

Not One of Us

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Date: 10 November 2024

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[0 : 01] Mark chapter 9, verse 33. This is the word of God. They, that is Jesus and his disciples, came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, What were you arguing about on the road?

But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last and the servant of all.

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.

Teacher, said John, we saw a man driving out demons in your name, and we told him to stop because he was not one of us. Do not stop him, Jesus said.

No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me. For whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

[1 : 19] Amen. Amen. Well, thank you for your prayers for me. While I've been gone, it's good to be back home and in the pulpit again.

There is no place like home, and there is no people like you. I know I'm a bit prejudiced, but that's the way I feel, and I'm glad to be back. And I'm glad that we can resume our study of the book of Mark, Mark's account of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we're just going to dive right back in, in which we see the disciples of Jesus were having a bad week. And Mark doesn't hide it from us, does he?

Because there's much that we are to learn from their problems. And so, first of all, we've seen their impotence. They had no power to cast the demon out of the boy that was brought to them.

And Jesus says the reason was because they didn't pray. They didn't even have faith the size of a mustard seed. And their impotence was followed by their ignorance due to not believing all that Jesus had said to them.

[2 : 29] They couldn't bring themselves to believe that their Master and Messiah was going to be killed and rise again. And such impotence and ignorance should have left them humbled in the dust.

But no, instead we see their proud arrogance follows next. As they're caught arguing along the way as to who of them was the greatest.

Showing that their idea of greatness was worlds apart from true greatness in the kingdom of Christ. For just as Christ was telling them about himself stooping to die in order to save them, they can think of nothing but which of them would have the greatest rank in Christ's kingdom.

And so their Master patiently bore with them, rebuking, correcting them like a mother or father does their children when they are wrong.

Teaching them that the way up in his kingdom is down. That true greatness takes the lowest rank of a servant and to serve the least and the lowest.

[3 : 41] The lowest, like little children that that society deemed unimportant and had little time for. So what a week in the life of the twelve this was.

Do you ever have a bad day? Maybe even a bad week? A whole series and string of failures. Sometimes seeing failures in others enables us to see them in ourselves.

And just as we're beginning to point the finger at the twelve, the Spirit turns that finger and says, Thou art the man, thou art the woman. And we then get to profit from their failures as the Lord brings his word home to us.

Well, sadly, the string of failures continues this week in our text. But this time it's the Apostle John. And perhaps he's changing the subject.

Maybe it's because he's a bit embarrassed about the fact that they've all got caught arguing about who was the greatest. And so he says to Jesus, Teacher, verse 38, We saw a man driving out demons in your name, and we told him to stop because he was not one of us.

[5 : 04] Now it seems they were expecting Jesus to pat them on the back for what they did. And if so, they were in for a great surprise because Jesus does not pat them on the back, but once again has to correct them for doing the wrong thing.

So I have three points this morning. We see this man that they met. We see the twelve. And then we'll see the Master, our Lord himself. So let's look closer at this man that they saw.

This man had clearly done a good thing. He was casting out demons. Demons working for the chief enemy of Christ, Satan, ruining people's lives.

And this man was casting out these demons, just as Jesus had been doing, and as the apostles themselves had done when Jesus sent them out two by two.

John will tell us later in 1 John 3, 8, that the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. And this work of the devil takes many forms.

[6 : 12] And possessing these individuals was one of the worst of them. And this man was destroying the devil's works as he set people free from demons who were destroying their lives, taking them to hell.

He was doing a good work. He was doing Jesus' work. Furthermore, this man believed in Jesus, so much so that he was casting out demons in Jesus' name, trusting in Jesus' power, not just using his name as a magical incantation, a formula to maybe scare the demons out.

No, he believed in Jesus and in his power. He was not like those seven sons of Sceva in Ephesus. We read of in Acts chapter 19. Those seven sons of the Jew Sceva in Ephesus were not believers in Jesus. They were not preaching Christ, but they were using Jesus' name as a magical formula to drive out demons, hoping it would give them power over the demons and perhaps scare them.

