

Grace Teaches Us Godliness

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[0 : 00] Scripture reading tonight is in Colossians chapter 2. Wonderful to realize that as much as we long to worship our Lord, He longs to meet with us.

And He's not satisfied when we don't long for Him and don't love Him. And so He comes to us in His words, speaking His heart to us in Colossians chapter 2 and verses 6 through 15.

Colossians 2 and verse 6.

He took it away, nailing it to the cross.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. We are in the very heart of the book of Titus.

[2 : 19] So I'm going to turn the few pages to the right and you'll find Titus. Sort of in the theological, practical, very heart of Titus.

Titus in verses 11 through 14. And so if you understand how the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to live, you'll understand the whole book.

So Titus is a practical book. The churches in Crete were in a mess. There was a lot of unfinished business. Then they needed practical help to live godly lives in a very ungodly culture.

And so this book is relevant to us. They needed to figure out how to straighten out what was still a mess. I guess the first thing is we're all kind of like that, aren't we?

We're still works in progress. Even the best of us. We're still parts of us that are messy. And that's what the doctrine of progressive, ongoing, growing sanctification is all about.

[3 : 31] And so we're all rooms partially cleaned and hopefully going in the right direction. So there's that, I think, that bumper sticker that says, Be patient with me.

God isn't finished with me yet. And if it's not a bumper sticker, it should be. Because you need to be patient with me and I need to be patient with you. God is not finished working in our lives.

And Titus chapter 2, 11 through 14 is one of those key passages to understand how God trains us, teaches us to be like him, to be Christ-like.

So is this important? Yes, this is important. It's important to every Christian, to every blood-bought, spirit-filled saint, child of God.

We cannot be satisfied. And I'm sure each one of you can echo this. We are not satisfied with how far we've come. Our restless souls aren't going to be happy until Christ is completely and perfectly formed in us.

[4 : 38] And so our greatest grief, when we're in our right minds, our greatest grief is our sin. And no matter how many times we sing it, we still mean it.

When we sing, Let that grace now like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. I'm prone to leave the God I love.

We want to say no to ungodliness. We want to say yes to righteousness. We want to say no to worldly passions.

We want to say yes to self-control, upright, and godly lives. We want that because just as Paul said in Romans 6, we are not just freed from the slavery of sin.

He adds the positive. We have been enslaved to God and to righteousness. And now God and righteousness have become our master.

[5 : 37] And so on those occasions when we fall into sin, we get up and we go on serving God again. It's part of what God has done in our lives.

He's our master and we're his willing slaves. And so is this passage important? It is. It's important. We want to live godly lives in an ungodly culture.

Now, last time we looked at this passage, I had two points. The first is that grace, not law, trains us to be godly. And what I meant by that is not that there's no place for the law, but the law is our rule

of life.

It shows us what we should do. It's God's rightful demand and obligation upon our lives. And yet demand does not create desire necessarily.

It doesn't put it in my heart. It doesn't give me the strength to do it. That was the fundamental problem with the old covenant. And so Jeremiah, the Lord through Jeremiah says, I'm going to give a new covenant that's not like the old covenant.

[6 : 47] I'm going to take that law that was out here, and I'm going to write it in your hearts so that now you want to obey it. And so the man doesn't create desire.

Ralph Erskine was an old Scottish pastor. He was one of the Morrow men. And it's really too much to get into, but he stood up for the clear gospel.

In a time when it was downgrading, and men's hearts were growing cold, and the gospel was getting a bit confused. And he put it like this in a poem.

To run, to work, the law commands. The gospel gives me feet and hands. The one requires that I obey. The other does the power convey.

A rigid matter was the law, demanding brick, denying straw. But when with gospel tongue it sings, so when there's a gospel tongue into that law, it bids me fly and gives me wings.

[7 : 57] The gospel equips us to obey the very things that the law demands of us. That's what Paul is teaching here in this passage.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. And one of the things it does is it teaches us, it trains us, it disciplines us, it equips us to live godly lives.

To say no to some things and say yes to other things. And we're going to get to the no and the yes next time that we're in this book together. But the point is this, that simply saying do this, or do that, put off and put on, that's not enough.

