

Endurance and Encouragement

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[0 : 00] And if you have your own copy of the Scriptures, I'd like you to open up to Romans chapter 15.

If you don't have your own copy, that's okay. We always provide some Bibles that are sort of scattered around in the chairs, and so we invite you to grab one of those Bibles and turn to page 949. If you're using one of those, you don't even have to know where Romans is.

Just turn to page 949, and you'll find Romans chapter 15. While you guys turn there, I know Justin's going to make announcements later, but I want to encourage you guys. We come to this time every week, and we open the Word of God together, and we spend some time in the Word of God, sometimes more than others, right?

But we spend some time in the Word of God, being encouraged by it, being instructed by it, being built up by it. And we assume as we open this book that it has authority over us, that it is, in fact, the Word of God.

And we rejoice in that. But we have a class. I'm going to be teaching a class this Friday that's going to ask a question. Why this book? In other words, we're going to ask why. Why are the books that we have that make up this book?

[1 : 16] How can we know and how can we have the confidence that these are the books that ought to be in the book? How can we know and stand firmly on the Bible as the Word of God? How can we know that it's not merely the product of man-made decisions and things of that sort?

And so I want to encourage you guys to come this Friday from 7 o'clock to 10 o'clock. We're going to be right here, and we will be talking about what's called the canon of Scripture. That is, the books that make up our Bible are known as the canon.

And we're going to talk about how we can have confidence and how we can know that what we have is indeed the Word of God. So I just want to encourage you. Justin's going to mention that again in a little while. But I want to encourage you guys to be here Friday night.

Now, if you're there in Romans chapter 15, I'd like you to stand to your feet. We're going to read just the first paragraph here this morning, verses 1 through 7. The Apostle Paul writes, We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.

[2 : 25] For whatever was written in the former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God. Father, we thank you for this paragraph.

We thank you for these words. We thank you for the Spirit who inspired these words. And pray that the Holy Spirit would open our eyes this morning to see beauty and truth here.

And to help us in our pursuit of holiness. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. The book of Romans, as we have talked during these past two and several months, years, as we have talked, the book of Romans was a book that Paul wrote in the latter half of his ministry to a church that he himself did not start.

He doesn't know most of the Roman believers. He knows a few because he's met them in other places. But he doesn't know the Roman believers and he wants to go to Rome. And so he wrote this book more or less to introduce himself and the gospel that he's been preaching all over the Roman Empire to those who live in the city of Rome, to the believers there in Rome.

[3 : 51] And in this book we can see, though, what Paul has been doing throughout his ministry. We can see as Paul systematically lays out his gospel, we can see exactly what kind of gospel he, in fact, has devoted his life to preaching.

We know, of course, from reading the book of Acts that the Apostle Paul traveled around and he went from city to city and he established churches in many of the cities around the Roman Empire. And sometimes we have an image in our mind of the Apostle Paul as sort of this Superman of a type of apostle.

We think of him as, even sometimes when we write out the apostle and spell it with a capital A, we're talking about Paul. If you ever see that, you might just hear Peter called an apostle. But if you see the apostle, everybody knows, oh, that's Paul because he's the preeminent apostle.

I mean, he's the apostle. After all, he wrote half of the New Testament, right? So we honor Paul, but sometimes we have an image of him in our minds that doesn't quite match reality.

Because if you look through the book of Acts and you read through the book of Acts, what you realize is that Paul did not accomplish the things that he accomplished on his own. Now, of course, we would want to say, well, of course not.

[5 : 01] He did it all by God's power. I mean, Paul says, I worked harder than them all, yet not I, but the grace of God within me. So, yeah, we on the one level, we would say, well, yeah, of course Paul didn't do it alone. It was God who was doing it through Paul.

That's the point of being an apostle. You're a spokesman for Jesus Christ. He's the one through the Spirit doing the work. But even on another level, Paul was not acting by himself. He traveled with other companions.

He had others who went with him on these journeys and helped him. They're the ones who carried the letters back to other churches. They're the ones who would go in Paul's absence and encourage believers that he couldn't reach.