So they were saying, these seven sons of Sceva, in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, we command you to come out. What? Well, this evil spirit and this man was not fooled, and he answered these seven brothers, Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?

[7 : 51] Who are you? Who are you to be commanding me? And then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

Now, that sort of thing doesn't go unnoticed, and we read all over Ephesus, the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. So unlike the seven sons of Sceva, just using Jesus' name, this man that John and the disciples met was a true believer in Jesus and called upon Jesus' name, trusting in his power and authority over demons, and God honored his faith.

And the evil spirits did not turn on him, did not overpower him, but were being mightily cast out by the Lord Jesus' power. Now, what was this man doing wrong?

Why did the disciples of Jesus tell him to stop? Well, just this, because he was not one of us. He wasn't one of us. He wasn't following with us. He wasn't in our group.

[9 : 09] A.T. Robertson comments, the man was doing the master's work in the master's name with the master's power, but did not run with the group of the twelve.

That's what was wrong. Now, it might have sounded like zeal for their master. After all, Jesus, we can't have unauthorized people out there doing our work.

You chose us twelve and gave us that business. But whatever they might have thought, Jesus was not pleased with the twelve, and instead of praising them, our Lord once again must rebuke them and does.

Verse 39 and 40. Do not stop him, Jesus said. No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us.

So that's the man casting out demons. Let's look secondly more closely at the response of these twelve disciples to this man and his work.

[10 : 11] There's a lot here. Let's drill down into the hearts of John and the other disciples. They all were in on it. It wasn't just John. Notice he says, we told him to stop.

They all said, quit it. Stop driving out demons. Well, what was wrong then with their treatment of this man who was casting out demons?

Well, overall we can say that it was just another outcropping of their arrogant pride. It was more of the same. They had just been caught arguing among themselves who was the greatest. Now, they're not arguing with each other about who's the greatest, but now they're arguing as a group for their exalted position of casting out demons and would look down their noses at anyone doing the same.

They're ganging up together. to feed their egos. We are the best. In other words, it's a narrow party spirit with arrogance feeding it.

[11 : 13] It wasn't that this man was sinning. It wasn't that he was lying. He was, he just wasn't one of us. This is the us four and no more syndrome. The us 12.

And they're guarding what they think is their turf, their little band of 12, their honor. Jesus gave us this authority to cast out demons, so you stop doing it because you're not one of us.

There's a saying attributed to the Dutch that if you ain't Dutch, you ain't much. Now, I've never heard a Dutchman say that.

Perhaps they think it. But I suppose we could all think that way about our own ethnic upbringing, about our people. If you're, if you're not Swiss German, you ain't much.

Well, that doesn't rhyme, but it's, it's the way we can feel about our people. That we, and I think there's a proper pride in our heritage and, but it goes to seed when it leads us to belittle and look down on others.

[12 : 27] You ain't much if you're not one of us, you see. And I believe that's at the heart of what we see here. An ugly, narrow tribalism that proudly exalts our tribe above all others in a way that demeans and diminishes any who are not one of us.

It's an ugly superiority complex seen everywhere in our world. It's the source of wars right now taking place in our world. It's, it's the source of genocide.

One ethnic group seeking to purge and wipe out another because they're not one of us, you see. It's behind many woes in our own nation by those stirring up racial prejudice.

You're not one of us. And sadly, as the 12 reveal, it's also found in Christianity. Yes, even in these who were chose to be the foundation with Christ the chief cornerstone but the foundation of his church on which would be built the church of Jesus Christ.

The religion followed by the humblest man who ever lived, Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man. So J.C. Ryle warns us that this exclusive party spirit is never far beneath the surface.

[13 : 44] This is what he says. Men of all branches of Christ's church are apt to think that no good can be done in the world unless it's done by their own party or denomination. And this arrogant party spirit says, if you don't believe every doctrine in our confession of faith exactly as we do, you just ain't much.

