

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

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[0 : 00] Found in 2 Corinthians chapter 7, starting in verse 2. If you were here last week, you know we looked at verse 1 of the 7th chapter last week. So we're going to start at verse 2, and let's go down to the end of that chapter.

Paul, writing to the church here, says, Make room for us in your hearts. We wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

Great is my confidence in you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort, I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side, conflicts without and fears within.

But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus. And not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you. As he reported to us, your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it. For I see that the letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while. I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance.

[1 : 16] For you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation.

But the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold, what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you. What vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong.

In everything, you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender, nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

For this reason, we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth.

[2 : 20] His affection abounds all the more toward you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word, and we pray that you would speak to us through it. Lord, give us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart and a mind to desire to apply to our daily lives for your glory.

And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. This is a very transitional time in the book of 2 Corinthians.

Transitional in the fact of the matter that Paul is now returning to what he has begun to speak of all the way back in the second chapter. If you go back to the second chapter, you can see where Paul is opening up this section, where he speaks of coming into Troas and then making his journey to Macedonia and having no rest in Macedonia.

And then he picks up here in the second verse of the seventh chapter with that which he left off in the second chapter. In between that, we need to pay attention. We can't discount what many people refer to as an aside, a godly refrain or an aside of something of secondary matters.

[3 : 33] Rather, we take it in its proper context. If we look at the word of God as being the word of God, as penned by the hand of man, being led by the spirit of God, then we understand that everything is in its place where it's supposed to be because it fits in that place.

Admittedly, we are looking at a very personal matter in 2 Corinthians chapter 7. We are looking at something that has direct application between some individuals in past history.

We are looking at a matter which really pertained to a man named Paul in the church, which was at the city of Corinth. And as I shared with your pastor's wife this week, it is always challenging when you're as a student of the word and you're reading in the word and you're reading things which seem to be very personal in nature that are confined, at least apparently, to a geographical time in history to find that application that transcends time and now has application to us as well. But I think we do that when we take it in its context. And that's why we need to look at the word of God in its entirety and we need to look at certain portions of scripture as it is connected to other places.

Because taken alone, what we read here is just a letter of Paul writing to the church at Corinth telling them how much he cares for them and how much he loves them. Taking on its own, we would see that Paul is encouraging the church to love him back in return.

[4 : 55] And taken on its own, it would be easy for us to dismiss it. But as we look at it in its setting, that is, on the heels of following Paul's explanation of his ministry and his calling and how he has been led on a victorious processional parade.

He is the captive of Christ. He is the captive of Christ who is the grand victor. And Christ has been using him for the proclaiming of the word of God. And as we've been looking at the last several weeks, not only is it Paul that is such, it is all who named Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. That is, we have been held captive by the Savior. He has conquered sin. He has overcome the enemy of our souls. And he is putting us on parade to be a fragrant aroma of Christ unto God, not unto the world.

And we are serving him in various ministries and various callings. That is, there are good works which God prepared beforehand for us in Jesus Christ. And on the heels of speaking of his personal calling and the using of those with him, then Paul interjects by the Spirit of God, because if we ever remove that, then we think man is just writing a letter.

Paul interjects by the Spirit of God a very personal note back to the church at Corinth. He could have continued on his course. And he could have, as we will see later on in 2 Corinthians, went through many deep theological issues.

[6 : 15] But he stopped for just a moment. And he went back and he dealt with personal matters. And it is the dealing of those personal matters which we see our subject today. And it is the grand importance of the church.

I know that's a long introduction to get to the title. But you needed the introduction or you wouldn't have understood how we got to the title. You see the grand importance of the church. Because, friend, listen to me.

If Paul deemed the church important, then so too should we. And if the church was so important to Paul that even in light of the way God was using him in various places, even in light of the way that God was empowering him and calling him and moving him and using him and utilizing him to bring the glory of God through his aroma of Christ in differing places, yet Paul was still concerned about the church, the local church, not the universal church.

It is the local church. It amazes me as we read the writings of Paul. If you were here several years ago, we made our way through the book of Romans. Maybe sometime in the future God will allow us to go back through the book of Romans because it's been a number of years since we've done it. But I love how when Paul is writing to the believers which are at Rome, he is writing to these believers and he's hoping that when he gets there, these are believers that he has never met face to face.

