

Hebrews 13:18-25

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[0 : 00] Well, amen, and good morning to you once again. Have your Bibles, open them up with me to the book of Hebrews. We will be finishing the book of Hebrews this morning.

We are in Hebrews chapter 13, starting in verse 18 and going to the end of the book. In the end of the chapter, that would be verse 25. We'll be finishing up the book of Hebrews this morning.

It has taken us some time to get through it. I have enjoyed our study through the book. I have enjoyed the discipline that you guys expect of me if I'm going through it.

So there were passages definitely that on my own I probably would not have just picked and chose, but I enjoy going through the book of Hebrews and we've had such a breadth of information.

And it's so deep that we probably have only scratched the surface, but I have enjoyed it as we've gotten together with it. I'm going to ask if the brothers up top who are helping me out help me not to hear myself as much to the monitors because I don't like hearing myself.

[1 : 01] And it kind of gives me kind of this squirrel effect. I get easily distracted. Thank you. I don't know if you guys know that about me or not, but I get easily distracted. I'm sure there's something they can tell me of some condition I have for that and I don't know what it may be other than being distracted.

So anyway, we are in the book of Hebrews. We're going to be in Hebrews 13, verses 18 through 25 as we wrap it up and really seeing the author's kind of farewell message, his doxology, if you will, his benediction, his closing remarks, but really they are remarks of encouragement.

If you remember, the theme throughout the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is greater. Now we want to keep that theme in mind in each and every portion that we read in the book of Hebrews because without an overall theme, without an overall purpose, and without an overall message, then the book would kind of, we could kind of make it say whatever it is we want it to say.

And we understand that the author here is writing to at least people of Hebrew descent who are more than likely scattered abroad throughout the Roman Empire. We need to understand as well historically that even after the Babylonian captivity and a number of people were able to come back reading the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as really you have the decree of King Cyrus who says that the Jewish people can go back to their land and rebuild the temple, which is a really phenomenal time in Hebrew history.

But we understand only a small portion of them went back. So God had his people scattered throughout the known world at that time, really throughout the ancient Near Eastern portions of the world.

[2 : 36] And they were all over. So the mission field was being set already for when Paul would take Rome's roads and go throughout the Roman Empire. And he would use the roads that road built to take the gospel message.

And he would begin with the Jewish people or the Hebrew people because here's an opportunity.

And now they are scattered throughout. Why am I saying these things? Why does it matter?

Because long before God gives you the opportunity, he's already worked in history.

Long before you have the opportunity to declare the gospel or to exhibit the gospel or to profess Christ to someone, God has already worked through history to make the way happen.

And that is amazing. That's exactly what's going on here. The author of the book of Hebrews is writing to Jewish people who are scattered abroad, the known world as he would have known it probably.

And they are scattered around and they have heard the things of Christ. Some of them maybe have at least tasted, as Hebrews chapter 6 tells us, the goodness of Jesus and been in fellowship with other believers.

[3 : 40] And they were kind of caught in this position. Now, these things are important. I know we've covered it, but they're kind of caught in this position of, do I go in all in? Do I completely trust

Jesus Christ with my life, not only my eternity, but with the life that I live today, with the way that I live it, with all of my being, even though I understand that there is the possibility I would have to die because of that?

Or do I say, well, this Jesus guy, that sounds pretty good, but I'm going to go back to trusting in Judaism and trusting in something that is an accepted practice, which at times makes me feel better because I do good, and at other times makes me feel bad because I do bad.

Do I trust in myself or do I trust in Jesus Christ? And all throughout the book of Hebrews, the author is saying, Jesus is better. He's better than anything you're trusting in. He's better than anything your hope could be founded upon.

And he is the greatest, not only person, but he is the greatest hope in history. And his call is for people to be completely committed to the work and the person of Jesus Christ.

It is to cast themselves upon Christ, not only to secure eternity, but also to move in time and history. See, salvation, the author is saying, is not something that is going to be.

[4 : 53] It is something that already has been and something that is going on in your life. We know biblically when the Bible speaks of salvation, it speaks of a past event. You are saved in Jesus Christ.

