

Philippians 1:12-18

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[0 : 00] I'm going to continue Philippians tonight. It's an interesting passage we're looking at tonight, and there's a lot to be said about it. It's good to see everybody. I know it's been probably a busy day on campus, and the fact that you're here just shows that you really want to learn the Word of God and really apply it to your life.

And I pray that it does that tonight. I hope that you leave walking away feeling challenged and encouraged and pushed a little bit. So, an introduction. I'll give you a brief introduction to this, but I think the focal point of what we're going to talk about is in verse 12 of what we just read.

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel. And Paul is explaining this in such a way to where he's like, my imprisonment or my time here that I'm in Rome, don't feel bad about this.

Because it's worked out for the greater good or the advancement of the Gospel. God has used it that way. And no matter what circumstance you find in, we're to be proclaiming Christ to a lost world.

And no matter where you are in your life, not looking to do something later or when things work out a little better for you. It's like wherever you are is where God has you right now, and He wants you to be proclaiming the Gospel.

[1 : 28] And a focus, a really interesting thing we're going to look at in this first verse is where He says, has really served to advance the Gospel.

That word advance is a really, really awesome word. It's a military word. It means like how, like when an army was on the march, people would have to go in front of the army and like clear the way.

They'd have to cut down trees, cross rivers, and do all these things so that the army could move forward. It's the kind of context that that's kind of used in. Paul is like saying that that's happening with the Gospel.

And, you know, I mean, I guess one of the best illustrations you could give, at least on earthly standards, I guess, I could talk forever about this.

I'm not going to. Those of you who know me know I like stuff like this, but I'm resisting talking about the whole night about this. But imagine that you and I lived back in 200s BC, and I told you, okay, I want you to organize an army from several different nations, most of which nations don't really like each other too much.

[2 : 40] They all speak different languages. I want you to build an army of these people, train them, and I want you to march over 1,000 miles over rugged wilderness across rivers.

And if you deal with, like, the native peoples there, you're just going to have to fight them and defeat them and keep moving on to the goal. And then eventually you're going to have to cross the Alps, cross those mountains in a really cold part of the year.

And once you do that, after you've kept everything together, I want you to go down towards Rome, and I want you to, like, defeat or annihilate 10 Roman legions numbering around 70,000 men.

You think you can do that? 1,000 miles, like, going over all this rugged wilderness, and that actually happened. A general that a lot of people know about today, he's studied and admired over tons of different military campuses.

Hannibal actually did this. He united people from many different nations and brought them together for a common cause, which was to fight against Rome. And Rome had devastated his country, which was Carthage.

[3 : 50] It was in North Africa at the time, modern-day Morocco area. And they had, you know, his father had fought against them. It was just a hatred to be, well, he just brought up to be just hating

Rome.

And so he was out to destroy Rome, and he did that. He gathered around 38,000 infantry by 8,000 cavalry, and he began this march. And about, he crossed over the land, he crossed over the Alps, and, like, eventually, he also had 37 war elephants.

I forgot to answer, bring that up. That's pretty crazy. But he crossed over many different rivers, and one river, it was a huge river, he had to cross his army. On the other side of it, there was a large number of Romans he had to fight, just on the other side of the river.

He was able to do that. He crossed them over in, like, rafts. When they landed, they just came around and, like, defeated the Romans. And he went through the Alps in the northern part of Italy. He crossed the Alps in, like, freezing weather. He cut through the mountains, pretty amazing, and made his own roads. And then he came down, and he faced a Roman army, about 70,000 or so.

[5 : 04] And he, it was known as the greatest defeat in Roman history. Around 70,000 men were killed at Cannae. Pretty crazy victory for Hannibal. And so, no matter what the obstacle was, like, he was just, didn't care.

He was going to face it and overcome. And how crazy this must be for us to even hear about something like that. But it's really garbage compared to what God has done since the beginning of creation to bring man, you know, back into a relationship to himself and sending Christ to reconcile us to God.

And God has committed, like we talked about this last week, to his saving purpose no matter what it takes. He will accomplish what he set out to do. He'll begin the good work that he began, and he will finish it.

And so there's no power. I want you to turn. There's a few places to turn tonight. Isaiah 40. Hold your hand in Philippians, but turn to Isaiah 40. But no power in this world or in the spiritual realm will stop God's advancement of the gospel.

