

# Faux Pax

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you'd like to open, you can open your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 1. We'll be reading all of that first chapter today. And then if you have a fancy ribbon or an extra finger, you can also stick that in Acts 17.

We'll be there a little bit later on, but we'll start in 1 Thessalonians. So I guess I spend a lot of time thinking about the Roman Empire.

Most days. So that's where we'll start. It's an unlikely place. In 49 B.C., roughly a century before Paul penned this first letter to the Thessalonians, a Roman general named Julius Caesar stood on the edge of the Rubicon with his standing army.

The small stream was a physical border between Roman territory and the province of Gaul, which Caesar was governor over. Before stepping foot into the water, which was an action that declared a civil war against the rest of the Roman Republic, it's believed that he said the phrase, the die is cast.

Whether he actually said those words or not, we knew that his decision was irreversible. He had passed the point of no return. He would either succeed in violently taking out those who stood in his way or die in pursuit of his own personal success.

[ 1 : 26 ] After his main rival, General Pompey, was killed, Caesar changed at once republic into an empire. But Julius Caesar wouldn't enjoy his success for long.

March 15, 44 B.C., during the Ides of March, which is only about five years after he crossed the Rubicon. And shortly after he pronounced himself king or emperor for life, he walked into the Roman Senate unarmed and was killed.

Two years later, the Roman Senate deified Caesar, constructed a temple for worship, and the imperial cult began.

Cult just means worship. It doesn't have the weird undertones that we oftentimes think of that. And this created an official civil religion for the Roman Empire, and the people were expected to participate in their rituals to show loyalty to the empire.

The cult was never really about true worship of these dead rulers. It was meant to reinforce the Roman rule, and it was a place where people would come together and they would receive decrees, and they would make connections and climb the social and political ladders.

[ 2 : 39 ] Refusal to participate would imply that you were an enemy to the empire. History repeated itself in a struggle for power, and Julius Caesar's adopted son Octavian would end up as the ruler of the Roman Empire.

And even though he was effectively a dictator, he had learned a lesson from his uncle's heavy-handed brand of dictatorship. And he chose not to label himself as the emperor or king.

Rather, he was known as princeps or first citizen. And because his adopted father was considered a deity, he was also called son of God.

It was a very whisper-thin facade of humility. Why do we care about that? Octavian became the leader of Rome, and it marked the beginning of a period of time that lasted for about 200 years.

It was a time that appeared to be marked by peace and economic prosperity, and it was known as Pax Romana, or peace of Rome. This was the good news, or the gospel of Rome.

[ 3 : 47 ] But it wasn't a true gospel, like we understand the gospel of Jesus. It was a false gospel. If you gave your allegiance to Rome and participated in the imperial cult, you were offered protection, and you would receive this new piece of Rome.

In terms of the way the world had worked throughout most of history, at face value, it was a pretty good deal. I mean, who wouldn't want peace over conflict and war and unsettlement?

But it wasn't a restful and real peace, and these weren't truly benevolent and loving emperors. This peace came about by violently taking at the expense of others.

Both Caesar and Octavian declared war against their own countrymen to get what they wanted. The men who ruled over this kingdom were motivated by their own interests and greed, and they were completely willing to take advantage of others if it benefited them.

If someone or some group stepped out of line and challenged them, they were crushed. Greed, violence, and occupation masquerading as peace and freedom.

[ 4 : 57 ] I hope this gives you a peek into why I'm calling this the Roman gospel. Can you see why I'm calling it a false gospel? The motivations and actions of its leaders looked and act nothing like Jesus.

But when the fullness of time had come, and just at the right moment, the very same time period, God sent his son Jesus to bring about a real and lasting peace by establishing a different sort of kingdom.

About 30 years after Jesus' birth, he also experienced a point of no return, similar to Julius Caesar stepping into the Rubicon. Jesus set foot into the Jordan and was baptized, which marked the beginning of his earthly ministry to establish a new and eternal kingdom.