And if you don't do church just as we do, if you don't do missions just like we do, well, we certainly don't have anything to learn from you and have no interest in what you are doing.

And Jesus condemns this exclusive party spirit in the 12th. He wants it gone from their hearts and behavior. Now there could have very well been some wounded pride behind this as well.

Remember what has just happened. They're just coming off of a failure. What was their failure? What was their impotence? They were unable to do what? To cast the demon out of the boy.

And here's a man who's succeeding at what they were unable to do. He is casting them out and they are fleeing. It takes a humble man to rejoice in another man's successes.

[15 : 01] And especially in the very area that he is weak in, that he is failing in, to appreciate the strengths, the gifts, the accomplishments of another.

And the tendency of pride when it sees someone else succeeding where we're failing is to do what? Well, it's to criticize them. It's to find some point. Well, okay, sure.

That's okay what they're doing. But then notice what they're not doing. And to point out some point of where they're not just quite right in order to diminish the praise that's being heaped upon him.

Well, yes, he was casting out demons, all right, but he's not one of us and we told him to stop. So pride wants to pull others down that will make us look better or at least not look as bad because we're failing in that area.

But a humble man? Oh, he truly seeks the glory of Christ and so he rejoices wherever Christ is magnified and being glorified and is able to rejoice in the successes of others even when it outstrips ourselves and our results.

[16:16] Remember, love rejoices with the truth. It's the truth of Christ being proclaimed. We rejoice with it. Love rejoices with those who rejoice with their successes to see the name and glory of Christ advance.

If the twelve had been as eager to see Christ honored as they were to see themselves honored, they would have rejoiced that this man was contributing to the honor of Jesus' name by his work of casting out demons, but instead they're critical of him and shut him down.

So it's not only pride that would keep us from rejoicing in the success of others, it's also envy, envy of others' success because it makes our own failure look all the more humiliating.

It didn't take a mind reader to see that the religious leaders in Israel were envious of Christ and that's why they handed him over to be crucified. Pilate himself, the Roman governor, the pagan, said, I know that it's out of envy that the Jews have handed you over to me because these Jewish leaders, what did they see?

They saw Jesus feeding the multitudes, performing miracles, healing with a word, with a touch, doing things that they couldn't do and they were envious because the people were hearing him with interest and leaving their little teaching seminar to go listen to this preacher from Nazareth.

[17:49] It was out of envy. He wasn't one of us. He didn't grow up in our ranks. He didn't come through our schools. He didn't quote our rabbis. He's not like us.

He's not one of us and so they hated him as he outstripped them in gifts and abilities and eventually they killed him.

These were the religious leaders, the shepherds of the souls of the nation and they couldn't rejoice in seeing their hungry people fed, their disease healed, their guilty forgiven.

Envy, wounded pride would not allow them to rejoice. So here's the twelve, this foundation group for the church and yet they're so guarding their turf as apostles that they were hindering the work and the mission of Christ.

You know, just in a matter of months, Jesus was going to leave them. He was going to go back. He's going to die and rise again and go back to heaven and then who would do the work?

[18:53] Well, Jesus did not expect the twelve alone to be the ones who do the work but he expected the twelve to teach and train others who would be able to teach and preach the gospel and so on.

He was, his plan was that everyone would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses and to do his good works in the earth and here they are shutting down those that are not a part of their group.

Well, the Apostle Paul understood this problem and that's why when he heard of this party spirit developing in the church in Corinth, he fired off a letter to correct them.

Some were saying, we are of Paul, we are of Apollos, we are of Cephas, Peter, even some, we are of Christ and they're ever so zealous for their own party, their own favorites.

Rather than striving together for the gospel, they're striving against one another. And Paul says, all things are yours. Peter, Cephas, Paul, Christ, it's all yours if you're in Christ and here you are fighting with this tribal spirit.

[20:07] Such a spirit destroys the church. Such a spirit hinders the advance of the gospel in the world. And we might ask, we might well ask, John, Apostle John, is this really you, the apostle of love, doing this, telling this man to stop?