[7 : 40] These are believers which he knew nothing of other than in namesake only. Paul didn't plant the church at Rome. We don't know who planted the church at Rome. Paul had no part in establishing the elders at Rome.

We don't know who did that. But we know Paul is writing a letter to the church at Rome. And Paul says that he wants to get to Rome and he says this, so that I may be encouraged by you.

That's astounding to me. That's astounding to me that the one who is so used of God says, I can't wait to get there so that you can encourage me. Paul was declaring his dependence upon other believers for his encouragement that he needed at that moment.

Now Paul meets the believers at Rome when the ship that is carrying him as a captive lands and he meets them at three ends, right? And the church shows up and they bring him all the way into Rome and he goes into house arrest.

And we love how the book of Acts ends. I love that, don't you? I know I'm getting a little preachy this morning. It's okay. The book of Acts says that he had people coming in and out every day and the gospel was unhindered because he continued to be encouraged and to be an encourager when he got to meet the believers at Rome.

[8 : 46] Friend, listen to me. The church is important. And we see it here in our text that the importance of the church really manifests itself in three grand ways from the passage before us.

Number one, we see that it is a place of beneficial connection. It is a place of beneficial connection. Look at what Paul says. Make room for us in your hearts.

Now this is Paul. This is Paul who is going on these missionary journeys. This is Paul, the same man that if you turn to the back of your Bible, you'll find maps that have color lines going around it. Most Bibles will. And it is the missionary journeys of Paul. This is Paul who has been in prison. This is Paul who has people traveling with him. This is Paul that Luke traveled with.

We see it in the book of Acts. This is Paul that took along Timothy. This is Paul who also, you know, didn't want Mark to go with him either because Mark abandoned him but later on repented of that. This is Paul, the man who was met on Damascus Road and had a man named Adonai come lay his hands on him.

[9 : 48] This is Paul who said all these things and yet he's writing to the church at Corinth. Don't separate this from its context because the context is 1 Corinthians. And 1 Corinthians, he refers to them, the saints which are at Corinth.

And then he tells us how wicked the saints which are at Corinth are. You remember that, right? It's a good place. The most wicked church that we find. I won't say wicked. The most sin-filled church we find in Scripture is the church at Corinth.

And this same Paul is writing to them and says, make room for me in your hearts. So he's not saying your sin is separating me from you. He's not saying that your sin is keeping me from fellowshiping with you because he addressed that in that letter of rebuke.

We'll get there in just a minute. But he says, make room for us in your hearts. And then he goes on, for we already have you in our hearts. So here Paul is affirming the reality that he holds these believers in his heart.

He says, for life and for death. That is, he holds them dear. And he's asking the believers there to hold him just as close. He said, make room for me in your hearts. I want you to return.

[10 : 53] It is a reciprocal love that should be coming back to him. He said, the love that I have for you, I want to fill it back from you unto me. Now, this is Paul who was being led captive by Christ in various places.

This is the same man. Now, we can't set the stage too much. We're not putting the man on a pedestal. We're just declaring that he wasn't a man that was without friends, right? He had multitude of enemies, sure, but he always had friends.

He was also stoned and left for dead, but then he got back up and went back in the city. That's one of my favorite accounts of Paul, right? They stoned him, left him for dead. He got up and went back into the city.

This is Paul who knew who he was in Christ. This was Paul who knew that he had met the Lord and Savior on Damascus Road. This is the one who had met three years in the wilderness of Arabia, being taught in the school of Christ.

Had a better degree than any piece of paper hanging on the wall. Who says, make room for me in your hearts, for I need you. Now, in the midst of that calling, go to Acts chapter 16. You don't have to this morning.

[11 : 55] You go to Acts chapter 16. That's the context of what's going on. In the second chapter and here in the seventh chapter, you know what's going on. Paul is on his missionary journey. He's traveling around.

He gets to Troas. The door is not open. He tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 that a door for Christ was opened unto him. You know what that door was, right?

We call it the Macedonian vision. He had a dream in the middle of a night where a man was calling out saying, Paul, come and help us. And he said, okay, the Lord wants us to go to Macedonia. He goes to Macedonia and he's there preaching.