That's pushing a baby out of the nest, a baby bird out of the nest, before it has its wings ready to fly. And so Paul talks about putting off and putting on.

That's very familiar language in Paul's sort of way of speaking. But he does it in this full context of the gospel of grace. And when we get the full context of the gospel, then it makes sense.

[9 : 08] And then we have the ability to put on and take off. And so when we're filled with Christ, we fly. We actually do put off and put on.

Now that was the first point. The second point last time was we can't separate Christ from grace, at least saving grace. And maybe that seemed a little weird, or a little of a strange thing to sort of, to insist on.

But the reason I was insisting on it is because I know from my own experience, I know just from thinking about this with people, is we all have this tendency to separate Christ and grace.

We all have the tendency to become and think like semi-Pelagians. And that's just a historical word. And you're probably saying, what's that? Pelagius was a fifth century theologian. He's from Britain. He was a famous opponent of Augustine, St. Augustine.

[10 : 14] And Pelagius said, we have a free will, and the things that we need to do, we can do. And to the degree that we are having trouble with that, God gives us grace to help us.

And he went so far as to say, some people don't even need that help. Some people do. And so, yeah, there's a place for grace, but what he reduced grace to was just a little strength that we could just live the Christian life.

So, Augustine had to write a book called The Grace of Christ. He had to say, you misunderstand what grace is.

You can't reduce grace to just God's help. Grace is not just a bit of divine strength that God gives us. That's to separate Christ from grace.

And there's no thing that God gives us apart from Jesus Christ. There's no saving thing, no gospel gift that he gives apart from Jesus Christ. And what I'm saying is, is that can so often be our problem.

[11 : 26] We just want a little help, but we lose sight of Jesus. We want a little strength so I can do it on my own, and I don't look to Jesus Christ.

I'm not exercising faith or dependence upon him in any way. We lose sight of him. And so, we want help thinking, well, I can still do it on my own, but we forget at the very heart of the gospel, the very heart of this message, is Jesus Christ himself, the God man, that as we read in Colossians, we've received fullness, but it's in him.

It's not fullness anywhere else. It's in him, in this person. And so, we think, I can do all the things if I just have a little bit of help, instead of, I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength. And I know that's a subtle difference, but it can make all the difference in the world, if you're looking to Jesus Christ, or if you're still just trying to do this on your own. And we took that from this passage, where it says, the grace of God that brings salvation, it's clear that that's nothing less than Jesus Christ coming in salvation.

There's those two appearances, the first appearance of grace, and the second appearing of Jesus Christ coming in glory. God doesn't give us some sort of bit, or particle, or force called grace.

[12:51] Through the Holy Spirit, he gives us Jesus himself, the Son of God himself. So Christ dwells in our hearts by the Spirit.

And that's the great ministry that the Holy Spirit has. He joins us spiritually to Jesus Christ. And so, we are joined to Christ's death, and his resurrection.

We are joined to him like a branch, to a vine. We don't just get mere help. We get the Son. He gives us Jesus.

And so we don't just get this little divine, to get us going. It's divine, God gives us his Son. He gives us the Son as our living bread. God is our fountain, as our treasure, as everything that we need.

And so, just as we've read, he is the fullness of God in the flesh, and we have received fullness in him. In him. Not apart from him.

[13:52] In him. And so there's no Christian life. There is no Christian life apart from Christ. Again, we read this in Colossians about, he was buried, we are buried.

He died. We died to our sin. He rose. We rise, and will rise. He's hidden now.

People don't see Christ for who he is. That's true of us. And when he appears in glory, we will also appear with him in glory. Our whole life is in the context, is in Jesus Christ.

There's no Christian life apart from the grace that is found in Christ. Now, that was verse 11. Now, today I want to just look into verse 12. And you can see it right there.

Titus 2.12. The grace of God that brings salvation. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

[14:57] Now, I have three big questions that I want to ask this verse, but we're only, tonight, we're only going to get to the very first one.

And the first question is, why? And let me tell you what I'm trying to get at. I'm trying to get at why. Why does grace teach us godliness?

What's the sort of logical connection? Why does gospel and godliness go together? We saw it back in chapter 2, verse 1. He said, you must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

He's saying, you have to teach the practical life that goes and fits with, that harmonizes with the gospel. So my question is, is why does the godly life go with the gospel message?