Maybe he might be in prison or he might be stuck somewhere for a while and he would send these co-workers out because he trusted them so much. Men like Timothy. Men like Titus.

I'm fascinated, though, by one of Paul's co-workers in the earlier part of his ministry, in the first half of Paul's ministry. You may know him Barnabas. I'm fascinated by Barnabas because Barnabas early on in the pages of the book of Acts is almost presented as the leader among the two of them.

[6 : 03] But very quickly, that changes. Very quickly, Paul becomes the leader of the two of them. And that shift happens almost without you noticing it. Barnabas is on the scene.

Paul meets up with Barnabas. He's more or less assigned to go with Barnabas. Someone more experienced. Someone who's been at this just slightly longer than Paul. But it doesn't take long for Paul to take charge.

And I don't think that's necessarily because Paul was the take charge kind of guy, although he probably was. I think it's because Barnabas himself was the kind of person who was willing to step back.

And willing to recognize that someone like Paul had greater gifts than himself. Someone like Paul had a unique calling to take the gospel to the Gentiles. And his role in that was to support and help Paul.

His name, we are told, in the New Testament, after all, means son of encouragement. I think Barnabas was crucial to those early years of Paul's ministry. Even though later there was a breakdown in their relationship.

[7 : 01] I think he was crucial because he was there as a source of encouragement for the Apostle Paul. As a means of saying, you can do this. Keep moving and keep going. Because we all need that.

I mean, I need to be encouraged at times. There are times when I just, as a pastor, I just get frustrated with things. Or I think things aren't going in the direction that I thought they would go.

Or we're not at the place where I thought we would be. And in those moments, I need someone to encourage me. And we all need that. We all need encouragement. And one of the things that I think Paul is doing in this paragraph at the opening of chapter 15, is he's offering us encouragement.

Because since chapter 12, verse 1, the Apostle has been calling us to a life of holiness. And a life of unmatched obedience in pursuit of God.

He has called us to live our entire lives, to offer up our bodies as living sacrifices. And as we've been saying, not merely in chapter 14, but also from chapter 12 on, this pursuit of holiness is not a one-man pursuit.

[8 : 08] The pursuit of holiness is a community project. It is something that we all labor together. I should be laboring for your holiness, and you should be laboring for my holiness.

And so we need one another in this pursuit. And sometimes, as we pursue lives of increasing holiness, we simply need some encouragement.

That is, we need motivation. Sometimes it's just being reminded of things that we already know are our ultimate primary motivators. Sometimes it's being offered some new and fresh motivation in the moment.

And what I believe Paul is doing here at the opening of chapter 15, is he's drawing, he's beginning to draw this whole section from chapter 12 now to the end of the middle of chapter 15.

He's beginning to draw it to a close. And as he draws it to a close, he offers us some motivation. You need to be motivated. Sometimes we even need to be pushed toward this life of holiness because of the temptations that surround us, because of the sinfulness in our own heart, and because of just the tendency to drift away from our fervency in pursuit of more Christlikeness.

[9 : 20] And so we have here in this paragraph what I want to point out to you this morning, four means of motivation or means of encouragement that Paul is giving to us. And I take this to be a great gift that Paul is giving to us.

Yeah, there's a lot of really difficult theology in the book of Romans. We've tackled a lot of that. We've faced it head on. There's not been a verse that we've avoided because of the theological implications or the difficulty with it.

That's true. But now here we come to a place to where we're simply being encouraged by Paul. But I want you to see first in verse 1 that this encouragement that he offers us is, it's connected to what he's been saying.

He's not beginning a new topic here. It's connected to what he's been saying in chapter 14. And then we'll see in verse 2 that it's connected more broadly to what he's been saying since chapter 12.

So look at the first verse. He says, and this is going to bring back chapter 14, we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak.

[10 : 22] We have an obligation. We've got to bear with the failings or the weaknesses of those who are unable or incapable. That's what he says. And then he begins to broaden out.