And we must answer, yes, this son of thunder still has a lot to learn as we see him thundering against a good man doing good work for Jesus just because he wasn't one of them.

So what about you? What about you? Can you rejoice in the good works done for Jesus Christ by someone else?

Can you rejoice in their gifts, their successes, their family, their possessions, their advancements, their favor, their influence? If not, there's probably pride or envy at the root of it.

So we've looked closer not only at the man but the twelve. Now let's look closer at the mind of Christ in his word of correction. The first thing he says is do not stop him.

[21:15] Do not. It's a negative command, isn't it? Don't do this anymore. Don't hinder or forbid others from doing good works for my name and honor.

But I trust we're learning from the Bible that wherever there's a stated negative, there's always an implied positive. Wherever there's the stated positive, there's always an implied negative.

So here's the negative. Don't stop him. Don't do anything to hinder him. Well, what's the implied positive? Rather, encourage him in the good work that he's doing for Christ in his kingdom. Rejoice with him. Give thanks for him and the work he's doing. Learn from him if you're humble enough to be taught by one who is not one of us.

Even if you don't agree with everything he's doing or the exact way that he's doing it, you don't have to agree with every single jot and tittle in order to rejoice and give thanks for good works being done for the Savior's name.

[22 : 22] Notice what else Jesus says in verse 39. Not only don't stop him, but no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me. This man, according to Jesus, was doing something good, not bad.

And he assures the 12 he's not about in the next breath to turn around and tear down what he's just been building up. He's been building up the kingdom of Christ. He's not about in the next breath to tear me down. So realize, he says, man, that if a miracle was done in my name, that's not his power.

That's God's power. God, the one who performs in him the good that he does for me. So would you refuse to praise God for what he's doing in the casting out of demons through that man?

He's just the instrument. God is the one doing the work. And so he is worthy of praise and that man is worthy of being encouraged.

God can use and does use all kinds of instruments, not just you, the little group that you are. So with every true conversion, any good work honoring Christ, be careful that you're not dismissing God's work because it's being done by churches different than ours.

[23 : 40] For whoever, he goes on to say, and here's the key of my message today, verse 40, for whoever is not against us is for us. Whoever is not against us is for us, Jesus says.

Brothers, this man is not against us. He's for us. In Mark 12, 30, Jesus will say, he who is not with me is against me.

So according to Jesus, there's just two sides in this cosmic fight or war of the ages. There's those who are against me and there's those who are for me.

And everyone that's breathing today fits into one of those categories. They're either against me or for me. You may not, you may know that you're lost, but perhaps you've never thought of yourself as against Jesus, the Son of God.

You may think, well, I'm just neutral in this battle. I'm one of those undecided voters. I really don't know which side I'm going to end up on. No, no. There is no neutral, middle class.

[24 : 51] There's only two groups. There's those against me and those for me. If you're not for Jesus, you're against him. And you need to hear that this morning. It's a humbling truth, but we must face it as our Lord says it.

You came into the world a sinner. We all did. Against Christ. He said, do this. We said, we won't if we don't want to. He said, don't do that. And we said, I will if I want to.

We were against him. We fought against him in his way, having the rule over our lives. We wanted to go our way. Every one of us came in against him.

We turned our back on him. And if you have not been converted, you have not confessed your sins and repudiated your past way of life and turned in faith to Jesus Christ, throwing yourself upon his mercy and his trusting in what he's done for sinners, then that means you're still against Christ this morning as you sit in church.

You're against him. You're not for him. Those who are for him are those who hear his voice and follow him, who put their trust in him and embrace his word as their marching orders for life.

[26 : 10] whoever is not against us is for us. Do you know that no one who is against Christ has ever won the fight?

He opposes the proud. He opposes those who are against him and not a one has ever won. And all who have thrown themselves upon the mercy of God and Jesus for what he's done for us sinners, not a one of them has ever lost.

To be for him, to be against him, it's an eternal divide. It's the division between heaven and hell. And if you find yourself against him this morning, know this.