It brought a different kind of good news. It brought the truly good news of redemption and salvation. A writing of creation that for so long had been ripped apart by the effects of sin.

A redemptive plan ordained by God himself. The die had been cast, and there was no going back. But Jesus wouldn't either succeed in his mission or die trying.

[ 6 : 17 ] He would succeed by dying. The gospel of Jesus isn't a violent overturning of the current empire for control. It isn't one man taking advantage and using others to satisfy desires.

The message of the gospel is actually a setting right of all that is broken and wrong in creation. It's a message of the Son of God motivated by love, putting himself lower than others to serve them.

To serve them in ways they wouldn't even realize until later. This king would be crowned, but not by force or compulsion, but by humility.

He came out of the waters of baptism ready to do the will of God, to serve and to show his love by suffering and dying to atone for our sin. Something we could not and cannot do on our own.

His life, death, and resurrection was an outpouring of love and mercy and grace. The gospel of Jesus is a message of grace to you and I.

[ 7 : 22 ] It's a message of restoration of what God intended his creation to be like. A message of destruction, of sin and evil and death. It's true peace.

This is the gospel message that Paul is bringing to the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica. Can you see how these two gospels are in opposition to each other? And even though outwardly they may look similar in both promising peace, they're very different.

Paul is writing this letter to the Church of the Thessalonians, one of the early Jesus communities, a genuine community of Christians living under the gospel message. The good news of King Jesus while also living in the context of the Roman Empire.

Today, hopefully, we'll see that these Christians live a life where these two gospels, the gospel of Jesus and the gospel of Rome, grind up against each other and how that might have looked. Audrey's going to serve us this morning.

Would you come up and read for us? Paul, the civilians, and Timothy, to the Church of the Thessalonians and God of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace.

[ 8 : 36 ] We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor, of love and steadfastness, of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, for we came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

You know what kind of men we provided among you for your sake, and you became emissaries of us and of our Lord Jesus and for the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers of Macedonia and Achilla.

For not only the word of the Lord sounded from you in Macedonia and Achilla, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so we need not say anything, for they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God and to wait for the Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Thank you. What is the church? That's what we'll be looking at today, I guess.

That seems to be what Paul is interested in demonstrating. So Paul gives us two distinctions here in verse 1.

[ 10 : 20 ] He says, the church is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is so important to Paul that he puts brackets around it or bookends.

He uses biblical parallelism and that should draw our attention to it and everything inside of there is going to kind of flow out from this big idea of what makes a Christian these two distinctions.

So the first is that they believe in God the Father. That means that they are not polytheistic or pagan. This is paralleled in verse 9 and he expands on that distinction.

He says, how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. That's to say that not only do you acknowledge that God is the only supreme and fully sovereign creator and sustainer of all, but that you give your service and allegiance to nothing except him.

The church will not offer worship to the idolatry that was mandated by the Romans. And so they were viewed as people who opposed the Roman Empire.

[ 11 : 35 ] And his second distinction is that they also believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So this excludes those that deny that Jesus is the Son of God.

So namely, that's the Jews. Jump down to verse 10 and we can see the parallelism continue. He says, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

So at the time, the Jewish community held a special exemption from participating in the imperial cult practices. The Jews across the Roman Empire didn't want to lose that exemption because some of their own community were now becoming Christians alongside other former pagans that had also become a part of this growing community.

At least as far as it pertains to these two distinctions that Paul lays out, believing in both God the Father and Jesus the Son of God, Christianity is an exclusive group.

In our context today, we tend to think that that can be helpful, maybe oftentimes more helpful than a hindrance. But that was for sure not the case in this community that Paul was writing to.

[ 13 : 00 ] Being a Christian actually put them between these two groups of people and neither group would accept them. By following Jesus, they were risking their ability to earn income for their families.