Why are they connected? Why do they always show up together? Why don't we have grace leading to ungodliness? That's how some people reason.

[16:00] That's not how the Bible reasons. And so my question is, is why? Why does grace teach us and train us unto holiness? Now, I'm sure there's lots of ways we could answer that question, but as I answer it, I want to just, I want to keep our eyes on who Jesus is.

I want to, I want to make sure that you don't take your eyes off of Christ himself, the person, the man, the God man. And that's what really I want to insist on, because he is the key.

He is the key. We've, we've taught you to look at the Bible through a simple lens of indicative and imperative.

Indicative just means this is the truth, and imperative means here's the command that comes out of the, of that truth. Here's the, here's the command. Here's the way to live that, that, that comes from that, that indicative, that truth.

And what I am saying is, Christ is the great indicative. Christ is the truth that comes to us.

[17:14] And because he is who he is, and he has done what he has done for us, and he, his ongoing life, the ongoing, everything that comes from the cross and the resurrection, because of who he is, that inevitably and always implies that we ourselves should live godly lives.

You can't divide grace, salvation, the benefits from Christ himself. You can't divide grace from Christ.

Who Christ is and what he has done demands holiness in our lives. He calls for it. Now, that kind of maybe gets to the heart of what I am saying is, it's a matter of living on, on the whole Christ, on all

that he is, and all that he has done, all that he is for us.

I take that term whole Christ. I take that term from another book by Sinclair Ferguson with the same title. And his argument in that book is, is a pretty simple one.

And he just says, the problem with legalists, the problem with people that try to make up rules and add to what Jesus has done, and the problem with antinomians, the problem with people who see no place for the law, who don't see any reason that we need to obey God's law, it's the same problem.

[18 : 47] And the problem is, is people are dividing what we get from Christ, from Christ himself. So, I'll take his forgiveness, but I won't take his person.

I'll take him as Savior, but I won't take him as Lord. I'll take his sacrifice for my sin. I'll gladly say, oh, he died for me, and oh, my sins are all washed away.

But I'm not going to take him in his ongoing reign and life as he is now. I'll take what he offers me, but I won't, I don't need him, himself.

And so, they say we are under grace, but they mean that in a way that says, I'm not under Christ. It's the same fault that the easy believers argue about, where they take him as Savior, but not as Lord.

And so again, what is happening is, they're separating what God gives us, from who Jesus Christ is. And once we realize you can't do that, holiness is the only and the inevitable response.

[20 : 01] If you are taking Jesus, you are trusting in him, you are living upon him, you're taking him for who he is, that will inevitably demand and work out holiness in your life.

And so, we can't separate him from what he gives us. And so, we have the whole Christ. He's the fullness of God in the flesh, and we have fullness in him.

And so, we don't have to obey in a legalistic way that says, in some way, that what Jesus Christ did wasn't enough for us. And on the other hand, we don't say, well, I'm going to go on sinning, so that grace might abound.

In either case, as if Jesus didn't save us from our sin. In either case, we're sort of, we're separating Jesus from what he offers us. And so, the answer to the why, why does grace train us to godliness, is because Christ is who he is.

He is who he is for us. He's done what he has done for us. And so, we really need to ask the question of, what do we have in Jesus Christ?

[21 : 14] When we've been savingly joined by the Holy Spirit, why does walking in the Spirit mean, and living according to the Spirit mean, well, it's going to mean holiness.

It's going to be obeying the law. It's going to mean obedience. Well, what do we have in Jesus Christ? And, so we just want to look at a few things.

The first is, and I'm totally aware, that this is not going to be comprehensive. If it was comprehensive, I would be talking about the whole Bible. But, this is just a flavor.

What do we have in Christ? Well, he's our king. And, Jesus Christ comes into our hearts, by the Spirit, as king. He doesn't come in any other way, than as the Messiah, as the king.

And, grace, grace comes to us, as he rules, in our lives. And, so you can read the Gospels. And, the Gospels, always call the, it's called the gospel of the kingdom of God.

[22 : 17] So, what Jesus, and what the apostles were proclaiming, was, now, God is coming, in this saving reign. He is a king, and he is coming, into people's hearts.