Acts 16, by the way, very pivotal chapter. You need to pay attention, Acts. Write this down. You know why? You just need to write this down. Acts 16 is the very first time that a non-Jew asked the

question, what must I do to be saved?

And it's the Philippian jailer. That's why it's so important. Because if you go and you look at Acts 2, I know I'm on a side note. It's okay. Acts 2, when Peter is preaching to the Jews, he tells them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized.

[12:59] And we can make this baptismal regeneration and make that our whole theology based upon that passage. We're separating that from history and the fact that the Jews had a special place already doing baptism. They knew what baptism symbolized.

They knew that it wasn't just getting wet. It wasn't regeneration. It was a sign of transforming from, in their context, from one belief to Judaism. But the very first time a non-Jew asked the question, what must I do to be saved?

It's the Philippian jailer. What does Paul say? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your whole household. And then after that, he's baptized. But he was not told to be baptized to be saved.

He said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take the Bible in full context, my friend. But it is there when Paul is ministering. It is there when Paul gets imprisoned and Paul and Silas are praying in that prison and singing hymns.

It is there that we pick up here. He says, even when we got to Macedonia, we had tremblings on the outside. And wait a minute, he says, and fears on the inside. Paul was afraid.

[13:59] But where did he find comfort for the fears? Look at what he says. But we were comforted by the coming of Titus. Titus showed up and brought us comfort.

He says, the God who gives comfort to the humble, the God who gives comfort to the weak, the God who gives comfort to the needy, brought comfort to my soul with the coming of Titus.

And the coming of Titus brought comfort because he brought a report from that. Listen to it, friend. From the church at Corinth. See, it was the steadfastness of the church which brought comfort to the apostle on the mission field as he was serving the Savior.

The one who was being utilized needed others. He needed Titus to show up. And when Titus showed up, he needed Titus to give a report. See, the steadfastness of the church.

Let Paul be confident in his ministry. Why was Paul singing in the prison? Why was Paul singing at the midnight hour when the jail cells fell down and everybody was there? Why was he doing it?

[15:05] Because Titus had just told him the church was still going strong. Friend, listen. The church is a place of beneficial connection. It is at the church. Read your scriptures.

Read every bit of it. It is at the church. I know this isn't real popular to say, but it is at the church where we ought to find the supplanter and the meter of our physical needs, our societal needs, and our emotional needs.

Men, we don't like to talk about emotions, but they're there, right? You ought to find in the church those who can meet your physical needs. What does the book of James says? If you have a need, go before the elders of the church and confess your need to the elders of the church, right?

We want to confess it to the world, and we want the world to know what all we want. The Bible says it is the church that you go to and you tell them, I have a need. We ought to bear one another's burdens. We ought to carry one another's concerns.

We ought to be there. We ought not be surprised when things fall apart in the world, but we ought to be surprised when people of the church go to the world. The church is to be the provider and the supplier of the physical needs.

[16:08] Open up the book of Acts. What does the book of Acts say? They were all together, had all things in common when we're sharing with one another so that there was what? No need among them. It was only when they began to lie about those needs that there began to be needs among them.

It was only when they began to keep back part of their stuff there began to be needs among them. But in the early stages, there were no needs among them so as if no one had any wants. They were carrying one another's burdens.

You say, Pastor, you're talking about going out and living like the Essenes in the wilderness and being a commune. No, I'm talking about living the way Jesus called his church to do, to bear one another's burdens, right? The church ought to be the provider of the physical needs.

The church ought to be the provider of the societal needs, that is. This should be your greatest and deepest friendship should be within the church. That's just the way it ought to be, brothers and

sisters in Christ.

If we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and yet we have friendships outside of the church body, I'm not saying they can't belong to another local church, but outside of the church body that are not deeper than the ones we have inside the church body, then all of a sudden we are finding greater societal provisions outside of the church than we are inside the church.

[17:16] For the Bible says, but what fellowship has light with darkness, right? We ought to have that. And our emotional needs. Oh, men say, I don't have any emotional needs. Well, your acknowledgement of that reality surely states the fact that you surely do.

I don't like talking about it either. I'm a pretty tough guy. I don't like to show emotions. But our emotional needs ought to be met within the church. Where can you be honest with someone and tell them I'm having a tough day?

