like Christ. However, some teach otherwise concerning sanctification as if its purpose is about meeting our needs. Let me say it like this. The process of sanctification,

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again, being conformed to the image of Christ is not about meeting our felt need for self-fulfillment on our way to pursuing Christlikeness. Sanctification is not about learning to forgive myself before I can accept Jesus's forgiveness. Learning to love myself before I can love others. Improving upon myself, personal development and achievement, emotional wellness, rest or happiness until we go home. That is not the goal of sanctification. The goal of sanctification isn't meeting our felt needs on the way to Christ's likeness.

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In other words, he's maturing me by working out these things in my life that I need for me. Beloved, he already met your need when he saved you. He met your greatest need, which is salvation, and now he's conforming you into the image of his son. Why? Because there's other people who've yet to have that need met in their life. One only needs to observe the example of the godly men and women in Scripture. They had one focus, John 8, 28. So Jesus said to them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak just as the Father taught me and he who sent me is with me he has not left me alone for always do

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the things that are pleasing to him are you caught up in doing the things that are pleasing to him Jesus is the example we must imitate him it's not about my will it's about doing the will of the Father back to this one thing I do. I don't seek to satisfy my desire. I don't seek to satisfy my need. I seek to satisfy the Lord who saved me. And then I know, as Paul says later in Philippians chapter number four, and my God, I love how he owns him as his own, my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. So he says, you don't have to worry about that. God knows what he's going to do My heart breaks over the man-centered theology permeating the church today It's drawing the hearts of men away from Christ

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But my heart's not the only one breaking Paul's was breaking far before mine Because he's writing with tear-filled eyes as he warns them for many of whom I've often told you and now tell you even with tears Walk us enemies of the cross of Christ they're in his destruction their God is their belly and their glory and they glory in their shame with mine set on earthly things give me ten minutes and I'll have you out get sometimes you got to warn people so they don't fall asleep on you give me ten more Paul exhorted them to follow his example in the examples of other godly men and women within the Philippian church. But notice he says there were many who didn't follow the example.

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He calls them enemies of the cross. And then he goes on to describe their lifestyle as that of self-indulgence. Paul's grief wasn't just sorrow for the believers who were being tempted to turn to another gospel. His grief was equally real for those who professed Jesus as Lord, but didn't live that way. His heart was breaking. He calls them enemies of the cross, not enemies of Christ. You might say, well what's the difference? Here's the simplest explanation. The Judaizers, and they believed that Jesus was the Son of God, that he died for the sins of the world, that he rose again, and we have to place our faith in him. And then we get circumcised and we follow

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the law. So that was needed in order to complete salvation. It's not just Jesus they're speaking against, it's his work on the cross. When Jesus said it is finished, he meant there was nothing left to do for man's redemption. Salvation will be available to all who genuinely repent and believe. And by adding works you take away from Jesus's work on the cross. Anyone who adds or takes away from the cross is an enemy of the cross. Remember what Paul said in 1st Corinthians 1 17, for Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel and not with words of eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of

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its power. If you want to know if a man's religion is truly of God listen to what he says about the cross of Christ. That's how you'll know. What does he have to say about the atonement? The cross of Christ is everything. Jesus accomplished what we could not. The focus isn't just his death, but what he accomplished in his death for sinful man. He provided for us what we could not provide for ourselves, the salvation that we stand in. Some in speaking about Jesus' death on the cross came as a result of man's depravity, man's sin, in need for a Savior. The cross is at the core of the gospel and it's the heart of what we believe. Yes, the cross represents God's love, but also his wrath upon sin. The wrath that we as sinners who were

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separated from God deserved. See, one view can make it all about us. God loves me He's just continue to make things great for me until he brings me home The other view says God loves me, but the cross exists because of my sin And I can't get home that's when those two words become really powerful but God Jesus's work on the cross the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, He redeemed us. Our view of the cross will dictate our walk in Christ. A pastor once said, the cross is the touchstone of true doctrine and right behavior. The touchstone of true doctrine and right behavior. It's these enemies of the cross.

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debate were they Judaizers, were they Gnostics? Both views were inconsistent with the gospel and both views promoted a lifestyle that wasn't consistent with the example that was set by Jesus. This is why Paul exhorted the Philippians to follow their example. And again, what is the example? Paul keeps listing it. 1st Corinthians 4.9, For I think that God exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become spectacles to the world, to angels and to men.