He promises that he will achieve it. One day he will have a people from every nation, tribe, and tongue worshiping Jesus. And Isaiah 40, go to verse 3 and see if this passage sounds familiar to something in the New Testament.

[6 : 34] This is 7,000 years before Christ. And it says, This is what John the Baptist quoted.

He's like, I am that voice crying in the wilderness, and the Messiah is here, and he's going to move forward. His kingdom will not have an end, and God will have his glory on this earth.

So Paul understands this, that God is committed to his saving cause, and that no matter where he finds himself, even while he's being imprisoned in Rome, he knows that it's for the advancement of the gospel.

So, we're going to look at four different things that Paul brings up here, as far as what does the gospel do to us, to those around us, and that's kind of what we're going to focus on.

But number one is, sharing the gospel affects your soul. Like as a child of God, as a believer, as a follower of Christ, sharing the gospel is good for your soul.

[8 : 00] It affects your soul. So, he recognized that the power of the gospel was being released by his imprisonment. And he knew that God had sovereignly brought him there every step of the way.

And he knew why he was there was for God to advance this cause. And he didn't complain. He didn't say, I wish I could just kind of get out of the situation and go do something else and get out on the streets.

But he understood that, like Joseph in Genesis, that what was being meant for evil, God was going to use for good. He was aware of that thinking of God and how God carried out these plans.

Flip to 2 Timothy 2. I think after this one, I just have three other places for you to look for the night. But 2 Timothy 2, I want to show you what he says here.

So, one of the biggest services that clothes nations to the gospel and people that are hostile towards the gospel, one of the greatest things they actually do to serve the gospel and advance the gospel is like try to persecute it and throw people in prison.

[9 : 12] And it always ends up backfiring on whatever cause they're trying to carry out. But 2 Timothy 2, go to verse 8.

Paul says, Timothy, probably this is, you should know 2 Timothy is probably the last letter Paul wrote, so, his last word, so to say. He says, Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal, but the word of God is not bound.

Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, the eternal glory. So, he's rejoicing.

And that's, he's stuck in this place. He can't get out. And in this go-around, this was not written in the same context as Philippians. He was in a dungeon cell.

He was waiting for death. He wasn't waiting on trial like in this previous time. This was after Paul's fourth missionary journey when he wrote 2 Timothy.

[10 : 26] And this is after the second one when he wrote Philippians. But he understands that though I'm here and I can't really physically go anywhere, like God's power is not limited to my physical dimension.

Like God's word is not bound. God's word is going to continue to move forward and change lives. And I'm willing to endure anything, he says, anything for the sake of those whom God is going to bring salvation to.

I'm willing to endure hardship and suffering and even death if it means that they can be reached with the gospel. Very powerful words. Because I want that attitude.

I don't always have it. And, but I want whatever it takes. You know, if it means my life, I want it to mean that for the sake of those who will be saved.

So, I want you to think about this. How sharing the gospel affects you. You might not think about that that much. You always think of like sharing the gospel is just for the people on the outside.

[11 : 26] But what we love the most is what we glorify the most, is what we praise the most. So, what we talk about, what we do with our time, the activities we engage in, what we do with our money, it reveals like what you love.

So, you can say that you love Christ, but if your life shows something totally different, you might want to recheck that. But it's like, have you ever wondered like why that's so?

Why do we bring praise to the things that we love? And before C.S. Lewis was a Christian, he was like reading through the Bible, and he was kind of curious, like he was reading through the Psalms, and he was like, why does it always talk about praise God?

Like, what's all this praise about? And while he was writing about that, this is something he said, I have noticed, excuse me, I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise.

The world rings with praise. Lovers praising their mistress. Readers praising their favorite poet. Walkers praising the countryside. And players praising their favorite game.

[12 : 40] I think, this is really cool, he says, I think we delight to praise that we enjoy, because the praise not merely expresses, but completes the enjoyment in it.

It is the consummation of enjoyment. So, like we can't help but talk about what we're joyful about, and what we love, and so it comes out of us. And the gospel is not meant to be something that is hoarded by us.

It's not designed that way. Christ didn't give you joy and save you so that you could hold it inside. And, often, he'll allow you to be very, very miserable, and you'll wonder why.