This morning on my way here, on the way to come to my office, I got a text message from another pastor. He said, I covet your prayers this morning, my brother. What was he doing? He was expressing an emotional needs because he has a need.

So I prayed for him this morning and he was doing it within the realm of the church. See, if you pay attention, my friend, the world is trying to meet every one of those needs. They want to tell you where you can find your physical pleasure.

They want to tell you where you can fit into society and they want to tell you how they can cure all your problems. But the answer to it all is the church. It is a grand beneficial connection.

[18:15] If Paul needed the church to continue in the ministry, how much more so do we? Number one, it is a place of beneficial connection. Number two, it is a proclaimer of biblical salvation.

It is a proclaimer of biblical salvation. Look at what Paul says. Paul says, I was remorse. I was upset. I didn't know what to think. Why? Well, go read 1 Corinthians and you'll kind of put yourself in that position, right?

If you were at the church at Corinth and someone stood up and read the letter of 1 Corinthians to you in one setting and Paul talks about handing one over to Satan and rebuking individuals and casting them aside and he's giving you up one side and down the other, you're going to feel a little upset.

Paul says, I don't regret it. He said, well, I did regret it for a minute, but I don't regret it anymore. Why? Because he says, I have no regret. Some translations say repentance. I have no remorse. He says, for though I caused you sorrow by my letter. Verse 8, for though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it, for I see that the letter caused you sorrow, though only for a little while.

[19:21] Here it is. He says, I now rejoice. Now think about that for just a moment. Someone saying, I am rejoicing in the fact that I made you sorrowful.

I rejoice. Why is he rejoicing? Look at what it says. For now I rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance.

For you were made sorrowful according, here it is, to the will of God. Some translations say with godly sorrow. You were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret leading to salvation. There it is, the proclaimer of biblical salvation.

Some people have it in their minds that pastors are just fire and brimstone guys who love to stand up and tell everybody what they do wrong. I'm going to go ahead and let you know that the majority of pastors I know hearts are heavy and minds are burdened with the reality that they must stand up and tell everybody what we do wrong, what each and every one of us do wrong.

[20:34] Pastors, there are some for sure who like to point the finger out, but most pastors that I know are pointing the fingers in. There are those who proclaim in the reality of the truth of Scripture, that when I read the Word of God over and over again, it does not tell me everything is okay with me.

It does not tell me everything is right with me. As a matter of fact, one of the greatest apologetics for the authority of Scripture is that this is the only religion that you will ever find that paints a very bad picture of you.

And if man wrote Scripture, then man did a very poor job of writing a book to make himself feel better. Because the more I read Scripture, the worse I feel about myself. The more I study

Scripture, the worse I see myself.

The greater I'm in Scripture, the more I realize I need a Savior. And this book alone does not tell me how good I am, but it tells me how great He is. And it tells me that the one that's so great came to die for me, for I'm in desperate need.

That I cannot do it on my own, I cannot attain to it on my own, and I will never suffer enough on my own, but that one must suffer for me. And it is that message that pastors must proclaim over and over and over again.

[21 : 35] And it is that very message that Paul had wrote to the letter of Corinth. And he said, But I'm thankful that this letter produced for you a godly sorrow, or a sorrow according to the will of God.

And it is a sorrow that leads to repentance without regret. This is biblical salvation. Look at what he says, For the sorrow of the world leads to death.

But the sorrow, according to the will of God, leads to salvation. How do we conflict those two? Well, the world can make you feel sorry that you got caught. And the world can make you feel sorry for some of the bad things you did that caused problems.

The world can make you feel sorry that some of your outcomes were not pleasant for everybody around you. But only can Scripture, only can the Word of God tell you that your sorrow is one that brings you before a holy God.

Only can Scripture tell you that your sin is not a bad problem for others. Only can Scripture tell you that your sin is not something you hope not to get caught in. Sin is an affront to a holy God.

[22 : 37] It is the Bible alone that tells you that sin is bad because of what it does to God, not what it does to you or to others. The world says it's okay as long as nobody gets hurt. The world says it's okay as long as you don't get caught.

The world says it's okay, and if you do, then you can feel sorry that you hurt someone. The Bible says that you must feel sorry because you have brought an affront to a holy, righteous God.