Jesus in the gospel is saying, come to me. Come to me. Trust in me. Repudiate your past life. Throw yourself upon me to save you.

And you will become for me. And you will join this wonderful family, the family of God. And you can live the rest of your life knowing that God, not only are you for him, but he is for you.

[27 : 25] And if God be for you, who can be against you? So there's an important lesson for those who are against Christ. But there's also an important lesson here for us who are for Christ.

For believers, just like the 12 disciples who, whoever is not against us, if they're not in that group, they're for us. Oh, but they don't fit this and that.

If they're not against us, they're for us. And we need to hear that message as well. They were not operating under this idea that whoever is not with us in our little band here is not for us.

That's how they were operating, I should say. And Jesus says, you're wrong. Whoever's not against us is for us. And this man fit in that category. He wasn't against them. He's for us, man.

He's doing my work. He's on our side. And just because you don't know him, just because he's not one of the 12, he's still for us. So rather than a narrow-minded, arrogant spirit that tends to think that only our group is on Christ's side and treats others with contempt and suspicion, we need to realize that God has many who are for us who are not of this church.

[28 : 39] They are not in the Reformed Baptist network. They may not even be Reformed. They may not even be Baptists. But all of their faith for eternal life is found fully on Jesus Christ and what he's done for sinners.

His obedience, his death, as we heard in Sunday school. They're for us. They're for us. I'm not talking about those holding to heresy. I'm talking to those who have embraced the true gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

And so, J.C. Ryle hits the nail on the head and I need to repeat it this morning. Men of all branches of Christ's church are apt to think that no good can be done in the world unless it's done by their own party or denomination.

Jesus condemned this spirit and his disciples so we as a church must guard against it. We're not ignorant of Satan's devices. What does Satan want to do? Well, he wants these tribal spirits.

We are of Paul. We are of Apollos. We're of Cephas. That's what he wants because as we're fighting one another, guess who we're not fighting against? The real enemy goes untouched as he sits back in glee and watches the church self-destruct as they're competing with one another as if we were enemies.

[30 : 02] No, no. If they're not against us, they're for us. In this present world where we all know in part and we all see through a glass darkly, dimly, we do have our differences of beliefs and practices from other true churches, true believers in Jesus Christ.

So there may be much that we don't agree about but if we agree on the main things we can rejoice that they're for us. We might be fighting in different battalions of the army but we're all fighting for the same captain of our salvation.

we're all marching under the same banner of the cross and we're serving our common Lord, Jesus Christ and all fighting against the same enemy.

So since God's power and grace does not flow only within our church or our group of churches, we can and should rejoice in any works of the gospel that are destroying the works of the devil which is sin and bondage and lies wherever the gospel of Christ is being proclaimed.

Sinners being saved, saints being sanctified. Remember Paul and well, it was Matthew Henry who said, rejoice in whoever is preaching down sin and preaching up Christ.

[31 : 25] If you see sin being preached down and Christ being preached up, rejoice with them. Paul was in prison and he writes to the church at Philippi and he says, you know, there's some preachers around here who are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ out of envy and strife.

They're happy that I'm in prison so I can't be out there in the limelight preaching. Now they get a shine and they're out preaching just to make things difficult for me here in prison.

You know what Paul says? What does it matter? The thing that matters is that Christ is being preached and therefore I will, I rejoice and I will rejoice.

Christ is being, do they have rotten attitudes? Yes. Are they preaching Christ? I will rejoice. Now this does not mean that we should never disagree or even preach against erroneous doctrines but as someone has said rightly, criticism should not be our full-time job.

It shouldn't be that which we're preoccupied about. Yes, we need to point out error and even small differences. We can believe strongly in what we believe but we don't want as a church to be known for everything that we're against but not what we are for.

[32 : 43] Well, they're against this and this and this and this but I really don't hear much about what they're for. No, we are here to proclaim the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ and as we do hold up the true gospel, it ought to be showing the erroneous gospels that are being preached in our day.