And, when God saves us, Christ comes as king, to our hearts. He takes over the rule. And, we have to ask the question, what king has no law? What, what kingdom has no, codes or regulations?

What kingdom has no, no expectations, no life, no, no way of living, no demand? But, here's the point. When Christ comes, it implies, that we have obligation, to obey him.

Just because he is who he is. But, here's the point. The law doesn't come to us, directly anymore. Just, in the written way, where it's just do this, or you die, and obey, and you'll live.

It comes to us, through, the nail torn hands, of our king. So, those same laws, now come to us, and Jesus, in Jesus' hands.

[23 : 29] And he says, do this, because I, I love you. I'm your king, and I'm not some sort of king, that lords it over his servants. I came as a sacrifice.

I'm the king, and so do this, because I love you. Romans 7 says, we died to the law, and were married to Christ, that we might serve, in the new way of the spirit, not in the old way, of the written code.

And so, why does grace teach you, to live a holy life? Because, when you have Christ, you have, a king. A king.

That's who he is. You can't have him, without having, him, as king. And so, his rule is your good. His law, is your blessing. So, the question is, is do you trust your king? Something that you need, to ask yourself, do you trust, your king?

[24 : 30] Good kings make laws, they just don't let, anarchy happen. And good kings, make good laws. And the citizens, are right, and wise, to trust him, and to obey them.

So, do you trust your king, then you'll obey his laws? But, it's more than that. One of the biggest reasons, that we sin, so, we're still talking about, Christ being our king.

One of the biggest reasons, that we sin, is because of fear, and distrust. You can see that, repeatedly, in the Bible. You don't trust the Lord.

You're afraid, he's not going to be enough. And out of fear, you sin, or out of fear, you take idols, or whatever. But, that's why, 365 times, the most common command, is, the Lord says, do not be afraid, do not fear.

Because, behind so much, of our sin, is this basic, distrust, this fear, that, God's not going to be enough, for me.

[25 : 34] The world, or the situation, or those people, out there, or even myself, or the sin, or Satan, or whatever, they're going to be, too much for me. But, who is Christ?

He's the king. He's the king of kings. He's the Lord, of lords. He rules over, and defends us. And the spirit, his ministry, is to testify, to our hearts, that Jesus, is the king.

I can trust him, to protect me. I can trust him, to provide for me. I can trust him, to guard me, and keep me. Because, he is strong, and there's nothing, too much for him.

And so, we weighed, into every spiritual battle. We weighed, onto every battle. Not all by ourselves, but with Christ, the king, with us.

He showed up, on the earth, as a king. And so, he commands, diseases, and they go. He commands, demons, and they leave. Remember, there was a legion, of them.

[26 : 40] So, 2,000, or whatever, in that one man, and Jesus commands them, with all one word, and they all flee. He's the king. He forgave sin. And it was forgiven.

He was the king. He is the king. And so, if Christ is our king, and if we have him, then fear gets its legs, swept right out, from underneath it, doesn't it?

And every temptation, that is based on fear, it loses its power, and now, I can obey. I can obey fearlessly, courageously, because, I have Christ.

So, I can't go on, in fearful unbelief. I can't go on, in fearful disobedience. And so, Christ is our king, and that encourages us, and that demands, from us, a holy life.

A courageous, obedient life. Now, who is Christ? He's our priest. He's our priest. So, think of an Old Testament priest.

[27 : 45] Jesus was the fulfillment, of every Old Testament priest. So, temptation is hard to deal with. It can bear us down. The world, sin, the devil, they can all be too much, and we would fall to pieces, under their great power.

But, Christ, is praying for us. That's not something, that he just did one time, for Peter. It's what he does, for us.

Christ is, presently, interceding for us. And his prayer, at least according to John 17, is sanctify them, Father. The prayer of our priest, in heaven, is make them holy.

Holy. This is what's on his heart. Our holiness. And so, this is encouraging, isn't it? Because, when we have Jesus Christ, we have one, who is in heaven, fighting for us, before the throne of God, for our holiness.

He sanctified himself, as a priest, for us. So, you can think of an Old Testament priest. What did it mean, to sanctify himself, to be ready to go?