He says that we are not to please ourselves. Now, verse 2, we'll see it's broader than just this issue of the strong and weak that we've been considering over the last few weeks.

Verse 2, Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. That's the community project of the pursuit of holiness that we've been talking about in these last few chapters.

Let each of us please his neighbor and seek his good so that we might build him up. That's what we're supposed to be doing as followers of Christ. That's what we're supposed to be doing as members of the body of Christ.

We're not supposed to be constantly seeking to please ourselves and get the things that we want for us personally. We're supposed to be looking at our neighbor. We're supposed to be looking at those around us and specifically in context here, the believers that surround us.

[11 : 25] We're supposed to be looking at them and asking ourselves, How can I seek their good? How can I do what pleases them? How can I help the others around me rather than just focusing upon myself and how I can do good for myself?

That's been on Paul's mind throughout these chapters. It's been on his mind. He's told us in chapter 12, Don't think too highly of yourself. Don't think more of yourself than you want. Well, that's a very similar statement to that we ought not to just be trying to please ourselves.

Or in chapter 13 where he defines the fulfillment of the law as loving your neighbor. This has been on his mind. This has been the driving force of these chapters.

And now he's saying it one more time in another way. Stop trying to please yourself. Look out for your neighbor. Figure out what works for their good. Figure out what will build them up.

That is, figure out how to make them more holy. Figure out how to work and labor for the holiness of other people around you. And then follows the four motivations that I want us to focus on this morning.

[12 : 32] Take a look beginning in verse 3. The first motivating force that Paul gives us is to look to Christ. Look to the example of Jesus. He says, For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.

Now that's a quote from Psalm 69, which is quoted frequently in the New Testament. And it's taken and interpreted to be ultimately a reference to Jesus. And so Paul here says, If you want to seek the good of others, If you want to try to build others up, Consider Jesus.

Think about Jesus himself. He wasn't trying to please himself as he gave up his life on the cross. He wasn't trying to do that which felt good to him.

He wasn't trying to do those things that were at the forefront of his mind of wanting to do. I mean, he prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, If it's possible, Father, take this cup from me. It's not as if he wanted to bear the wrath of God.

He didn't want to do that. Not for his own sake, but for the sake of others. He's willing even to go all the way to the cross. Verse 7, Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.

- [13 : 42] How has Jesus welcomed us? Has he called us to fix ourselves up? To get rid of our sinfulness before he welcomes us? No. His death fixes the problem.
- His death comes in to say, Sinner though you are, You can be declared righteous through faith in me, But you're still sinful. You're still a sinner. The gospel is not a message that says, Clean yourself up.
- Stop doing bad things. And then you can come to Jesus. And you can come to church. And you can do the right things. And everything will be okay. The gospel is a message that says, You are messed up.
- You are sinful. You are currently, right now, filthy. So come through faith in Christ. And you don't have to bring your own righteousness. He'll give His righteousness to you. It'll cover you like a blanket.
- He'll count you righteous in Him. And though you're sinful, And though you're fallen, And though you're weak, He'll welcome you in. He'll bring you into the fold.
- [14 : 39] And declare you to be righteous. Well, Paul says, As Christ has welcomed you, Welcome one another. In other words, In following His example, Our mindset is not, Well, I mean, If they would just get their stuff straight, Then I could probably be friends with them.
- Well, I probably wouldn't mind them being a part of our church. Or I wouldn't mind being around them, If they would just, And then you fill in the blank. Whatever it might be. But if we are to follow the example of Jesus, That's not the pattern that Jesus Himself sets.
- Yes, He calls His people to repentance. Yes, He calls us to a life of holiness afterwards. But that's the community pursuit of holiness That we're supposed to be engaged in. That's not how we welcome one another.
- That's not how we embrace one another. No, that comes afterward. That's encouragement. That's calling. That's accountability after the fact. But we look around us, And we see fellow sinners, And we say, Come through faith in Jesus.
- Be a part of us. And then we'll work together to be more holy. But we don't look around us, And we don't say, You would be acceptable if. You would be okay if.
- [15 : 41] Because Jesus doesn't do that. And Paul says, You want motivation? You want some encouragement? And trying to actually implement the things That I've been telling you to do? Then you need to, Before you do anything else, You just need to look to Jesus.
- Look to Him. Or, as the writer of Hebrews says, In Hebrews chapter 12, That we are to be looking to Jesus, The founder and perfecter of our faith.
- Now listen to what this says. Who for the joy that was set before Him, Endured the cross, Despising the shame. Like I said, He didn't like it. He didn't want to go to the cross, But there was something better beyond it.
- There was something more beyond it. What was it? The redemption of His people. The salvation of those Whom God had given to Him. And we are, Paul says, To imitate Jesus.
- Look to Jesus. Consider Jesus. Welcome one another as Jesus has welcomed us. Do the things that Jesus does. Let His life and His example Be a prime motivator for you.
- [16 : 44] But then he moves beyond that Because he has this quote from Psalm 69, Which I think he puts in there So that he can transition kind of smoothly To the next motivator that he wants to give us.
- It's not necessary for him to quote Psalm 69, But he brings in the Scriptures, He brings in a quotation from the Old Testament So that he can say what he wants to say next.
- Verse 4, For whatever was written, He just quoted it, Now whatever was written, So all of the Scriptures, All of God's Word, Whatever was written in former days, Was written for our instruction.