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We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour, we hunger and thirst. We are poorly distressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless. When persecuted, we endure. When slandered, we

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entreat. When we have become and are still like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. I do not write these things to make you ashamed. I'm not trying to make you feel bad. But to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you don't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus to the gospel I urge you then be imitators of me Paul was used by the Holy Spirit to birth the church in Corinth it's interesting the verbs that he uses in this section or in the present tense which means this was his lifestyle being hungry being thirsty being poorly distressed, badly treated, homeless. This was his lifestyle. Mind you

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of someone else, foxes have holes and birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. I want you to see, when Paul says, imitate me as I imitate Christ, beloved, this manner of living can't be done if you're not a believer because it can't be done void of the power of the Holy Spirit. And it's not something that you arrive at, it's something that you pursue. And as you continue to grow in spiritual maturity, more and more of the marks you will bear in your body. Paul called upon the Corinthians to imitate him, as opposed to the lifestyle of the enemies of the cross, who he said, their end is destruction, their God is their belly, their glory and their shame, which with

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mind set on earthly things Paul saying instead of becoming what they could have been which is children of God through faith in the cross their end is destruction and that word speaks not to a loss of being but of well-being an Eternal loss of well-being and then Paul goes on to say that their true. God is really their own desires That's why he says their God is their belly speaking about their flesh. He's saying their flesh rules them. They focus on earthly pleasures So satisfaction was their pursuit. They lived in rebellion to God's holiness meaning Christ likeness was not what they were after

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And the worst part of all they weren't ashamed of it They were completely okay with it they had no regard for the cross of Christ and their lifestyles bore that out So, let me ask you this morning God's styles bore that out. So let me ask you this morning, where does that leave us? Where does it leave us?

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My prayer is that we don't admire the sermon that was delivered or admire the passages that we see, but they actually break our hearts and make us weep. Because I'm afraid and I fear that I have not longed to be like him like that. I fear that I've been so comfortable in my walk with Christ that I feel that's not actually necessary. I don't need to do those things. But beloved, imagine being a parent looking at your child, well I don't need to go to school. I don't need to learn anything. I don't need to be respectful. I don't need to have good manners. I don't need to do these things and your kids 8. And you're

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telling your child, I want you to grow up. There's something you want them to be. Can I tell you your father was saying, I want you to grow up. There's something I want you to be. You are my sons and daughters and I want you to look like my son. That's the goal and the aim. So how do I do that? Forget that which is behind and reach for that which is ahead. Keep your eye fixed on the atonement, the cross. What did the cross of Christ secure for you? Eternal life if you believe. So then what do I pursue? It's not salvation because you're standing in it. So what am I pursuing then? I'm pursuing to be like him. Theologian says, Paul finds his chief delight is the cross of Christ.

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It is the center of his life. It is the pattern of his life. It overshadows his life. It is the goal of his life. That is the place the cross of Christ should have in the life of every child of God. Is that the place it has in yours this morning? See, when I said that I don't want to get mad at myself for mad when I was preaching, it's because we hear the same thing over and over again. And then we promptly leave and do exactly what And there is this clarion call that just says, Hey, when are we going to do something different? When are we going to mature?

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So I'm speaking to everyone in here because it's not as though we have attained,

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but we press on.

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Some of you I know really well. And if you really want a deep dive into you call me and ask me to sit down with you And I will no matter how mature you are or how immature you are And let's open the Bible and see where God's moved you spiritually or where you're still standing in the same place But what makes you qualified to do that I'm not This book is. And I know what God has called me to do. He's called me to act as an under-shepherd here.

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Which means, because of that, He'll give me the discernment that I need to speak into those areas in your life. And let me tell you this also. Please feel free to speak into mine. Everybody except my wife. The idea is that we continue to grow.

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The idea is that we continue to move forward.