[28 : 58] Well, he had to wash himself, he had to prepare himself. And that's what Jesus is saying. I've sanctified myself, to be a priest, for these people. I've made myself holy.

I've dedicated myself to God. And so, he is holy to the Lord. And so, if I have him, how can I be anything else?

If I have him praying for me, if I have him as my holy priest, then I, too, must pursue holiness. I, too, must dedicate myself to serve God.

And so, he comes as a great high priest, into my heart, by the Spirit. And more than that, he carries me, on his own heart. He opens the door.

He brings me, into the Holy of Holies. That's who he is. Then how can I do anything else, but seek a godly life? If I have him, if he's my salvation, if he's my fountain of life, then what else can I do?

[30 : 06] That's the only fitting response. And when I sin, who is praying for me then? Because, again, the temptation when we sin is to stay down.

To just say, I can't get up. I can't go to God. I have to stay away. And that further separates our heart from him. And it makes sinning all the more easy. It makes it easier.

But I have a, I have a, I have the Son of God. He's the King of Kings, and he's the priest of priests. He's praying for me. So I can get up.

His sacrifice is enough. So I can go on and fight. Because he is who he is for me. So who is Christ? He's our King. He's our priest. He's, he comes into our hearts as a Savior.

You see this in verse 14 of this, of chapter 2. Jesus Christ gave himself up, up himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

[31 : 10] So Christ, by the Spirit, dwells and he comes into our hearts. We accept him and receive him as our Savior. Our Savior from sin.

Not just the consequences of our sin, but from the sin itself. That's his purpose. That's his rule. That's why he died to rescue, to redeem, to buy out, to claim us from our sin.

And again, it's not just the consequences. That is true. Thank the Lord. And it's not just from the wrath of God. Praise God, it is that. But he died to buy us out of the power and out of the presence eventually, out of the clutches of all wickedness.

And so why does grace train us to holiness? Why does the gospel and godliness always go together? Why is there an indicative and that means there's always an imperative?

It's because Christ died to save us from wickedness. From the sin. From the sin itself. And so sin is a tyrant. It's a destroyer.

[32 : 17] We talked about this in Sunday school. It has never done anything good for anyone. It's a monster. It enslaves us all of our lives. And then it pays us with hell. It pays us with death and misery and ruin.

So sin separates us from the life of God. Sin brings down the curse of God on our own heads. Sin separates us from peace and joy and security.

You know this in your life. It cuts us off from happiness and joy. And so Jesus didn't die just to save us from the symptoms of sin.

He died to save us from the thing itself. From the disease. So that's a test to know if you're really saved.

Do you want to be just saved from hell? Is that good enough? Do you just want to be saved from a bad conscience? Is that enough?

[33 : 22] Well, Jesus is not offering such a small reduced salvation. He offers and he gives and he rescues. He came to save his people from their sins.

Not just the consequences but from their sins. From sin itself. And so Christ dwells in my heart by the Spirit as my Savior.

and as we believe that and as we feel that and all of its aspects yes from the consequences yes from the guilt but more than that Christ died to rescue me from this.

So how could I live in it any longer? And who's on my side? Again, there's this encouragement. Who is on my side?

Christ is on my side. He went to such lengths for my holiness that he shed his own blood for it. So now that I'm asking for it, now that I'm pursuing it, won't he be there to help me, to walk beside me, to pick me up, to encourage me on the way because this is who he is.

[34 : 32] And so by faith I take him as my Savior not just once but every day. Every day I get up and say thank you Lord that I have a Savior.

I have a king, I have a priest, I have a Savior. He's also our law keeper. We talked about this a little bit this morning. He's our law keeper.

Now is this mercy? Well we sing his rose from mine, what cause have I for dread? God's daunting law, Christ mastered in my stead.

Praise the Lord, God, the Lord Jesus is our law keeper. And so some people say, well see, if he kept the law, then I guess I don't have to.

I don't need to because he did it for me so I don't need to bother keeping the law. And again, I want you to see and I want you to think that is dividing who Christ is from what he has given us.

[35 : 41] That's dividing himself from his benefits because he doesn't come to us in grace. He doesn't come into our hearts and save us as anything less than the great law keeper.

And when we receive him, we're trusting in one who loved the law, who keeps the law, who obeys the law, who obeyed the law. He took it seriously. He didn't shirk it.