It was written for us. Yes. I know sometimes we have a tendency, Particularly with the Old Testament. I know sometimes we have a tendency With the Scriptures and the Old Testament Specifically to say, Well I don't know if that has really much to do with me.

I mean, I don't, I don't really even understand all these things. I don't know why they have all these genealogies in here. And I don't know why they have all these rules About what you can eat and what you can't eat. And how you got to wash your cups Before you drink anything out of them.

[17 : 44] I don't understand why they have all of these things. And so sometimes we tend to just sort of push the Old Testament Or at least the bulk of the Old Testament. We'll hang on to the Psalms and Proverbs Because those are easy.

But we'll push the bulk of the Old Testament sort of aside As if it doesn't really have a whole lot to do with us. It's just preparing for Jesus. Now that Jesus has come, We'll just start with Matthew and move forward.

But Paul says, Whatever was written. In other words, All of what we call the Old Testament, Which for him was just the Scriptures, All of the Old Testament was written for our instruction.

And specifically, it was written to do something. Look, so that through endurance And through the encouragement of the Scriptures, We might have hope. The Scriptures are given to us To encourage us.

And in fact, to help us to endure All the way to the end. And not give up. And not fall to the wayside. But just to continue to persevere in the faith And to keep believing And to keep pursuing holiness And keep doing the things that God has called us to do.

[18 : 50] We have not just the example of Jesus. We have this whole book to help us. Now it helps us in different ways. Sometimes, Sometimes the Bible provides us With examples of what not to do.

I mean, it's not as if we can just pick out any given story In the Old Testament or even the New Testament And say, I'm going to do what the people in this story do. Because honestly, sometimes they do some pretty weird and bad things.

They really do. And they're not all written down just to give us an example Of what we ought to do. In fact, I tell people frequently That the Scriptures are not even written primarily To show us an example of how to live.

The Scriptures are written primarily To teach us about who God is And what He is like. And so I've often used the example Particularly in training up children's teachers. I've often used the example of David and Goliath.

If the only way that you've ever taught Or heard the story of David and Goliath taught Is as an example of courage and bravery That we should imitate, Then you've missed the main point of the story. It's not mainly about the courage of David.

[19 : 51] I mean, David just walks into camp As a shepherd boy Who has no right to even say anything And yet he walks in, He sees Goliath And his question is not Hey, what can I do to deal with this guy?

Because I can take him. That's not his attitude. He comes in and he says Who's this uncircumcised Philistine Who dares to defy the armies of the Lord? I mean, from David's perspective It's an issue about God.