It is a present event. You are being saved through Christ. And it is a future event. You will be saved eternally. So the impact here is that it's going to radically change how you live your life in the day to day.

And when the author closes the book of Hebrews, he gives those closing remarks. And the final remark is probably one of the greatest. And it is the remark of what it would look like.

It is a greater encouragement to minister. A greater encouragement to minister. I want you to see that this morning. All of that introduction, all that set up for Hebrews 13, verses 18 through 25, because we would, we are tempted at least just to say, oh, well, he's just, I've got a fancy way of saying goodbye.

No, he's encouraging them here. Since these things are so, and since you are giving your life to these things, and since you are trusting in Jesus Christ for your eternity, and you are running the race of endurance throughout history, then I want to encourage you, minister to those around you.

[6 : 15] Take a look through your Bibles. I did it this morning just for curiosity's sake. Just about every New Testament letter, once you get out of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and out of the book of Acts, well, even including the book of Acts, every other book of the New Testament is written to a church or to an individual.

The book of Acts is written to an individual just like the book of Luke is. So most excellent Theophilus in the book of Luke and Theophilus in the book of Acts.

The Pauline Epistles, starting in Romans, going through every one of those written to local churches. And what I encourage you is at each and every one at the end of those Pauline Epistles and those church letters, even the first, second, third John, first and second Peter, there is this encouragement to minister.

Paul told the believers, I think it is at Philippi, but, no, it was Titus. He was telling Titus, our people must learn to engage in good deeds.

It is this encouragement to minister to those around you because the church is put on place for witness. And I know I'm giving a long introduction, but here's the reality.

[7 : 35] If Jesus is as good as the author says he is, and he is, by the way, and if he deserves our allegiance and our devotion for all of eternity, and he does, by the way, then shouldn't we be encouraged more to minister in the day in which he has put us?

And the answer to that is yes. So here is a greater encouragement to minister. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 13, starting in verse 18 and going down to verse 25.

The author says, Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. And I urge you all the more to do this so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Now the God of peace who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever

and ever.

Amen. But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation for I have written to you briefly. Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released with whom if he comes soon, I will see you. [8 : 53] Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. And God, we thank you for your word and what a privilege it is to read the word of God with the people of God.

Well, may this word now speak to our hearts and minds and may we be encouraged by it to live our lives for your glory and yours alone. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

We see this morning from our text a greater encouragement to minister because the reality is this. If we are saved for all of eternity, if we are secure, and I believe in the security of the saints, that is, I believe those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are eternally secure.

There is nothing, as Paul says in Romans chapter 8, that can snatch them out of the hands of the Father. Nothing, neither powers nor principalities, nor forces of the air, nor forces of darkness, no spiritual force, no physical force, there's no might, no sword.

Nothing can snatch them out of the hand of the Father, including ourselves, because if the powers or the forces of the air cannot snatch us out, who do we think we are that we could jump out? So we are eternally secure in the hand of the Father, and we are secure for all of eternity to live for His glory and honor and praise, and we will gather around His throne and cast our crowns at His feet, and we will praise His name with the heavenly host for all of eternity, and that is great.

[10 : 18] But if that is all there was, if God just saved us for eternity, then I would say it would be very mean, at the least unkind, of a loving God to leave us here in time and space and history.

If we are simply saved to live with Him for all of eternity, why would He leave us here temporarily? But the answer to that is because He has left us here to minister, that is to be His witnesses, to declare His praises and His glories and His worth to the people around us.

As we see, for those of you following the yearly reading plan that we are, and I hope that you're up to date on that, and I hope that you're seeing, and you're reading in the book of Ezekiel and how Ezekiel has this prophecy and God told His people, He said, you're my people, and when you went to these other countries, people belittled my name and they looked down upon me and they said, oh, if these are the people of God, then why couldn't God take care of them?

If these are the people of God, why are they in such a terrible state? And then there's this great prophecy that God gives Ezekiel. God says this, not for your sake, but for my name's sake. I'm about to do something good in your life.

I'm about to restore you and bring you back to your land. And I'm going to call the heavens to rain down produce upon you. And I'm going to take out your heart of stone and I'm going to put a heart of flesh in it. And I'm going to do all of these things, not because of you, but because of me.