Their livelihoods were at risk. And about a decade after this letter was received by the Thessalonians, Nero would begin torturing and executing Christians in Rome.

We can see that what makes the church fundamentally sets it apart from the rest of the world. And that exclusivity during this time made life quite hard for early Christians.

The word that we see used for church is the word *ekklesia*, which most of you have probably heard before. And it comes from two words.

There's a root word, *kaleo*, and that means to call out. And there's a prefix, *ek*, which means out of. So literally, this means the called out ones.

[ 14 : 00 ] The church is the called out ones. A group of people brought together, called or set apart for a specific purpose. So we might think about this similar to how we think about serving on a jury.

We receive a summons from the court that states that we're going to show up on a certain day and be brought together with 11 other folks for the specific purpose to render a verdict in a court case.

Friends don't just get together at a park and say, you know what would be great, Jeremy, if we just got 10 other people and we got ourselves on the docket. We could just be a jury.

Wouldn't that, wouldn't that be a hoot? That's not how it works. The court decides. You have no say in the matter. And that's also how the church, the *ecclesia* works.

We humans are not the decisive cause here. It's a work that's wholly outside of ourselves. Even though we make up the church, we don't make it ourselves.

[ 15 : 05 ] I think we can see this if we look at Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew. In Matthew 16, starting in verse 15, it says, He, Jesus, said to them, but who do you say that I am?

Simon Peter replied, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock I will build my church, my *ecclesia*, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So Jesus teaches us a few things in here that help us round out our picture and our idea of what a church is.

There's four things that I want us to notice in here. Jesus is the builder. Number two, what he is assembling is a group of genuine believers.

Number three, the profession of faith Peter makes isn't a work of flesh and blood. It's a work of God's revelation of the truth to Peter. And number four, Jesus will continue to build his church by virtue of genuine believers sharing the good news of Jesus.

[ 16 : 26 ] Peter is the first one to share the truth at Pentecost in Acts 2. And we're still seeing the gospel spread and the church continue to grow today. Now the church is not an affinity group like a curling club, like maybe a lacrosse team.

It's an assembly of people called to be set apart for a specific purpose. And even death, that's where Jesus says the gates of hell, which is the only real threat that an oppressive empire like Rome can hold over us, even death will not be able to stop the purpose of the church and the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

That's what a church is. A called together assembly of believers throughout all time, past, present, and future. And those believers are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

These distinctions confirm membership in the church, but you can't see these distinctions as visible and outward signs. So how does Paul know that this church at Thessalonica is both in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ?

If we look at verse 3, Paul will show us three ways that these brothers and sisters bear a visible witness that confirms their membership in the church that Jesus is building.

[ 17 : 47 ] Verse 3 says, Remembering before God and Father, before our God and Father, your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith, hope, and love are the visible outward signs of the inward reality that God has done a work in your heart and you have been joined to the true church.

church. We're going to look at each of these phrases separately and just learn a little bit more about them. So faith is first. Faith is living right now with an expectation that God will make good upon his promises.

It's not blind trusting, but it's looking backwards and seeing the faithfulness of God through many generations and seasons, through your own previous struggles, and then reasoning confidently that he is able to deliver on his future promises.

We don't receive faith as a result of our own work. It's a free gift to us. But once we receive it, Paul shows us that the work we do, that's the reasoning confidently part.

[ 18 : 58 ] We labor not because of God's shortcomings, because we know that he who called you is faithful. He will surely do it. But because God made that promise to us, our shortcomings, my failures, my doubt, my insecurities, my unbelief.

Faith isn't hard work because God isn't worthy of our faith. Faith is hard work because we are reliably unreliable. Under the faux gospel of Rome, voicing doubt or unbelief casts suspicion, and you may find yourself on the unfortunate end of some punishment.

But, under the gospel of Jesus, expressing doubts, failures, and unbelief, will find yourself on the receiving end of God's grace. Paul knows that the outward marks of true belief is working hard to believe despite our unbelief.