And so how could we do anything less? He was the Psalm 1 man who meditated on God's law day and night and now I won't. Or he's the Psalm 119 man who said the law is my delight and now I won't delight in it?

He was all in on obeying God's law. And so the question is, if that was how he thought, that's how he thinks, then how can two walk together if they are not in agreement?

If he's going to take law keeping and obeying seriously and pleasing the Father and doing what he says seriously, and I'm not going to, well, how can we walk together?

[36 : 53] Again, do you see the why? Do you see the why? It's because Christ is who he is. And when we're saved, we don't just get his benefits, some of his stuff, we get him.

So why grace and godliness go together? Because Christ and godliness go together. Because everything Christ is for us says to be godly. Everything Christ did for us says you should now be holy.

And the more we think this way, the more we take in Christ, the more, as Paul put it in Colossians 2, the more we're rooted and built up in him.

just as we received him, we receive him by faith, and now as we rooted into him and built up into him, the more we will bit by bit grow in godliness, not without effort, not just automatically or magically, but in our hearts as we accept and as we receive more and more of who Christ is and we believe it, the more we are going to strive, the more we are going to make every effort to be holy, because Christ is who Christ is, and so the more we live by faith on Christ, the one who's our king, our priest, our savior, our law keeper, the more that we believe he is that for us, the more we're going to see holiness as the only way I can live, it's the only option, and the more we actually will live that way.

well, we started with a question of why, and the answer is because Jesus Christ is the why, he's the why, he's the savior that God offers to every sinner, he's the savior that if you're a Christian, you've received, you've trusted in, you've been united to him, so the more you focus upon him, the more you live in faith upon him, the more you're going to see holiness is the way I need to live, it's what Jesus is doing in my life, it's what he died for, it's what he's living and praying for right now.

[39 : 10] So here's where I want to end, this is the Christ that God is offering to sinners, sinners. So do you need a strong king?

You say the world's too much, the devil's too much, my sin is too much, do you need a strong king? Jesus comes as the king of kings. Do you need someone to bring you to God?

A priest who can take you to the Lord? Who can offer a sacrifice, who offered a sacrifice, who can stand for you before God?

That's who Jesus Christ is. Are your sins too much for you? You say, you tell me to believe, you tell me to repent, but it's just too much.

I don't want to, I can't stop. I don't even know if I want to. My sin is too much. Jesus is the answer because he saves from sin.

[40 : 13] So is sin too strong for you? Jesus Christ saves from sin. Do you say, well, I can't keep the law, I can't live the Christian life, I can't do what I'm supposed to do.

And Jesus Christ is the law keeper to offer up a perfect righteousness in your place and then to help you live a godly life. Not because you have to win or earn your way to heaven.

We talked about that. Not because you have to pay off some debt. The debt is paid for. But he kept them all. He mastered God's law in your stead.

And that's who he is. And he can help you, empower you, and encourage you to do the very same thing. He's enough. That's the point.

He is enough. He's all you need. And so take him. Take him. Well, let's pray. Lord Jesus, we do again receive you by faith and all that you are as our king, as our priest, as our prophet, as our law

keeper, as our law giver.

[41 : 23] We receive all that you are and all that you have done for us. And we know that we then need to live a godly life, believing in Jesus Christ, striving with all of our strength, making every effort, but doing it in the strength of the Lord.

So please, for any discouraged person here, or any person that is getting wishy-washy about holiness, who's growing tired, who doesn't see the point, I pray, Holy Spirit, come and bring Jesus Christ, out of the shadows of their heart, out of the dimness or the confusion or whatever, bring Jesus Christ into the forefront of every mind, so that we can, by faith, see him, by faith, appreciate and adore and understand and rely upon him.

Do this work in our hearts so that we can live Christ-like lives. and for those who, in a way, say, excuse themselves and say, I can't ever live this life.

I can't do what you're saying. Lord, make it clear that that's why Jesus came. He's their Savior.

They're not their own saviors. So show them their need and show them their Savior and Jesus.

we pray that you would honor him amongst us. Honor him in my heart. Honor him in every heart.

We pray this, Father, for your son's sake.

[43 : 09] Amen.