[11 : 38] I'm not going to do it so that people can say, oh, look how good those people are. I'm going to do it so that the nations will know I am able. And I'm going to do it so that people can say, wow, that God took a bunch of messed up people and did some amazing things with them and He brought them back to their land.

And what kind of God must that be? God says, not for your sake, but for my name's sake, declares the Lord. I'm going to do a work in your life. Friend, I want to tell you something. Salvation is the same way.

God didn't save you for your sake only. He saved you for His name's sake. And He left you here so that His name may be magnified. This is why, just as Paul would write, I can also declare, if God could save me, I know He could save anyone.

Because it has nothing to do with me. It's all to do with Him. And I am the chief of all sinners. I'm the greatest sinner that I know. And if His grace is sufficient for me, then His grace is sufficient for anyone.

It's not about me. It's not about anyone else. It's about Him. And this is our call to minister. And we are encouraged here to minister. And the author encourages us through four things here. He gives us four great encouragements to minister from the passage.

[12 : 44] Number one, we see their participation in the ministry. Ministry does not have to be a vocation. Neither does it have to be very hard or difficult, really. Ministry starts on a foundational level.

And just as anything else, the foundation is so important because as is the foundation, so also is the rest of the structure. And He starts here with a foundational ministry, how they can participate in it.

Now He has told us in verse 17, Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy, not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. So He realizes the fact that there are those that God has called among the people of God.

And He says, really, you know, encourage them along. You know, encourage them through your obedience and encourage, not to them, but to the Word. Encourage them through your participation and really be involved. But then He says, but do more than that.

Take part in the ministry. And He says, well, how do you take part? Verse 18, He says, pray for us. Pray for us. You know, it doesn't take a lot of theological training to pray.

[13:45] It doesn't take a lot of theological or biblical knowledge to pray. Because some of the greatest prayers we see in Scripture, Jesus gives us the contrast between the philosophical Pharisee who stands with His face up to heaven and says, oh God, I thank you that I'm not like this man over here and has all this abundance of words and all of this knowledge.

And Jesus says, that man, he got nothing. But then there's this man in the center who's just beating his chest and he's beating his chest and says, woe is me, woe is me, woe is me. And God said, that man's prayers were heard. It's not your education level.

It's not your preparation level. It is really a foundational level. He says, you can participate in ministry because He calls out here. He says, pray for us. Take part.

And He speaks. He says, it's not that I feel like I have a problem. He says, it's not that I'm convicted. It's not a call of prayer. He says, pray for me because I have this sin in my life because look at what He says.

For we are sure that we have a good conscience. His reality is this. Now, we don't know who He is. Some say, well, this 13th chapter sounds a whole lot like Paul and it does. It sounds very Pauline but we don't know if Paul wrote it though it may sound like it.

[14:55] I mean, we understand the impact that the Apostle Paul would have had upon the early believers. We can also understand that it could have been him or it might not be him so we don't want to speculate but we understand. He says, my conscience is clean so his prayers are not one of necessity because he's done something wrong.

His prayers are one of necessity because he understands that's the foundation on which his ministry stands. And he says, and I urge you all the more, do this. Pray for us.

Lift up those who are involved. We can give account after account after account and I've given some of them to you over and over and over and over again how we see and how prayer is really the most important ministry but also the most accessible ministry.

Charles Spurgeon says prayer is that hand that grabs the rope that rings the bell in heaven and calls attention to what's going on on earth.

Spurgeon had a great ministry in England and particularly London. He had a great ministry. Multitudes, multitudes, multitudes of people would respond to the messages of Spurgeon. People would so pack the door.

[16:06] You had to get a ticket to get into Spurgeon's church. You had to have a ticket to get into the door because if you didn't they would have to keep you out because the church was just packed. And at that time the pews, we're not going back to this by the way though some of you may think it would be okay.

Those pews had little gates at the end, little doors that were there and each door had a lock. So depending on how much you gave to the church you got the key to that lock. So believe it or not those who gave the most their door was in the front not the back.