That could be why, a lot of the times. A great analogy or picture I've heard this metaphor is like how the Dead Sea in Israel, there's a lot of water that flows into the Dead Sea from different places.

And, there's a lot going into it, but there's no water coming out of the Dead Sea. And so, what happens is, like, everything in there dies. That's why it's called that.

[13 : 44] And that's what joy will be like in us if God is pouring himself into us and giving us much of himself, and he's increasing who he is in us, and we refuse to let it come out onto other people.

And, we're meant to have such a joy and such a delight in God that it overflows onto the people that are around us, and to love him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And, the result of that is loving those around us. And, so, if we have Christ in us, he can't be held in. You have to talk about him. It's like this thing you just, like you're going to blow up if you don't.

And, you know, so it does good to our souls to, like, express the joy that we have. You ever been so excited about something?

I mean, just think about something you just got super stoked about, and then, like, you just couldn't talk about it. I mean, you're just like, like this thing that you just can't. You feel like you're about to explode, like I said.

[14 : 49] And, that's what enjoyment of God will do. It has to come out. And, Jeremiah said, if I don't speak in his name, there's like a fire that's shut up in me, and I have to let it out.

So, first of all, sharing the gospel affects your soul. Secondly, the gospel affects the souls of the lost. And, this is probably the obvious one, but I want you to think about this.

Let's go back to Philippians, sorry, and go to verse 13, and we'll see this. So, he's talking about, my imprisonment is turned out for the advancement of the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to all the rest, that my imprisonment is for Christ.

So, Paul is rejoicing, because, while he's being in prison, he's becoming well-known throughout the whole city of Rome. And, the imperial guard is, another word is the praetorian guard.

We've mentioned them in the first night here. You can go back and listen to that message if you want to know more context. But, these are the guys, like I said, were in gladiator. They're wearing, like, the purple, and they're the dudes that are just jocking everybody up.

[16:08] But, they were the elite guard of the emperor. They guarded the Palatine Hill, where the palace was, and important places in Rome that are like the secret police. And, more than likely, Paul's case would have been heard by the commander of the praetorian guard.

And, so, he's around these guys a lot. And, so, what's really cool is, you know, he could be saying, like, I wish that I could just get out of this position.

And, you know, these guys come, and they change the guards all the time with him, probably. And, he's just kind of sitting there, and, I mean, you know they've got to be talking about stuff.

You know, like, Paul's sitting there with these guards. And, so, I mean, what are you doing here? Why is this? Why are you here in Rome? This kind of seems ridiculous. And, he would just, well, and just kind of go into it with them.

And, that just began to affect the whole guard. And, eventually, it would go into Caesar's own home, to the palace on the Palatine Hill. And, so, even the people in Caesar's household, which he mentions later in the letter, are knowing Christ and becoming believers.

[17:21] And, they probably tried to keep it on the down low, because that's, at the time, Nero was the head honcho of the Palatine Hill. And, so, he understood, like, this is why I'm here.

And, like, my imprisonment here is affecting some of the elite of Rome. You know, these men that hold these positions as civil magistrates and guards, this is turning out for the advancement of the Gospel.

And, so, our hearts, if you really know Christ, your heart should break for the lost. You have no hope.

You have, they're thirsting for the water that only Christ can give them. They're seeking pleasure in everything but their Creator. They're living as masters of their own lives and seeking to determine their own destiny.

And, I bet that a lot of them are actually pretty filled with fear. I know I would be. I can remember times that I was in my life. Like, who's piloting my ship right now? I hope it's not me, because I don't know the crap I'm doing.

[18:28] And, I really, it brings a lot of fear to us all to know that. And, they're longing to hear that they have a, something far greater to live for than themselves.

And, I hope they can be found in Christ. And, they're waiting to hear that news. So, we should be able to go through whatever extremes necessary to reach those people.

We're going to touch back on this at the end, so I don't want to wear it out now. But, in Jude 1, 22, it says, Have mercy on those who doubt. Save others by snatching them out of the fire.

To others, show mercy with fear. And, if we're to rescue those people, like, be God's instrument to go to them and be the means by which He saves these people.

So, second, sharing the gospel affects the lost souls. We're going to come back to that. Number three, sharing the gospel affects fellow believers. So, look at verse 14.