Who's this guy? He doesn't even know Yahweh And he wants to defy his armies? Who is this guy? The story of David Is the story of someone coming and saying I will stand for the name of God.

David is a type of Christ Coming in to stand in the place of Israel. Israel was afraid. They were unable to do What they ought to have been doing. But David comes And he stands in the place of God's people And he fights God's enemies.

Jesus comes And he stands in the place of God's people And he fights God's enemies For them And defeats them. That's what that story is about. But even having said that And I say that a lot I do not want to take away From the reality That we are given Example after example Throughout the scriptures Of how to live And how not to live.

[21 : 02] Now in terms of how not to live There are plenty of examples of that. And we could thumb our way Through the Old Testament And look at several. But instead of doing that I want you to turn over real quickly To 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

And I want you to hear What Paul has to say About those people And events recorded in the Old Testament About Israel in particular. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 1 Paul says I want you to know brothers That our fathers Were all under the cloud And all passed through the sea.

So he's talking about the Exodus. Right? Our fathers They all did that. All were baptized into Moses In the cloud and sea. All ate the same spiritual food. All drank the same spiritual drink.

For they drank from the spiritual rock That followed them And the rock was Christ. All of them did that. And he says But nevertheless With most of them And if you know the story Of Israel in the wilderness Yes, there is always a remnant.

There are always the faithful few. But most of them Are grumblers and complainers And at any moment Willing to create an idol Rather than worship the true God Ready to head back to Egypt To slavery. It's not a good example. Nevertheless, verse 5 With most of them God was not pleased For they were overthrown In the wilderness.

[22 : 12] Now notice verse 6. Now these things took place As examples for us That we might not desire evil As they did. They were written as examples For us to show us Don't do this.

Don't go that way. Don't be a grumbler. Don't be one who's looking back Upon your life Before you were redeemed And say I'd rather go back To that kind of life. Don't do that, Paul says. These things were written down To show you That's not going to work out so well.

God did not deal kindly With that generation For the things that they said And the things that they did. So don't do that. Don't walk in that way. Don't be like that. We have a multitude of examples Of what not to do In the Old Testament.

But of course What we really like Are the positive examples. And there are There are plenty of those. Again, we don't have to walk Through the Old Testament To see that. We can see it in the New Testament. Hold your place there.

Well, you can just hold your place In Romans And turn over to Hebrews. The great faith chapter Of Hebrews chapter 11 Gives us example after example Of people that we should imitate.

[23 : 16] Of course, we shouldn't imitate them In every way But only in the ways Mentioned here in Hebrews. He mentions Abraham a few times And we can think of some things That Abraham did That we probably shouldn't do. Don't marry your sister For one.

That's a bad thing to do. Right? Don't do that. It's before the law Thankfully. All right? And don't lie And say that That she's not your wife When asked. Okay? There are some bad things But there are some good things About Abraham That we are called to imitate.

So for instance Verse 8 By faith Abraham obeyed When he was called To go out to a place That he was to receive As an inheritance. Maybe you're struggling Maybe you feel that God Has genuinely called you To do something To a new job Or just to a new way Of doing things Or whatever it might be God might be calling you To something new and different And you might be hesitant About that.

Well, sometimes you need The encouragement of the scriptures And you read about Abraham Who gave up far more Most likely Than what God's calling us To give up And by faith he did it By faith he obeyed.

Or Sarah Abraham's wife By faith Sarah herself Received power to conceive Even when she was past the age Since she considered him Faithful who had promised. In the face of everything To the contrary She believed that God Was going to be faithful To his promises.