So they would get closer because people wanted to go see Spurgeon and they wanted to hear his messages and I think he did a great thing but also there was a great Joseph Parker was ministering in London at that time and the church was going on the same way and there's all these wonderful people proclaiming the word but Spurgeon used to take people inside the tabernacle there and he would bring them in I think it's called a Metropolitan Tabernacle around London and he would take them in there and he would say you want me to show you where really the ministry starts of this church because he used to speak to preachers all the time this is where you have lectures to my students by Spurgeon and you have the Pastors College by Spurgeon and he's a prince of

preachers probably had the greatest impact of any other pastor throughout history upon the ministry moving forward across denomination lines really just an amazing thing and he would always bring people and he said I'll show you where this ministry starts and he would always bring them into the church just like this and they would go through a side door and then they would go downstairs and they would go downstairs and downstairs and they would go under the basement of the church and there was a bowler room down there and this bowler room was literally right under the pulpit where Spurgeon preached it would be like right there right here like actually what I'm saying right now there's no baptismal pool you know that right some of you that know that the history of the church there's a big baptismal pool so if this is wherever goes out

I'm going to go way down but under him there was a bowler room and that bowler room was underneath him and he said this is the powerhouse of the church no the bowler room he says no over a hundred people would gather in that room and pray every time he stood up to preach he rightfully asserted that the might and force of his ministry literally stood on the shoulders of those that were praying these people who were never seen were taking a part in the ministry they were participating in it wholeheartedly by lifting up the pastor by lifting up the word and this is exactly what we say pray for us for we assure that we have a good conscience desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things and I urge you all the more to do this pray for us he said I need you to participate in the ministry and he's literally asserting here that their participation will have an influence on how things happen because he says so that I may be restored to you the sooner so we understand here the encouragement to minister is we don't have to be further along we don't have to know more we don't have to understand more we can't use this excuse well when I know more Bible or when I understand more scripture or when I'm a little smarter no those things all come they come as we minister right they come as we take part they come as we we are involved in this thing we all can start in the most important part of ministry the most essential part of ministry and I love how God often makes the most important the most accessible pray pray someone once said and I think it was

Andrew Murray Andrew Murray wrote a lot of books on prayer and as a pastor Andrew Murray was a pastor by the way it's brought conviction to me Andrew Murray wrote it real simple Jesus never taught his disciples how to preach but he taught them how to pray read your Bible he never taught them how to preach he taught them how to pray he has not called all to preach but friend listen to me he has called all to pray this is not a matter of well if God calls me to it it's a reality that he already has we are called to be people of prayer as Paul says pray in all things with rejoicing and thanksgiving so we see their participation in the ministry number two we see their preparation for the ministry because the moment we accept Jesus Christ we are called to this ministry of prayer because we understand that our really receiving of Christ comes through prayer and this is childlike faith which we can ask him anything and we expect him to answer

[20 : 45] I want to encourage you when you pray not if you pray I want to encourage you when you pray to pray with expectation right to expect God to respond to your prayers not to pray with a hope so think so maybe so pray with an expectation and expect that God is going to move in response to your prayers because you are praying in his name in line with all he stands for and here we see their preparation because as we minister as we minister God prepares us more and more and more if we are waiting on God to prepare us beforehand and then to begin ministering or to begin to work then we are already behind because God has called us into relationship with him and that relationship is to be active through our relationship with Jesus Christ and if we are following Christ then we will be doing what Jesus is doing and I don't ever find anywhere in scripture where Jesus is not doing anything because even when he withdrew and rested he was encouraging his disciples right even when he withdrew and rested he was encouraging those around him there's no place in what Jesus says what the father does I do as I see the father do so I do and that's supposed to be our relationship