[19:33] And, most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. So, the believers around that are in Rome and the Philippians who are reading this letter are becoming more and more bold to speak the gospel because they know, like, what Christ is, or what Paul is enduring there.

His imprisonment is throwing them up to go and, like, to share more. And, I know that one of the biggest ways, I mean, I don't know how you do it, but one of the biggest ways that I get really fired up to go and share the gospel with people is, like, just for someone to even tell me, like, a story of the gospel advancing.

You know, I've already mentioned this before, I believe, but I really loved living with John Overton and Josh Middleton because we would come together most nights and there would always be some kind of story we would just share, like the gospel going forward on campus or elsewhere, and it would just get us so pumped up to go out the next day and just find somebody just to go after some guy just to love and serve and give the truth to.

And, or when I hear about stuff that's going on abroad in the U.S. or overseas, it gets me really excited. I met a guy while I was in Belfast a few summers ago in northern Ireland.

There's a conflict going on there. I'm not going to get into that necessarily, but Irish Catholics against, like, the British, Scottish Protestants that are in the north, and this struggle has been going on for hundreds and hundreds of years, and they hate each other with a passion.

[21 : 17] It's not, they're brought up to, like, hate the other people, and I met a guy at a camp who, that was sharing that, I actually met this guy and it was pretty, pretty awesome, but he, he was a leader of one of the Protestant militia groups for a long time, the Ulster Defense Army, and he was a pretty jacked dude.

He had tattoos all over his arm. He had scars all over his body from, like, knife fights and he had been shot in a few places and I know that he had definitely probably killed many men just, just standing there and he was telling these teenagers at this camp, like, don't fall into that mess, you know, it's not worth it.

I gave my life for this cause and, and I was going down a long road to perishing, you know, and so please, like, Jesus is worth it and I asked him how he came to know Christ and he said that there was a believer just in that community that began, like, with some fear but went and just got into that group, just started hanging out with, like, being around those guys, not joining them but just being around them and, like, was pretty fearful, I mean, these guys could really jack me up or kill me just by me hanging out with them and, I mean, he kind of befriended this guy and just started sharing some life with him and this guy started planting seeds of truth and eventually this guy was born again and now he's, like, renounced all that and just going out to spread the gospel to these other guys there in Belfast and that just got so, when I think about that, I get so excited to see the gospel moving forward and, so, it does good to us, fellow believers, when you hear about the thing you love being spread to other people, it just excites you and gives your zeal a huge push and the fourth thing, then we're going to come back to some other things, but the fourth thing is sharing the gospel affects,

I mean, I have to explain this word, it affects opponents and look at verse 15, verse 15, chapter 1, some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will, the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel, the former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me, afflict me in my imprisonment, what then, only that in every way, whether in pretense or truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice, so there is some stuff that you probably just, I want you to know about here, but Jesus warned that eventually the greatest, some of the greatest opponents to the gospel would be like from within the church itself, you would always just think from the outside of the church, but Jesus warned that many of the great battles the church had to fight would come from within its own ranks, and the danger would be from within as well as from without, and Paul understood that as well, and so he had witnessed hostility from different religious factions, the Jews or the pagans, you know, of other countries, and he understood that, but you would expect hostility to come from like the lost world around you, darkness doesn't like the light kind of thing, but it really does hurt to have a fellow believer slander you and attack you and falsely accuse you for something that's not true at all for different reasons, and so this word,

I want you to look at that text where it says out of envy or strife, it means really to like to deprive someone of something that's rightfully theirs, to try to steal away because you're jealous, you want to steal away like the prominence somebody has or the crowds they're gathering or the popularity that they're gaining, you want that and you don't want them to get it, and that's kind of like what was going on, so they weren't doing it out of a spirit of love at all, they were doing it out of a divisive spirit, and the problem was not necessarily with their theology, but they were teaching the real gospel, the problem was in their their desires and their motives for why they were doing it, and there was, in the Old Testament, there was, false prophets were often called seers by the real prophets, they would come around to town to town and they would say, they would do like a little show, they would put on something, and they would say certain things that helped the people give them money

for being a prophet, but they really had no power, and they weren't really from God, and so these seers were speaking the gospel, they were doing it because they were jealous of Paul, and they hated like the influence he had, and the authority he had been given, to the point where they're like, we wanted to gather, you know, these people that are listening to you, we want to steal them away, and like, have them a part of our group, so to say, and so they sought to dismantle his reputation by accusing him of a lot of false things that he didn't do, so Paul recognized this, but he also recognized that other people are doing this out of right motive, out of love, out of a righteous spirit that they have, and so he knows that both of these are going on at the same time, and Paul also knew, like, he would think, well, that's not cool, like, these people that are doing that, then why are they having success if they're doing this with the wrong motives?