And your sin is bad by nature, not by outcome. And it is the proclamation of that truth that brings a rent heart, that tells one that my sin has affronted God.

It doesn't matter what it does to anyone else. It is that proclamation that says, even if no one else finds out, holy God knows and therefore I must repent. It is the sin that says it doesn't matter if everybody sees me as if I'm okay.

It doesn't matter if everybody sees me as good. It is the reaffirming the reality that who I am before holy God is all that really matters. And it is the sorrow that leads one to repentance without regret.

[23 : 38] You know, I've never met an individual who truly repented of their sin, who came to the salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who said, oh, I wish I hadn't done that. I've never met one, not one, who said, I wish I hadn't have done that.

I've met plenty who said, I wish I'd have done it sooner, or I wish I'd have done it another day, or I wish I hadn't have waited so long, or I wish I had done it before these things happened. But I've never met one who has had a godly sorrow who later regretted it because it is the reality that it is a sin before a holy God that I must confess and forsake and cast off for all time.

It is biblical salvation. Friend, listen to me, and I'm sorry to get so worked up. I've been burdened the last couple days over it. The world can tell you to be sorry you got caught, but only from the pulpits of the church when the Bible is being preached can you realize that the word tells you you need to be sorry before a holy God.

And it is that message that biblical pastors are confined to proclaim. And if you find one who's not proclaiming it, I'm going to tell you to flee.

If I ever fail to proclaim the truth and the whole truth and nothing but the truth of the word of God, then you need to remove me as your pastor. I don't mean to paint it as bleak and sad and doom and gloom.

[25 : 05] I'm not a doom and gloom guy. But I know that we ought to come before a holy God with all reverence and adoration and all humility because joy is on the other side of the cross.

We have to have a sorrow that leads to repentance without regret that brings one unto salvation. The church is a proclaimer of biblical salvation.

Number three. This is the last one. In the church, we find a place of beneficial connection. In the church, we find the proclamation of biblical salvation.

And in the church, we find a practitioner of believers' sanctification. It is that sanctification is lived out and practiced in the confines of the church.

You can come to Christ on your own. I came to Christ at 201 Canova Drive, Shelbyville, Tennessee. Right now, it's a little white house on the left side of the road of Canova at a little dead end cul-de-sacs down there.

[26 : 13] You know you've been married long enough when the house you bought when it was brand new has changed colors because back then it was yellow. It was a yellow house on the left right at a corner of two roads, 201 Canova Drive, Shelbyville, Tennessee.

If you're looking at that house, you'll see a door. You'll see a double window to the right. And to the right of that double window, you'll see a single window. I'm not telling you how to be creepy on somebody else's house now, but that single window was our bedroom.

And in that bedroom was a bed in which my wife was asleep and I was on my knees at the end of that bed at about the midnight hour. And I cried out and said, Lord, I can't do it anymore. You take it, I give it to you all.

And I surrendered all for the first time. I was all alone. Hunter was asleep at the other end of the house. The other kids had not been born yet.

Carrie was asleep, sound asleep there. And I surrendered my life. But I surrendered my life as a result of the encouragement of a pastor of a local church who had told me to read the book of Romans.

[27 : 11] And reading the book of Romans, I came to the understanding of what true salvation was, that it was not by the works of man but by faith alone. And I put my faith in Jesus Christ that night.

Now, I could have walked away and lived the rest of my life and been a believer. But thankfully, I went back to that same local church. I was baptized in believer's baptism after my confession of Christ.

And I stayed connected to that local church. Later became the pastor. I later became a deacon in that church. I became the youth leader of that church. Then I became the pastor of that church. And then the Lord called me to be the pastor of this church.

But it was through my connection with that local church that the sanctification took place. That is, I knew I needed a Savior and I found Him.

But there's a whole lot I didn't know after I found Him. I didn't know what it was to study the Word of God. I didn't know what it was to fully follow Christ in all things.

[28 : 12] I didn't know what it was to walk in faith. And I did those things within the confines and in the context of the local church. Paul says here in verse 11, What Paul is saying is that when God produced a sorrow, not only leading to salvation, He took it further.

And you began to cleanse and purify yourself of any appearance of sin. Now when we read 1 Corinthians, we see any number of sins. A man taking his own father's wife as his wife.