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The idea is that sometimes I'm having conversations with people and they have no idea what they told me six months earlier. It's right in front of my mind and they're saying 180 from what they just told me. Sometimes I just want to tap and go, are you sure about that? Do you remember June 17th, 2 o'clock in the afternoon? Here, blah blah blah blah blah. And so, hey, it's not to put you down. It's to say, hey, I need you growing because I need to grow. I can't grow without you. You don't grow without me. We grow with each other, but God's the one who's bringing the increase. So I'm gonna close service but I want to close service by just offering an opportunity for people to

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come to this altar and pray. We don't do this every single Sunday. The reason why I want to do it this Sunday is because no one in this building has arrived and so because of that I want you to have the opportunity to be able to come and just like you just pray with me Just pray with me and if I if you don't know Jesus, then I want you to be able to say, okay I don't know him. But what does it mean to know him? And so this is what I'm asking Five minutes is all will take Won't take much of your day

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1:00:19  
But for some of you who may need that prayer It may make all the difference in the world in terms of how you're growing spiritually. So I'm going to ask you to stand with me. I'm going to ask if Chad and if Carrie and if Jeanette would join me here at this altar. If you desire a word of prayer, just come. Just simply come and let Him pray with you, let Him pray for you. Listen, everybody in here may say it's not about I want to be saved, but I sure want

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to grow. I haven't arrived. I don't know where I'm stuck, but I know God's calling me forward. So pray with me pray for me if that's you Just take a moment. I know it's difficult because all eyes are on you But can I tell you something you're performing for an audience of one? You're performing for an audience of one if you can humble yourself before him. You'll be amazed at what he can do in you So if that's you Just want a moment of prayer. Whosoever will come just come and let them pray for you.

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1:01:42  
There may be storms that will move out the way trials will come to only test my faith. What I've learned about your favor, your mercy is sufficient for today. When I'm worried about tomorrow, I won't be overwhelmed. And the burdens that I've carried, I will choose to lay them down. Because what I've learned about your favor, your mercy, and your grace, is they

2  
1:03:27  
go on forever, they're sufficient for today. Oh, hallelujah. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, There's sufficient for today. I find you just the same And behind my darkest mornings, there's a peace I can't explain I'm so grateful for your favor Your mercy and your grace

2  
1:04:37  
Cuz they go on forever, they're sufficient for today Hallelujah, Hallelujah, that's sufficient for today. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, One day I'll finally see you And my faith will be my sight And behind my present suffering We'll be standing in your favor Your mercy and your grace Cause they go on forever They still go on forever

2  
1:06:23  
They still go on forever The all glory to your name Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah The all glory to your name Hallelujah Hallelujah

2  
1:07:03  
Hallelujah All glory to your name Hallelujah, there's some fishing for today. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, sufficient for today Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah Hallelujah Be sufficient for today

2  
1:08:30  
Hallelujah Hallelujah

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1:08:36  
Hallelujah There's a desire, Father, to be so much more, to be all that You've created us to be. So, Father, this moment in opening an altar, this is just wood. The altar is Your heart. And so, Lord, I pray, precious Heavenly Father, I pray that as this body comes together, Lord, not just in this building, but in this world, that the church becomes the force of love, but also the force of truth. That we have the boldness and the courage, Lord, to be able to stand so that men and women can see that there is an eternal life, Lord. You sent your Son to die, not for happiness on earth, but for holiness and joy for all

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eternity. Father, help us to embrace what we can't see. And in the process of embracing that, we learn what the Scriptures teach. Godliness is profitable for this life and the one to come and father We don't seek to suffer but in the course of serving you whatever we endure we counted all joy For as James said it's working for us father or for a more eternal weight of glory So Lord has it is perfecting Righteousness in us not ours, but Christ

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1:09:56  
Father the endurance as James says we receive Christ. Father, the endurance, as James says, we receive from the steadfastness of walking through trials with you. We grow in a faith that becomes visible. And your pattern, which becomes our pattern, which becomes visible to the world, cries who sent his one and only son to die a brutal death upon a cross. Perfect love meets perfect wrath so that we could have perfect life. One day we will see

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1:10:38  
you as you are Lord Jesus. Until then we strive. We press on and upwards towards the high mark. I pray for everyone in this building and outside this building that we carry the gospel of truth. And for those who do not know, Lord, send us in their path. Let us be your church, not on Sunday morning and Wednesday night, but let us be your church every moment of every day until the day you call us home. This is the prayer of your church, the prayer of your body. And we ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Christ we pray.

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1:11:14  
And let the body of Christ say amen turn and hug And let the body of Christ say amen turn and hug somebody before you leave here today

Transcribed with Cockatoo