It's approaching the Lord time after time in repentance and humility. and it looks like this. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.

steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ is the next of the three. So, hope and faith are linked together and we need to have faith for hope, but hope is the forward-looking component to faith.

[ 20 : 33 ] It's the confident expectation that God will do what he has promised and the certainty that he can do it. hope under the Roman gospel is nothing more than wishful thinking.

If you like the current emperor and think things are doing well, you would hope that it continues that way, which may work out well, unless they die, which happens to most people eventually, or they're overthrown.

Then, your false gospel only gave you a false hope for a while, and you'd have to find something else to hope in. Christian hope is different. It's a promise made by the sovereign and immutable God.

It cannot be broken because God's will cannot be overturned or changed. We know and are confident that our King Jesus will not be overthrown and that death has no hold on him and that our hope will not be cut off.

Paul shows us that this is an outward mark of a true believer, continuity of our hope or steadfastness. Jesus is the anchor of our hope and it looks like the words to the song we often sing.

[ 21 : 49 ] Christ the sure and steady anchor in the fury of the storm. When the winds of doubt blow through me and my sails have all been torn, in the suffering, in the sorrow, when my sinking hopes are few, I will hold fast to the anchor.

It shall never be removed. So the third one is the labor of love. And I have a confession for you guys.

We're all friends here so I think this will be alright. I enjoy watching some reality TV dating shows. But notice, I said some and not all.

I think it's a curiosity and not an unhealthy obsession. If you disagree with that, we can talk about it later. This is not the place. I enjoy seeing how people think and how people interact with each other.

And one of the things that you'll find on many of these shows is people saying things that go like this. I came here looking for love or I'm just looking for someone to love me for me, for who I am.

[ 23 : 01 ] to quote the 1987 hit by the band White Snake, is this love? I have an answer to that question and it's no.

Not really. It's probably something closer to desire, possibly lust, but I don't think David Coverdale really cares what I think. And so I'll save the stamp.

I won't mail him a letter. I will propose to you, however, that the world and its false gospels have a different definition of what love is. This is probably the hardest of the three marks to discern and differentiate between a true Christian and someone that's outside of the church.

But the difference is the source or the motivation of the outward appearance of love. It's relatively easy to identify that on dating shows that love is usually selfishly motivated.

the contestants are looking for someone that will fit into their already scheduled program and it'll just add something that they think is currently missing. It doesn't require much, if any, change on their part.

[ 24 : 10 ] We've all heard something like this. Love should be easy. But think of it like this. If you're sitting down and eating dinner, you're probably, it's something with potatoes or rice, kind of bland, and it's fine, but it's just boring.

What are you doing? Audrey, if your food's bland, what do you do? Maybe a little ketchup?

Spicy, spicy ketchup? No. Maybe just salt shaker. Grab a little salt, throw that on there. Love is just additive. Many dating shows portray love like shaking a little salt on your bland dinner.

What are you going to do for me? The next example that I have is a little more subtle. We probably all know someone who isn't a believer but volunteers at some organization or serves their family well or just always goes out of their way to help people.

What makes that person different than a follower of Jesus? It's definitely not the action itself, but it's the heart or the motivation underneath that action.

[ 25 : 27 ] What are some of the possible motives for that kind of love? Could be that they're looking for affirmation from others. Could be trying to make your life count for something.

Could be trying to fit into a group of people by doing what they do. Like if your lacrosse team is cleaning up ditches, you might join them. Could be working to pay for or make amends for things that you've done in your past.

Maybe you've hurt others. Maybe you've made some poor life decisions and you're trying to make those right. That could be your motivation under there. I know there's a lot more, but even just thinking about these is hard because I still struggle with these things.

With wrong motives, with a heart that can be selfish, in thinking about what am I going to get out of this? If I'm being honest, I've even struggled with the first example too.