Jesus says I am the vine you are the branches the branch will always be connected to the vine and will always be going in the direction the vine is going and we understand this thing so as we are ministering and as we are serving and as we are being active and what it is he's called us to do then he will continue to prepare us because look at what it says now the God of peace who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant even Jesus our Lord so the first thing we need to understand about our preparation our preparation comes from one with extreme power now aren't you amazed Hebrews is probably one of the

passages in the New Testament other than the book of Revelations who have some of the scariest text in all of the New Testament it is Hebrews chapter 6 who speaks it seems to imply that the believer can lose his salvation even though if you remember we looked at it as it is not exactly what it is implying at all because a believer cannot lose his salvation it is Hebrews chapter 6 it says those who have got close but denied Jesus have crucified again and will never be saved it is Hebrews chapter 10 who says it's a terrifying thing or a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God and that's we said the message that Jonathan Edwards used to preach his message sinners in the hands of an angry God and the people were gripping the back of the pew and they said that it was almost as if hell was opening up below them and they were going to be sucked down into it because of the terror from the judgment of God from Hebrews chapter 10 and that's a really a good exegesis of the scripture it means that but it is also Hebrews who says he is the God of peace he is the God of peace because in Jesus Christ he is the God of peace we are now at peace with him who is our judge he is the God of peace he is the power to be a God of peace even though he is also a God of judgment and righteous judgment because of this he brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant even Jesus our Lord so if he is powerful enough to be the God of peace he is powerful enough to bring to life the great shepherd of the sheep surely he is powerful enough to prepare us for the ministry this is he who is preparing us and look at what it says now the God of peace look at verse 21 equip you in every good thing to do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus

Christ to whom be the glory forever and ever amen the preparation that the God of peace extends to us is not a preparation to do whatever it is we want to do it is he who comes into our life and prepares us for exactly what he wants to do he prepares us in every good thing to do his will as he equips us he enables us this is the purpose of his relationship with us the Bible says that God has plans and purposes for every one of his people before they were knit in their mother's womb before he laid the foundations of the world there were good things he has planned for his people to do that means I believe that there is at least biblical authority to stand on the reality that everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior before the foundations of the world were laying God had ordained a purpose and a plan for that individual which implies!

to us that every single individual who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior already has a work to do according to his will he has a will for that purpose person he has something specific that individual is going to do for his glory so isn't he the one that we submit to and allow him to prepare us for it you say well how do I do that?

[25 : 37] begin serving begin ministering start a foundational ministry of prayer get in the word of God allow God to lead you God stirs your heart and moves you and there's this burning desire listen when I accepted Jesus Christ I never in my wildest imagination not even in my wildest imagination would have ever considered myself a candidate for pastoral ministry I would have never thought that I would be a preacher I would never thought that I would stand in front of people I'm not a big fan of public speaking I don't like to be in front of people I don't like to I mean I don't mind being around a lot of people but I don't like being the one who stands up and is supposed to have all the answers for everybody and that would have never happened that was something that I would have never thought I didn't even think I would be in a teaching ministry I just thought I'll accept Jesus Christ and I'll be secure for all of eternity I'll climb telephone poles for the best for his glory I'll be the best telephone lineman I can ever be you know I'll climb those poles I'll put the telephone lines up I'll go down that pole and I'll go home safely that was my whole theological plan by the way that was my purposes right and all of a sudden the opportunity came to hey would you teach this class by the way it was like they were looking for a warm body I think is what it was we need someone to lead this class and I was like okay in my naivety

I said sure why not I'll do it I don't care because I was on fire for the Lord I was excited that's why I say don't give someone six years to cool down give them six weeks to get flamed up right and put on the work and I was like okay so sure I'll do it and I went and I started teaching I was so underprepared I was so under I didn't I did not know what I didn't know you know what I mean I didn't have no idea anything and I was like we're just going to read the Bible and we did and there's another opportunity I was like okay I'll do that and all of a sudden this fire begins to burn and this passion and then I became to be like like Paul says woe is me if I do not proclaim the gospel and it didn't make sense but that's okay it's not supposed to make sense but here's the reality I understand too there's a fire burning in each and every heart and each and every soul of every

other believer it's just a matter of whether or not we let that thing take off or we quench it down and that's true it's not a question of if pastoral ministry is not we have it wrong if we think it's at the top it's at the very bottom it's the very bottom

Ephesians 4 the pastor is the one called at the bottom to equip everyone else to do the ministry his is the lowest here with the greatest responsibility because he's going to be held accountable I understand that but it's definitely not limelight we get that but there's a fire burning for his will let him equip you in every good thing to do his will why it is for his praise look at what it says to whom be the glory forever and ever amen the only reasoning I can ever give to why God ever called me to the ministry he's ever called me to is because he has to get the praise forever and ever amen it's definitely not Billy Joe I ran into a gentleman that I known years ago years ago played baseball with him and I ran into him in a soccer game this week and I called his name out and I was like hey man you don't recognize me do you and he was just like looking at me you don't know who I am at all days and I was like Billy