[27 : 28] Well, Paul rejoices because he just understands, I don't care, this is not a competition, as long as Christ is being proclaimed clearly and doctrinally soundly, I don't really care, because Paul knew something tremendous about God that I try to think about a lot, but it really failed to, but God is not limited to circumstances, he will work, he will work even evil people and the things they do for his purpose, he'll work in spite of people, he'll work around all kind of situations to achieve what he wants, a great example of this is in Isaiah, years before this man lived, Isaiah names King Cyrus of Persia as the man who would eventually come and punish the Babylonians for their evil and at the same time restore Judah back to their homeland, so he's telling this years and years and years way before

Cyrus was ever born and like Isaiah names him several times, like God is saying to him, Cyrus, you are my servant, I will do this through you, and then he says in there twice, though you do not know me, though you do not know me, I'm going to use you for my purpose, it's very, very crazy, so Paul understood, let these guys have their day, you know, like this is not going to bother me at all, they can preach all they want, but it's not going to do their souls any good, so as long as Christ is being proclaimed, it really doesn't bother me, I'm going to rejoice, and so I know that two camps possibly could be in here, those who aren't sharing our faith and some that are, but if you are, I want you to ask yourself the question, why am I doing it, why am I proclaiming Christ, check your motives for why you are doing those things, I'm sorry,

I'm having a hard time breathing today, I've been trying to get my airways going, but, so I want to just ask a few things, why are you proclaiming the gospel, if you are, is it because people will look at you and be like, wow, he's really serious about his faith, he seems to be gathering a lot of people to himself, he's got a really big evangelistic Bible study going on, or all these things, I know people, I've met people, and like, you know, it'll be a girl or a guy who is getting all serious about evangelism because they're trying to impress somebody of the opposite sex about how serious they are about their faith, and like, just things like that, and ministries and churches that will also like, content with each other, like, because they want bigger numbers than the people down the street, and they want the most things going on, and so they'll slanderously sow things into people's hearts about those people so they will leave and come there, so examine why you do those things, you know, and I understand that your motives can sometimes change, you can have a pure desire to really make

Christ known, and then you get caught up in like, yeah, I really want to be successful in this, so Jesus warned in Matthew 7, we don't have to turn there, but Matthew 7, 21, that a lot of people were going to come to him one day and say that, Jesus, we did all this stuff for you, we cast out demons in your name, we proclaim the gospel, so forth, and he's going to tell them, I never knew you, you know, you're doing that of your own accord, and you had your reward while you were there, I never knew you, and so, those are the four things, but what I mainly wanted to do is just focus on some application tonight, and I had a hard time really knowing how to talk about some of this, because I knew what I think needed to be said, but I didn't just want to jump over the passage, this is what the passage is about, and the essence of it, and how do we really bring this into our lives now, but the question is, you know, is the advancement of the gospel, or the progress of the gospel, one of the passions of your life, is it what you live for, is it what drives you, where does your energy go, is it to the advancement of the gospel, where do you, where is your reading and your thinking, and that kind of stuff, where does that go, is it for the advancement of the gospel, and because all those things are going to reveal where your heart is, and so we're going to look at just a few of these things, but what are some excuses that you might make up, and I've made these up myself in the past, what excuses do you make for not sharing the gospel,

I'm going to look at some of these, but number one, one reason why we're not really interested in advancing the gospel is that our circumstances, we think that we're victims of our circumstances, if God would just work this out, if things weren't so busy right now, if I was just in this position, or not that position, if I'm stuck in this place, or if this didn't happen to me, then I wouldn't be quiet about Christ, even like, if God would just work out for me to go and have this awesome ministry position, then I would get so serious about sharing the gospel, or if God would just send me to this nation and I could go do missions in this place, I would be so serious about sharing my faith.