But we have something too valuable to just preach about what we don't believe. We're called to preach the gospel and that means we must conduct what some have called a doctrinal triage. When a major disaster happens in an area and a hospital is overrun with patients being brought to them for care, they set up a triage center and someone there or several there have to decide who out of these hundred that have been brought to us need immediate care.

They all need care but who are right on the brink of life and death and we must get in first. There's an order of importance as to who should get the care.

We need to do the same with doctrine. Not all truths are of equal importance. Now it's true that all truth is important because it's God's word but it is an error to therefore say therefore all truths are things that we should live or die for.

[34 : 07] All truths are therefore of the utmost importance and we cannot call a man a brother if he doesn't agree with everything that we believe. There are some truths that without believing you'll go to hell.

If you don't believe that you're a sinner deserving God's wrath you'll go to hell. If you for some reason think I deserve to go to heaven you ain't going there because heaven is only for the undeserving and for those who acknowledge that and come and throw themselves on the mercy of God in Christ.

So there are truths. If you don't believe that Jesus is God and man like we've been hearing in the Sunday school 1 John tells us that you're not one of his. You deny the Trinity that God is one God in three persons.

I don't understand it either do I but we embrace it because it's taught everywhere in our Bibles. So those are hell and hell differences as to whether we believe them or not.

High on this triage of doctrine. But you know you can hold a different view of baptism than what we do and how much water should be put upon a person being baptized and still go to heaven.

[35 : 24] You can believe in a different form of government church government and still go to heaven. You can believe how all things are going to shake out in the end times differently than what we do and still go to heaven.

And here's the thing if we do not do triage with doctrine instead we reject everyone who does not agree with us on every single teaching or practice then we'll be guilty of this proud tribalism.

Rejecting others who are not with us do not agree with everything. Well that's a sad and pitiful position to hold. It's an ugly dishonor to Christ the head of his church and that's why he takes the time to correct his men the twelve and that's why Mark includes it in the Bible by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that this church might be warned against this tribal spirit.

It doesn't mean that we never teach as I said upon these lesser doctrines. We believe that believers are the only ones that should be baptized and we believe that they should be immersed and you'll see that next Sunday evening as we baptize five.

So I'm a Reformed Baptist and this is a Reformed Baptist church. We don't hide that. Indeed if you join this church you'll learn all about that. We believe the doctrines that were recovered during the Protestant Reformation.

[36 : 50] Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone and our final authority is the scripture alone. And so as Reformed we hold to Reformed theology which we believe is just a nickname for biblical Christianity what Christ and the apostles taught.

If we didn't believe that we wouldn't hold to it, right? So we are a Reformed Baptist church and we're Reformed in our theology. We're also Baptists as I said believing baptism is only for those who savingly repent and believe in Christ alone.

And we adhere to a Reformed Baptist confession of faith which I love as a summary of what the Bible teaches. Every church says we believe the Bible and they may deny that Jesus is God but we believe the Bible.

You see so it becomes an aid to us. Here here's 32 chapters of what we believe the Bible teaches and it helps you to know what do we believe the Bible says.

We belong to the Reformed Baptist Network a group of churches a growing group that's about 70 now fellowshipping cooperating to fulfill the great commission to the ends of the earth.

[38 : 00] And I love the good work that the network is doing in church planning and missions but I also know that other associations and networks and denominations are also doing good works for the kingdom of Christ.

Many of us profit from those ministries. They're preaching up Christ. They're preaching down sin. They're exalting the word of God. They're destroying the works of the devil.

And so we rejoice with them. For 30 years now I'm in a weekly Bible prayer meeting with two other men neither of which are Reformed Baptists. But you know something? We have found enough unity about what we believe the big things that even where our differences there are differences they're not made they're not in that top triage they're lesser things.

And so we have found that there's enough in Christ and the things we agree on to pray for one another to weep with one another to rejoice with one another to pray for the blessing of God upon our three different churches.