Joe Calvert oh Billy Joe Calvert baseball player man yeah really good so yes I talked a lot smack I said yeah he said so what do you do now like I'm a pastor he's like whoa where'd that come from I said yeah I know he said did you go to Bible college or something I was like yeah kind of in isolation you know has nothing to do with me really has nothing to do with me you know the answer I gave man the Lord did something in my life when he came into my life when I accepted Christ everything changed that's the only answer I can give when I gave my life to Christ everything changed everything and that's the only answer I can give and it's for his praise but you know what the ministry he's given each and every one of us is for his praise what if he had not called me that what if he had called me to be the best toilet cleaner the church had ever seen

I'd say that's for his praise by the way I used to help do that I learned some important lessons never whistle while cleaning church toilets because water splatters and you don't want that on your lips I told you it wasn't all limelight and glory so from then on I would walk out of the bathroom like honey don't whistle while cleaning toilets just leave them alone just like what did you do just don't ask just leave it alone you learn lessons right but this is what I also learned too I learned it from some great people someone told me my mentor in the faith told me because you know the first job that my wife and I had in the church was cleaning the church he called me aside one Sunday there were a little bit of extra leaves on the porch he was my mentor he was my pastor you know what he told me and some of you know that I see this this way he said make sure all the leaves are off the porch make sure all the trash walk up to this building this is how they see the

[31 : 21] God we serve he said if you're doing it I want it to be perfect you know what I did every Sunday morning when I got there make sure there wasn't any leaves I didn't want the pastor getting on to me anymore that's all I did make sure there's no leaves there there's a lot of trees around that church they used to blow up on it all the time I hated that sidewalk but you know it's just impossible get it off there why let that fan into my life right let him prepare you for his glory his praise not you not so that anybody go oh man Billy Joe swept the porch good so they can say man they must really care about the way it looks you see that that's preparation that was a long one right now let's look at these last two really quick because they are important the greater encouragement to minister number three we see their position within the ministry their position he is writing to believers scattered abroad he is writing to believers some of them maybe they're a little bit isolated maybe they're a little bit alone maybe they're like you know what

I am going to go all in with Jesus and they're committing to this look he reminds them of! they're going to get! they're going to get! they're going to yet our position within the ministry we serve though we may not be recognized or noticed it's connected to a lot of other people around the world that when we stand around the throne in glory we will be overwhelmed like I really was not alone in this I think maybe one day I'll be standing beside around this throne and I'll be worshipping I'll be throwing my crown and I'll look at the guy beside me I was like so what did you do?

He said man I swept the porch in the church I'm like awesome we were together that's great you're never alone the position is you're connected now fourth and finally we'll end right here because we have to see this we'll see the production of their ministry what does their ministry produce verse 25 grace be with you all involvement in the ministry produces grace upon grace upon grace there's one thing that we need as individuals and one thing that the world needs more of it is grace grace upon grace and the greatest way to be overwhelmed with the grace of the father is to be serving the

father and see grace upon grace I mess up so often I'm so thankful for God's grace may we never ever get over grace may grace never become simply something that we received may it not become something that we take lightly may we constantly be overwhelmed with grace do you know how I have found to be more overwhelmed with grace serve God in any capacity and you're going to fall flat on your face and you'll need his grace more and you'll be like God I'm thankful for grace you don't know how many times I've preached a sermon

[36 : 39] I go back to my office and say God I thank you for your grace I've looked back at a lot of my old sermons and go wow God you are gracious and so were those people they were awful some of you may think this one is too and God is gracious grace be with you all amen let's pray Lord I thank you God's so thankful for this day and I'm thankful for every opportunity you give each one of us to serve you Lord to labor in the kingdom may kingdom ministry be the focus and the drive of our life where you've put us Lord may you be glorified and honored through it we ask it all in Jesus name amen