[24 : 32] And we ought to do that Because like Sarah Maybe not to the degree That she experienced But like Sarah There will be things That we know I think that's what God wants me to do Or I think I feel pretty sure That this is what God's going to do But then When we look at the situation It's just not possible Because I mean It can't be done I can't do that I can't I mean I've got I've got these kids I'm trying to deal with I've got work I can't do I mean it's great I think maybe that's what God wants to do But I can't do That's not possible And then we read About Sarah Not only here in Hebrews But you can go back And read the story From Genesis And you read And you think Okay it was much more Impossible for her To conceive a child At her age Than it is for me To do the thing That God called me to do We have all these Examples of encouragement Moses verse 23 By faith Moses Or verse 24 By faith Moses again When he was grown up Refused to be called The son of Pharaoh's daughter Choosing rather to be Mistreated with the people Of God Than to enjoy The fleeting pleasures

Of sin Maybe it's not Some big thing That God's called you to Maybe you're just Maybe you're just beset With a certain sin Maybe there is Maybe there's something That you just can't Seem to get past And it's just It's there This particular temptation That continues to overwhelm you And that you continue To give in to Whatever it may be And you think I don't know how I'm going to overcome this And you remember Moses That Moses chose To be mistreated With the people of God Rather than to enjoy The fleeting pleasures Of sin That Moses understood That he could have Remained He could have remained In Egypt He could have Not been associated With the Hebrew people He could have not Killed the guard Who was beating The Hebrew slave He could have Had no care and concern For the people of God Whatsoever And stayed aloof And stayed distant And not dealt with it And that would have Been a sin for him Because God had called him

To do something And he had a family And he had people That he had to stand up for And that would have Been sinful to him But it would have Been easy Told that he Would rather be Mistreated with the people Of God And numbered among The slaves Than have the fleeting Pleasures of sin Fleeting That's a lifetime Of being set Right He's raised by Pharaoh's daughter That's not Doesn't seem fleeting It's probably set For his life But from an ultimate Perspective It's fleeting Even if the bonus For your sin Pays off for 20 years It's a bad financial deal Where you have to Cheat somebody And you can live off What you're going to Make for years It's still fleeting Life is a blip On the radar It's just It's just so small And eternity Is so vast It's always fleeting Whatever the reward That sin offers It's always fleeting And we turn to Moses And we're reminded Of that Over and over And over So by the time You get to chapter 12 It's just The great cloud Of witnesses That surrounds us

This great Massive Huge Crowd Paul says Be aware of them Know about them Be encouraged By them So we have The example of Jesus We have the examples Negative and positive From the Old Testament To help us And to motivate us In this Difficult task Of not pleasing ourselves But seeking the good Of our neighbor We have We have a lot Of encouragement already Just with the example Of Jesus Just with the encouragement Of the scriptures But then there's more Verse 5 May the God of endurance And encouragement So he's got these key words He has said that the scriptures Are given For your endurance And for your encouragement He's picking them up again May the God of endurance And encouragement Grant you To live in such harmony With one another In accord with Christ Jesus This is a powerful motivator That you might miss But don't miss Two things here Number one God is the God

Of encouragement And endurance That's who he is Where does your endurance Come from? It doesn't come from yourself It doesn't Where does all the encouragement That we have Through Christ And through the scriptures Where is that coming from?

[28 : 49] It's coming from God himself Ultimately The source Of our holiness Is God himself He gives us encouragement He causes us To endure And what does he say?

May he grant you To live in such harmony With one another This is the harmony That Paul's been calling for So he's commanded us To live in harmony With one another And now Near the end He says And may God grant you That harmony Because he is sovereign And the source Of our ability To seek the good Of our neighbor Is not to be found In some hidden reserve Within myself The deeper I dig Into my own heart The darker it seems to get And the more Subtle sinful tendencies I seem to find It's not the source Paul says The source Is God's sovereign power At work within you To cause you To live in harmony With one another And that's encouraging It ought to be encouraging For us I know sometimes We say things like Well if God's in control Then you know You see bumper stickers Let go And let God It's just not a biblical mindset The biblical mindset

Is hang on Because God's hanging on Right? The biblical mindset Is cling to him Because ultimately He's the one clinging to you And holding you in close And now Be in harmony With one another Because God can grant you That harmony And so we ought to be Encouraged to know That it's not within ourselves And it's not by own power That we're going to do All this stuff That he's been telling us to do But it's God himself Who's going to accomplish it Through us He has means He's given us the scriptures He's given us the example of Jesus Which by the way Is also in the scriptures He has means By which he does The things that he wants to do But he's the one Doing them And that ought to Encourage us Greatly And the reason that he Has chosen to do things In this way The reason that God Has set it up So that ultimately He is the cause That he stands Sovereignly behind These things Moving and motivating us And changing our hearts The reason that he has Set it up that way Is spelled out Very clearly for us May the God of endurance