And so it's been a great blessing. We've seen God answer prayer. If we are in Christ we're a part of the biggest family in the world and it is a big family let's not shrink it down to our tribe but thank God that it is far bigger than just us.

[39 : 29] Sam, who's your father? David. David Hart? Ollie, who's your father? David Hart?

Well, if you both have the same father what does that make you two? Brothers. Ah. So you're supposed to love each other with a special love a brotherly love.

And it's the same in the body of Christ. If I belong to the father through faith in Jesus Christ and you belong to the father through faith in Jesus Christ well then that means we're brothers.

We're sisters in this great family. You'll notice we say brother and sister around here. We are. We are in the same family. Brothers and sisters. brothers and brotherly love this special love is a marker of all who are the true children of God.

It will be John who says this in 1 John 3.10. This is how we know who the children of God are.

Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

[40 : 45] So there we have it. Recently we heard the testimony of one who's to be baptized. A teenager I believe that's to be baptized next Sunday evening. And this is what they said.

I feel a new connection with people in the church through our shared redemption through Christ. And that's it. There is a new connection. We're now family. And when you meet a brother or sister in Christ out there in the world you immediately have that connection don't you?

There's something about the spirit of God in you that also dwells in them. The one spirit somehow in them and in you is bearing witness to each other. And you immediately they may be on the other side of the world and you immediately know I have something special with this person.

We are in the family of God. I was recently in a coffee shop meeting with a fellow believer from a different church and before we left we prayed together.

And as we got up to go one of the servers ran over to us and said I noticed you prayed and I just want to encourage you and thank God that you're not afraid to pray in public and I noticed from what she said that there were probably some lesser differences between what she believed and what I believe.

[42 : 03] She loved Jesus. She was for Jesus not against him and so we were enabled to have this sweet on the spot fellowship right there in the coffee house just for a minute but it was a taste of heaven.

So I want to apply this to us who are believers. Let me encourage you in this month of November to make a pointed effort to nurture relationships with other Christians outside of this church.

Maybe just one maybe two to pray for them better yet to pray with them to acknowledge them as brothers and sisters to give thanks for them to show appreciation to them for the good works that they are doing for Christ to encourage and even to listen and learn from them to meet and share fellowship with those you will share eternity with.

You know, Jesus Christ suffered and died shedding his blood to do what? To make us one body. He spilled his blood.

He suffered the wrath of God to make us one family from all nations and peoples and languages and tribes. To see us united in him is part of the reward for the suffering that he gave.

[43 : 24] So let's not deny him the reward. Let's gladly promote that reward and identify our brothers and sisters for what they are even though they not be in our little group.

Furthermore, Jesus says, I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

When you show kindness to someone because they are a brother, a sister in Christ, he takes notice and he says, what you do to them, I count as if you've done it to me. Those who refresh another child of God because he is a child of God will himself be refreshed.

So we've heard our Lord Jesus say, whoever is not against us is for us. Which side are you on, my friend? Have you enlisted in his army by repentance and faith?

Have you taken up your cross to die to that old self and to follow Jesus? If not, he counts you as his enemy and if his enemy, you must know that Jesus is the best of friends or the worst of enemies.

[44 : 37] Which is he? The best of friends to you or the worst of enemies? And if you're still his enemy, you also need to know that he is present in the preaching of his gospel and he's saying, come to me.

Come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. Grace Fellowship Church is just one leaf on God's family tree.

The Reformed Baptist Network is just one little twig on this big family tree. Let's thank the Lord for all of his people everywhere. Pray with me.

Lord Jesus, what your blood has purchased, not just one or two here and there, but millions, more than can be numbered, one day to, who in this life trusted in you and one day will gather around the throne, all singing the praises of the Lamb who was slain, to purchase us for God.

Thank you for this church. Thank you for every other gospel preaching church in this town and throughout the world. Bless their labors and give us to show our encouragement and prayers for them that we might demonstrate the fruit of Christ's suffering to reconcile us not just as individuals, but all of us as one body unto God.

[45 : 57] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. A new commandment I give you. Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another.

And by this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. Amen.