[33 : 28] I want you to know those are all lies, there's nothing justifiable, in any of that. If God puts you in a position, He has you sovereignly there, right now, like to be faithful where you are right now, to be sharing where you are right now, why would you ever think God would move you into a different place if you weren't being faithful with where you are?

And if Christ is the love of your life, then you'll talk about Him. You're going to find ways to make this happen, and He'll take precedence over all those things.

So, if you're not sharing the gospel tonight, there's either one or two reasons. One is, your love and your zeal for Christ has really been calmed down, it's been cooled off, and you've grown, you belong to Christ, but you've grown lukewarm.

And the only other option after that is you might not know Christ, and that's why you don't have that passion. And those are the two only reasons for why we don't share our faith. And a second reason is, if you're at my community group last night, we actually touched on this briefly, but I'm afraid to share my faith.

I have fear about going out and talking to my friends and the people that God puts into my life. I'm afraid of this. And if you look really, really hard, there's actually like a hidden idolatry in your life, and it's not fear.

[35 : 03] We don't live in a country, at least now we don't, that if you speak the name of Christ, you're not going to get thrown in prison, you're not going to get a bullet through your head. That's probably not going to happen. It can, but probably is not going to happen.

If you're not afraid for your life, that might be a little different in some of these other nations where we have brothers and sisters that are advancing the gospel in those contexts. But the truth is here, you're not fearful, you're very prideful.

You want to be seen as cool and acceptable and you want people to like you. And you're not willing to be humiliated for the sake of their soul.

Whether they turn against you or don't turn against you, you're not willing to kind of shed that off and come to them regardless. So it's a hidden idolatry of your pride.

You want to be known and loved and respected by those people around you. And you're aware that the gospel can be divisive. Derek Webb has a song where he has this one line in the song, the truth is never sexy, so it's never an easy sale.

[36 : 15] You can't just dress up the gospel to make it acceptable to a lost world. Some people are going to hate you because of it. I mean, Jesus taught these things. It happened to him. He said, if they persecute me, I promise they'll persecute you.

I'm the spotless lamb of God and they hate me and they're going to crucify me. And so we have to, we're not afraid.

Stop using that excuse. It's really something much deeper. Pray that God just breaks you and just shows you that it's not worth it. Your friends, you need to be willing to lose your reputation if necessary to reach your friends.

And the question really isn't, should I be, I mean, ever heard anybody just say, I'm praying about it. That's the really Christianized way of like disguising your fear a lot of the time or your pride.

I'm praying about it. You know what? You don't need to pray about what God's already commanded you to do. He says, go and make disciples. He says, go and reach the lost. They need me in their lives.

[37 : 21] But what you do need to pray about is how to go about it, the strength to carry it out, and pray for their soul because you know that you have no power to change them. That's the things you pray about.

You don't negotiate the commands of God in prayer. God's like, make me known. Make me known to these people and seek me for direction, strength, and wisdom on how to reach them.

So, they're in your lives for a reason. God has put them there so that you would be Christ in that spot to them. And I have another reason.

well, I'll make one more comment about that. This kind of came to my mind. I want to have more of a discussion with you tonight.

But there's something that a lot of ministries do, a lot of churches do this, and it's really trendy today for sure, but this idea of friendship evangelism.

[38 : 24] You ever heard of that or something like that? I have to be really good friends with this person and be around them for at least six months. I'm going to say at least six months. And then maybe they'll listen to me if I share the gospel with them.

there's a lot of flaws in that. But what I don't want you to hear from me is don't love these people, don't befriend these people, and don't serve these people.

I'm saying definitely do that. I'm only saying that you don't love them if you don't do that. You need to be a part of their life and a part of their world and find ways to show them the love of Christ and love them sacrificially.

Do things for them. Be a part of their life and be in their world. Show them that you care. That is what good works, a lot of the old confessions say, good works adorn the gospel.

They make beautiful the gospel by how we treat people with the love of Christ that he's shown us. So I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that I think that a lot of people use that as a disguise for not sharing the gospel.

[39 : 32] I'm just getting to know him. My bro, you've been getting to know him for five months now and you're with him every day. What's the deal? And it's wrong because you're living on presumption.

You're saying that I know that in six months this guy's going to still be around and I'm still going to be around and this is going to work out. You don't know what tomorrow holds. You need to live if it is your last day and really seek to love these people and give them Christ while you have the opportunity.