And encouragement Grant you to live In such harmony With one another In accord with Christ That together You may with one voice Glorify the God And Father Of our Lord Jesus Christ There it is It's your final motivator And it's the reason Why God's doing things The way that he's doing them So that with one voice We might glorify God I'll be honest with you If my only motivator Sometimes Were the people around me And I love the people Around me Obviously My family I love Thy church My church I love my church I love you guys But if that were The only motivator I had Then it wouldn't Be sufficient It wouldn't be enough If all I had was You ought to do good For them Because they're good folks And I love them It's not always going to be enough There's a greater motivation There's a greater goal It is that we might With one voice Glorify God Or as he says In the last verse Welcome one another

As Christ has welcomed you Why? For the glory of God That is always At all times To be our final Ultimate motivation We do everything That we do In order that God Himself Might be glorified In us And through us Now that's a tricky Statement though I have probably More than anything else Talked about The glory of God In my sermons More than I think Any other topic I can think of I can't think of A sermon That I have preached In the last I don't know 10-15 years In which the glory of God Has not been some sort of Factor within the sermon Mainly because it's Everywhere in the Bible And it doesn't matter Where I'm preaching from It's just there But also because It's ultimate But as much as I talk about it And as much as I preach about it I think sometimes We have phrases Like that That we say so much That we don't really

[33 : 04] Know what they mean And so when we hear Things like that You might glorify God Or for the glory of God Sometimes we might Mistakenly think That God is calling us To add something to Him That He's lacking Oh God needs more glory He's lacking in His glory So I'm going to do some stuff Here you go Here's your gift God I'm giving you some glory And you're lacking in that Well if that's your concept Of the glory of God It's not going to motivate you It doesn't inspire me To live for and serve A God who lacks Who's empty in some area And that's not what we mean When we say glorify God That's not what we mean A great theologian Jonathan Edwards Wrote a book And I wouldn't encourage All of you to read it It's honestly a very difficult Book to read But some of you Might want to pick it up It's called The End for which God Created the world End being the goal For why God made the world And one of the Brilliant illustrations That he uses in that book Is he says that He says that God Is like an overflowing fountain

And that when we speak Of glorifying God We're not putting anything Into the fountain No We're drinking from the fountain The fountain of itself Naturally overflows With beauty and excellence And worthiness And when we glorify God We're not adding anything To the fountain We're partaking of the fountain We're participating In the overflow Of the fountain And so when I say Do everything for the glory of God What I mean is Not fill up the lack that he has Because he needs more glory Than he's got What I mean is He's overflowing He has so much goodness And greatness And beauty And what he calls us to do In everything that we do Is to partake of that glory And let it resound through us To the rest of the world That's what it means To glorify God You never add anything to him You're always receiving from him And even in the receiving He is greatly glorified

Because it magnifies How much he overflows Toward his people That's a motivator That's a way When you're frustrated And nothing else is working And the people that you're called to serve Are just frustrating And you don't want to seek their good If you're really honest about it You just don't want to do these things You think But in doing good to them And in seeking their good I get to drink from the fountain That overflows And my soul is satisfied That's what a life Pursuing the glory of God Is like A life that partakes Of an infinitely overflowing fountain Of goodness and satisfaction That is why we don't have to Please ourselves Because the greatest pleasure To be had Is God himself And Paul says

Stop focusing on pleasing yourself Serve others Aim at the glory of God And the irony of it all Is at the end of that You find yourself More satisfied And more pleased Than you could have ever imagined In all of your life Pursue his glory Drink from the fountain And pursue one another's holiness Together It's a powerful call And powerful motivators Let's pray Let's pray