Even though I can watch others say cringy things on TV shows, I know that at least in some capacity, I fell into those wrong beliefs too. It's been maybe more years than I want to say, but when Sarah and I were dating earlier on, I for sure thought, what am I going to get out of this?

[ 26 : 43 ] How is Sarah going to make my life better? desire. That's not love. That's desire. And it's motivated by self-interests. That's not the love that Paul is talking about here.

Paul tells us the kind of love that outwardly marks people that are true members of the church. He gives us a definition in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

In verse 4, he says, love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude, it does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love that marks a Christian turns the direction and flow.

The world's definition of love flows towards me. Even though good things may happen at a result, at its core, it's selfish. Look at Paul's words.

[ 27 : 57 ] Do you see they don't point inwards, but rather outwards? The labor that Paul is talking about looks like working to turn that arrow from a worldly selfish and inward love to an outward and sacrificial and serving love.

life. Living a life that's consistent with the gospel of Jesus and honoring God is hard. For the Thessalonians, it was more difficult because the world they lived in subscribed to a different gospel.

We've seen some of the dynamics at play that they faced, and Paul is remembering just how hard it has been for the Thessalonians to walk in the good works that Jesus has prepared for them.

work of faith, labor of love, and steadfast hope. All three of these phrases help us see just how much effort it takes to remain committed to living as a Christian.

To be faithful that God will make good on his promises. To remain hopeful and live like these promises are already a reality without becoming discouraged. To live a life that's motivated by love, care, and concern for others and not of selfish ambition.

[ 29 : 15 ] Remembering and sharing in the labor and struggles that other believers go through helps us remain committed to our mission when we're struggling as well. It reminds us that it's hard for all of us, but by God's grace we can continue together relying on each other for support and encouragement.

Paul leaves no room doubting for doubting that these brothers and sisters are real believers participating in the true church. Notice the word no in verse 4.

He says, For we know brothers and sisters loved by God that he has chosen you. Paul's confidence in knowing that the people he's writing to in Thessalonica really are true and genuine believers and it's not confidence in people at all, but rather it's anchored in who God is and how God works out his plan of salvation.

It's confidence in them because God has chosen them and further that God loves them. If God is for us, who could be against us?

He goes on in verse 5 and 6 and shows us how the gospel is received by those who are brought to believe in God. How does Paul know that God has chosen them?

[ 30 : 37 ] This is another not visible sign. So he goes on in verse 5. He says, Because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full convictions.

That's a lot of ands. That's how I write a sentence. We see Paul describe just how God changes hearts and how imitation or works is a response to joyfully receiving the Holy Spirit.

They heard the gospel but not only heard the message, they also were able to comprehend what sort of true and transformative change that would make on their lives.

What happens to those who receive the gospel message in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full conviction? We see our sin for the first time. We feel the weight of it on us, crushing us.

We realize that there's nothing we can do to help ourselves. We see that not only ourselves but the world is not as it should be. That death and sin has distorted and touched all things.

[ 31 : 46 ] That all of these other gospels, these false gospels, are empty and worthless. We reach spiritual rock bottom. But then, because of the work of God, changing our hearts, we hear the good news, the gospel of Jesus.

That Jesus not only died to atone or cover over sin, but for your sin. That God is not some cold, distant, and far off entity, but he is the living and true God that has in love, mercifully spared you from the consequences of your own destructive choices and wants to be active in your life.

life. When something truly changes us, we change as well. The works that Paul sees as the marks of a true believer of the church are not the reason that they're members.

It's the response to the fact that they are members. Paul saw that because of this beautiful reception of the gospel message in the heart of the believers, the church's response was to become imitators of them, of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, but more importantly of Christ.

We'll look at verse five and six. Verse five says, You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake, and you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

[ 33 : 23 ] So they received the word in much affliction, but with joy. So I already laid out some of the dynamics that are in play that put the Christians at odds with both the Roman and the Jewish communities.