The gospel has urgency in it. I mean it does have to weigh the cost and think about what you're doing but it's not like saying I have the ability to put this off for months and months and months while I try to get to know this guy so he'll listen to me.

God's power is greater than that. So I guess my word is just be obedient. If there's a person in your life and you're like I want to show Christ to them I don't know how to go about this but I'm going to do it I don't know how yet.

Lord show me. Be obedient. He may be like just be with them right now. Just listen to them right now. Just serve them right now. When I'm ready I'm going to tell you. I'm going to make it clear.

[40 : 45] This is the time you need to speak. Be obedient. And then it could be the other way around. I remember going up in the dorms not this past August but last August.

Up in it was Louis I believe yeah up in Louis and and I just barely met this guy. And I was just talking with him and he liked to just invite me in his room.

I went and was just getting to know him and he asked me about who I was and stuff and I just really felt this strong urge and leave him I'm just going to give him everything right now and just poured out the gospel to this guy and he was just like wow never heard that before that's amazing.

and wanted to meet up afterwards like I knew the guy for probably 15 minutes before I started pumping him with the gospel. And that was just the leading of the spirit and the power of God. God might have said just back off of this guy right now and just hang out with him right now.

Just be obedient to what's going on. It's not we want a rule where God says share it right now or don't share it right now. And that's not what God's going to do. He's about working in your heart and changing you as he's working in somebody else's life and growing you in relationship to him.

[42 : 02] So, but don't use friendship evangelism as like a disguise to like not share the gospel. I know a lot of people do that. Just be obedient. And when he says act, act.

So, another one, and this is probably one of the last ones I can think of at the moment, but it's like I don't, my knowledge is limited. I feel like this guy's just going to throw all this stuff my way.

I have no idea how to answer that. So, if God is all powerful and God is all good, you know, and he has the power to destroy evil and the desire to destroy evil, why is there evil?

You know how to answer that? You know, like if they throw those kind of questions at you, and it actually makes you feel like I don't know how to answer these heavy philosophical theological

questions.

I don't know how to talk to an agnostic or atheist or someone who just doesn't care at all, or relativism where everything's true to each individual, whatever is true to them is true for them.

[43 : 08] It's okay. You know, don't wait till, you don't have to go to seminary and read all the greatest Christian authors and memorize the entire scripture before you go out and share the gospel with somebody.

because it's the power of God that saves people. If it was up to us to go out and convince people and to argue them into heaven, then it would be different.

But God has said that's not the case. You can read 1 Corinthians 1, 2, and 3, and then Paul will tell you that. He tells them, when I came to you, I didn't come with wise and persuasive words.

Because he knew that he didn't have that. He knew he wasn't an eloquent speaker. He didn't have that gift. He wasn't the greatest communicator. Paul knew that. And he told them, I decided not to come to you that way because I knew that I would be found wanting.

But what I did do is I came and I spoke to you as a demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power. I resolved to preach nothing to you but Christ and him crucified. And so that the power would rest on God and not on me.

[44 : 11] That's kind of like what he says there. So God is not limited to how much you know. As long as you know the gospel, that's like enough. And God can use that.

And don't be afraid to say to somebody, I don't know. I don't know. Maybe I can check into that for you. But don't feel like you have to have all the answers before you go and start sharing the truth with someone.

There are people that are like, for some people, they're longing to hear this, and we're just like talking ourselves out of it. Maybe tomorrow. This isn't all right. It's kind of like all these things.

Just go. You know? Just step out and trust the Lord. Be wise. Think about things. Use your head. Yes, use the wisdom God's given you.

But ultimately, you have to learn to follow what the Spirit's leading in different situations. things. And so, this is something I journaled about this summer.

[45 : 14] But when we are fearful to share Christ with people, it makes the love of Christ, which was radical, right? The love of Christ was incredible.

He left heaven to come here to die and to save us. Like, this just makes no sense. We're going to get to that in Philippians chapter 2 really soon.

But his love was amazing. There was no greater love than what Christ showed. And when we are afraid or when we are prideful or whatever and we're not going and proclaiming to people, it makes the love of Christ have to be weak and puny.

You see that? Like, the love of our Savior is betrayed as puny when we don't live that way and we're not willing to go through whatever it takes to reach people. The love of Christ is put on display as weak and pathetic.

So, if you're feeling bad and you have sympathy for your friends or your family and you're like, I see how miserable their lives are right now. I just feel so bad about it.

[46 : 22] You know, David Livingston said, sympathy is no substitute for action. You can't just feel bad for these people. You have to, God has you there, sovereignly there to be a light to them.

He's not asking you to save them. That's his job. He's asking you to be an instrument in his hands to work in their life. So, they don't need your sympathy.

They need Christ. We've got to stop being afraid of his unpopularity and looking like an idiot. It's okay. We can be fools for Christ. Paul said that in one place.

We can be fools for Christ. So, start asking God, show me how to go about this. I know that I need to be doing this. I want to do this. Please show me.

Who do you have me around right now that you would have me shed the love of Christ with? Turn to last place here. Turn to Acts 20. We don't want to portray the love of our Savior as weak.

[47 : 32] I want it to, and I do, I make Christ love to be pathetic sometimes and it breaks my heart. Acts 20 verse 24, sorry, verse 24.

This is Paul talking here, and I hope that this can be kind of like a cry for your life, and mine as well. I want this so bad. He says, but I do not account my life of any value, nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course in the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. So Paul knew, like, you're not going to see me again, to these people he's writing to hear.

Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of you all. And what he means is, like, I've done what God called me to do. When I was with you, I was obedient, and whatever happens is going to be on your head and not mine.

I have carried out my responsibility. And he says, I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

[48 : 52] Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. Amazing passage.

Paul's just like, I just don't care about my life anymore. Like, if I did, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing right now. If my life was here, I'm like, wasting it in the greatest way, but my life is not here. My life is hidden in Christ in eternity, and I'm laboring for that kingdom and that reality, and so I don't care. I just want to be able to lay my head down at night and be like, I testify to the gospel of the grace of God today, and I don't care what it costs me.

I didn't shrink from proclaiming to you the whole counsel of God. We want to be able to say that, and I pray that we, this really convicts some people here, and it's just a challenge and push to us as believers.

It's not cool. I mean, there's some things that God is going to put you through of some miserable times, just like this isn't coming out of you into the lost world, and I want you to keep this verse in mind in James chapter one, be not hearers of the word, but be doers of the word, and we can't, I don't want you to come here every week and be like, oh, that was a great message, amen, and then go hang out somewhere and just go back to life.

[50 : 26] Like, that's not the purpose for why we gather. All you're doing is making yourself more accountable, and that's all you're doing. You're coming here and just trying to store up knowledge and store up theology, but then you do nothing with it.

All you're doing is you're making yourself more accountable for truth that you've learned to God, and so I want you to learn. I want you to grow in your knowledge.

We're going to talk about some great things this semester, but like, we have to be obedient. We have to put into practice what we know, and we need the grace of God to do it.

It's an impossible task in and of ourselves. So, plea with God to make you an instrument of reconciliation to the lost world around you, and complete the joy that Christ has put into you by doing that.

Well, we're going to, I'll close this in prayer. We might seem to have some time. We started just a little late tonight because of the fall jam, and I think we gained like one or two people because of that, but next week, no mercy, back to the normal time.

[51 : 31] That was intentional. So, I'm going to pray for us, and we're just going to respond and sing. Father, I feel very insufficient to even communicate this message tonight.

Lord, I know that I do share the gospel, and I do desire for the lost to know you, but I don't anywhere as I should, and I overlook so many opportunities because of laziness or my pride, and so God, I pray that you would awaken to me and everyone here just a desire to make you known in the dark places where you have us, that we would be the light of Christ there, and we wouldn't be all fired up about going to the nations and other countries if we're not willing to walk across the hallway to share someone who's dying in their sin, and help us to be faithful where we are, Lord, and to trust you, to step out, and to be bold for the sake of Christ, and to not shrink, but to boldly proclaim the whole counsel of God, and to testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

Help us do that, Lord. We are going to fail unless you be with us, and so Lord, make your name great at the North Georgia campus in Nalaunaga, and through what we do and how you lead us, God.

Thank you for giving us the privilege of being those you use to accomplish your purpose. what an honor we have. You don't need us. You could have done this any way you chose, but you chose to use us, and we give you praise for that, and we love you.

In Christ's name, amen. Amen.