And if we read it in context of 2 Corinthians, it appears even worse because it seems as if that man, the dad, was still alive. It seems as if he took his dad's wife while his dad was still alive.

He didn't let his dad die. And if we read it in that context, there's a number of things going on. There are people taking the Lord's Supper yet dying. 1 Corinthians chapter 11. They're taking it in an unworthy manner. People literally falling down dead after taking the Lord's Supper together.

All kinds of manners of evil going on. We find no mention of those things in 2 Corinthians. Because what we find is after the sorrow, they got together. They began to cleanse and purify themselves with one another.

[29 : 33] They began to live out this identity as a church. They began to sanctify themselves because, look, Paul was not just writing. He says, so although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender. That is, I wasn't just writing because of that person who did the wrong.

Nor was I writing for the sake of the one offended. That is, I wasn't just writing to the one who had the wrong done to him. But I was writing to you. See, Paul's letter was not directed to the individuals, but it was directed to the church.

And it was a church matter in which they needed to live out the sanctification. The cleansing and the purifying and pressing on towards what we ought to be. Paul's concern was not so much whether one individual had done right or wrong, but rather the church would walk in holiness and obedience.

And it was within the confines of that church that he could later go on to say, I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you. Why? Because they were living together in godly sincerity.

Friend, listen to me. It is absolutely true that you can accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and not be a member of a local church. It is absolutely true. But the process of sanctification, or what the Old Testament calls iron sharpening iron, takes place in the community and the fellowship of the local body of believers referred to as the church.

[30 : 54] And it is the church that calls us to account. It is the church that prods us home. It is the church that when we walk into the door having a bad day, it's okay to have a bad day because somebody beside you is going to build you up and pick you up so that later on you can build and pick someone else up, right?

It is within the confines of the church that we find the up and downs of life leveled out a little bit so that we may walk forward in godliness and in sincerity and in truth. This is a practitioner of believers' sanctification.

When left to ourselves, we will not press on to sanctification. You know why? Because no one loves me more than me. You meet people every night and you say, He loves him a lot of him.

We don't tell ourselves how bad we are. We don't tell ourselves what we need to give up. When we compare ourselves with ourselves, we're okay. But it's only when we're walking in the confines and in the confidences of a local church assure those who may offend us every now and then, but those who ultimately have our greater end and goal.

And it's within the context of that body of believers that we see sanctification taking place. Paul says it this way, What have I to do with judging those outside the church?

[32 : 14] But rather, I have judgment for those within the church. And we read it and say, Oh, nobody's my judge. Paul says, No, but when we're one body of believers, when you're my brother and my sister in Christ, then it is my responsibility for you to hold me accountable and me to hold you accountable so that we can push forward to what we ought to be.

This is a place of practicing sanctification. And we praise God for the church. Paul took a moment before he got into Grand Theology Matters. And he took a personal moment to write to a local church because the church is important.

It is of grand and great importance to all who know it and realize it. I don't just say this because I'm a pastor. I'm a pastor because I say this. God put the weight of the church on my heart long before he ever called me to be a pastor.

As a matter of fact, I prayed, Oh, Lord, don't let me be a pastor. Because I know the church. I am one. Right? I don't want to preach to people like me. Lord, don't let me be a pastor. But he said, But I've got something for you to do.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for this day. I thank you for your faithfulness towards us. Lord, I thank you for your calling and your choosing your people for your glory and your honor. Lord, if there's any here today who do not know you, Lord, I pray that you show them that.

[33 : 32] We know that salvation is of the Lord, so we pray that you would work it in their hearts and minds. Lord, those who need to speak to someone about believer's baptism, Lord, I pray that you lead in that. Lord, for those who need to have a greater and grander commitment to the church body for your glory and for their benefit, we pray that you would lead in that manner.

Lord, for those of us who know you as our Lord and Savior, for those of us who love the church and all of its imperfections, and we know it's imperfect because we're a part of it. Lord, I pray that you continue to encourage us by the fellowship we have with brothers and sisters in Christ.

We thank you for the church. We thank you that at times it can bring us sorrow, but we thank you that you use it to bring us great comfort and joy as well. Lord, you just be glorified and honored, and we ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[35 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.