So now, if you have that ribbon, let's flip over and look at Acts chapter 17. And this is Luke's narrative recording Paul's first visit to Thessalonica, where he helped establish the church.

I think it'll help us see what sort of opposition they would meet as Christians in the city. So sometime after Paul and Silas arrived and set up the local church, things had reached a boiling point.



Verse five says, But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out of the crowd.

And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.

[ 34 : 31 ] And Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus. And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things.

And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. So what we see here is that the Jewish community is upset with the Christians, so they go ahead and get a few thugs to stir up a mob, and they get the rest of the city in an uproar by saying they're acting against the Roman government.

They said, These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. But who in this narrative is actually turning the world upside down?

Who formed a mob? Who set the city in an uproar? Who had taken hostages and dragged them in front of the city authorities? Who took money in exchange for these hostages?

Was it the church? No, it wasn't. It was the Jewish community. At least in this moment, they aren't following God. They're following their own emotions.

[ 35 : 41 ] They're serving their own jealousy. It's no different than the way of the Roman Empire. And so the Christians find themselves between these two groups, hated by both.

This is just some of the affliction that these early Christians faced. Let's remember that Paul says they received it with joy. The gospel message changes us, and it's most easy to see outwardly when your beliefs are challenged.

How will you respond to adversity? The Thessalonians saw the folly of the Roman gospel in comparison to the truth and beauty of the gospel of Jesus.

The true gospel changed them, and it wasn't work that secured their place in the church. They received the gospel with joy. Then the work that Paul identified happened.

As a result of receiving the gospel in word and power and spirit and full conviction. Because of that affliction that they received, paled in comparison to the worth of loving and serving Jesus.

[ 36 : 48 ] If we're truly members of the church, this will be our response as well. How does adversity of the church bring glory to God? verse 8.

For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

This is how Jesus is continuing to build his church. The gospel will continue to reach new ears and hearts through the church. church. The gospel will spread even through adversity.

Paul not only knows and loves this community, but he also gives thanks to God for them and keeps them in his prayers. Verse 2 says, We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.

Paul's thankful and undoubtedly encouraged by these brothers and sisters because he knows they are genuine believers and part of the true church. We should know that by now because he also brought receipts.

[ 37 : 59 ] That's what the cool people say these days. That's not me. This is the kind of encouragement that I'm sure that Paul needed to stay the course and continue to pour himself out by sharing the gospel everywhere he went, even imprisonment and death.

What kind of encouragement do you think that would have been to these brothers and sisters? What kind of encouragement would it be to know that someone that disciples you is praying for you and encouraged by you?

What kind of encouragement would it be when you pray for and encourage those that you are discipling right now? Praying for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is a way that we are individually connected to the rest of the church.

The very heart of a true Christian community is love. The primary thing that makes the gospel of Jesus different from the gospel of Rome is that the underlying motivation is love.

That's true love. Y'all, you and I look most like Christ when we love people the way Jesus did. Are we learning and growing in loving others like that?

[ 39 : 16 ] We are called to continue to share the gospel. It's the purpose of the church. But we do it out of this love and not under compulsion or fear like a subject of the Roman Empire.

We share the gospel out of an abundance of love and joy for what has been so richly provided for you already by the finished work of Christ. Can we pray?

Lord, we are so thankful for your plan of redemption. Lord, we see the brokenness in our lives.

We see the struggle, the wrestle that we have to maintain faith, hope, and love. It's not easy, Lord, but you supply grace.

Lord, I just pray that as we prepare our hearts for communion, that we would just take a moment of silence and just reflect upon your goodness and the grace that you've given to us and shown us through the giving of your Son through humility.

[ 40 : 39 ] Lord, we are just so thankful for you. We're thankful for your word to us. Lord, continue to just change hearts and spread your gospel.

Lord Jesus, we know you will continue to build your church. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen.