

A Unified Life In the Gospel

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[0:00] Colossians 1 and verse 21. Not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

This is the gospel that you heard and has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness. The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

[1:35] To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy which so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not met me personally.

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Sometimes we have a hard time, a difficult time connecting the dots in our Christian life, don't we? We have a hard time figuring out how the different parts of our life fits together, our lives fit together. So that's why a while back in Sunday school we did a series on work in Sunday school. Because we have a hard time figuring out sometimes what Jesus has to do with what I do most of my waking hours at work.

[3:05] We don't want to live two or three different parallel lives where my work life and my spiritual life and my family life and my recreations, my life in my neighborhood.

We don't want a series of lives that are separate from one another. We want something whole where the gospel fits it all together.

We know, we have the sense as Christians that the gospel should be relevant and penetrating and affecting every part of my life.

And so I'm not having a life like this in one area and a life like something else in a different area. But the gospel is fitting it all together. We want that.

And I think the Holy Spirit helps us in our passage today. Paul has been talking about what Christ has done for us, for the Colossians.

[4:02] God, through Christ, has reconciled them. Through Christ's death, we were once alienated. Enemies in our minds because of our evil behavior, showing itself by our evil behavior.

And so our sins separated us from God, from life, from blessing. And like everything else, our lives began to disintegrate.

We talked something about that. When mankind fell, all of creation fell under a curse and all of creation fell out of harmony and started warring against each other.

And the same thing started to happen with us. We started to disintegrate. Disintegrate. And I mean that literally. We began to disintegrate.

We lost our center. We lost the thing that gave us unity. We lost our integration. We lost the thing that tied our lives together. And what Paul is saying is in this redemption that God has given us in

Jesus Christ, we are regaining.

[5:08] We have regained our center. We've regained the place where we're living under God's blessing. And so those who were estranged were brought back into the fold. We found our centers again.

Well, how did God do that? We saw this last week. He sent his son into the world. It's a very personal, hands-on action by God.

He sends his son into the world. His son became flesh. He stood in our shoes. He advocated for us as he stood beside us.

So you remember that passage where the woman is caught in adultery and Jesus is right beside her, speaking on her behalf.

Well, Jesus did that for us. He was right beside us. He was speaking on our behalf. And then he died to pay the penalty that was due our sin.

[6:09] And so now because of Christ's death, we are brought back to God. We are re-centered. Our lives begin to experience this wholeness, this integration that we had lost once, but now we're regaining it.

And so we're coming under the blessing of God. And now Paul, in the second half of verse 23, wants to reaffirm them.

He wants to gather the Colossians back and show them, you know what? This is for you. You need to hear this. And so we're going to be looking again at verse 23 in the second half.

And so in the second half of verse 23, Paul says, this is the gospel that you heard. This is the gospel that you heard. Now, whether there were other gospels floating about, that's no doubt true. But Paul wants to remind them that this is indeed the gospel that they heard. It had to do with Jesus Christ, had to do with them being reconciled by Christ's physical body through death back to God.

[7:08] And so this is where we see the first way that we begin to experience integration, where we begin to really live out our peace with God, where you start to gather the various strands of your life and start to live them as a whole.

So remember what you first heard. Now, Paul is reminding the Colossians that this gospel was something that was already told them. They had already heard it one time.

And now he's telling that to them again. This is a gospel they heard before. Now, the danger was, and I don't think they were falling yet, but the atmosphere that they lived in, the air that they breathe, would pull them apart.

He talks about in chapter 2, verse 5, it ends with how firm your faith in Christ is. And so I don't think they're already giving over, but this air, the air of Colossae, the different thoughts, the worldviews going on in Colossae, would pull them apart.

And so he wants to ground them again in what they've already heard. He wants to say, this is where the wholeness comes from. This is where the fullness comes from. See, life in Colossae was like life, it was like going through the line at a buffet.

[8:29] Okay, so next week we're going to have the fellowship luncheon. And you grab your plate, and you pile some of this on, and some of that on, and some of that on. And you look down at your plate, and it's a big mess at the end of the line.

Well, that was what life could be like in Colossae. You could take your plate and say, well, I want a little Judaism. I want a little some of those rules.

I'll take some Jesus too. And there's some philosophy, some thoughts. And then there's some mysticism. And you could take a little side of angels. And pretty soon you looked at your plate, and it was a mess.

It was piled high. Well, that's where the church in Colossae would be going if Paul doesn't stop them right here and now. And so they had come together in Christ, and now they were in danger of turning their lives back into that mess that is living without God, of disintegrating again, of losing their wholeness.

And so Paul says, remember, this is the gospel that you heard. You don't need something else besides Jesus. You just need to go deeper into Jesus. So look over at Colossians 2.6.

[9:42] He says this, So let me ask you, does it feel like your life is here, there, everywhere, where you're living parallel lives, where your work life doesn't seem to have any connection with your church life, and your church life doesn't seem to have any connection with your life at school, or your life in your family, or your life on your street?

Well, you need to remember that it's in Christ that all things hold together, that it's through Christ that we live life with God, that we experience and we find wholeness.

So if it feels like your life is here, there, and everywhere, can I encourage you, you don't need something else besides Jesus. What you need to do is to start asking some difficult, thought-provoking questions.

One of the reasons I think that we don't experience a more whole Christian life is we don't think about it nearly like we ought.

So we need to start asking ourselves questions like, what does the gospel have to do with my work, with my play, with my family, with my life in the neighborhood, in the city?

[11:08] And so ask yourself, how could Jesus, how does Jesus change this situation that I'm in? The fact that I am in him, and that I've been reconciled to God, and now I live a life of blessing under him.

So ask, how could Jesus change this situation? How is Jesus changing this situation? You might ask, what might Jesus be doing here?

If Jesus is the resurrected Savior who brings people back to God and blessing under him, how would that change what I should do? If that's what God is doing through Christ for this whole created world, what should that mean for me?

What should I be talking about? What should I be acting like? What do I need to say to these people? How should the hope of the gospel, the hope of the gospel, change the way I do this? So if you're living a scattered life, you need to go deeper into the gospel. You need to figure it out. You need to pray for clarity so that you can understand how the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ apply.

[12:25] And so in other words, you need to stay where you are, rooted, but go deeper. Get built up. So secondly, if you're going to live a life of wholeness, where you're not pulled in a hundred different directions, secondly, you need to see that the gospel is good news for everyone.

It's good news for everyone. It's of universal significance. And look at what Paul says there in the middle of verse, or in the end of 23.

This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. Now that phrase can be a real head scratcher.

People have tried to figure out what it could possibly mean because you want to say, Paul, how can you possibly mean that this gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven? First of all, you have the whole question of animals and plants and things like that.

That's one part of the question. But then you just have the more basic part of the question of, well, probably not even everyone in Colossae had heard the gospel. There were people in Colossae who had never heard of Jesus Christ.

[13:41] And then that leaves the question of, well, what about everyone else? What about people living in Africa and Asia and China and so on? How can Paul say this?

Well, there's been a few answers, a few explanations. Some say, well, what Paul is saying is, is now that the gospel has reached Rome, the center of the world, so to speak, well, now the gospel can be said to have reached the whole world.

The whole world knows about it. Others say, well, no, maybe not that. Maybe what he's saying is, is that there's been a few, now that several key gospel, important cities, gospel centers have been planted.

So there's a church in Athens, there's a church in Rome, there's a church in Corinth, there's a church in Jerusalem. Now we can say that the gospel is going to be going to the ends of the earth, the whole world.

There are other possibilities. that we could talk about. But I think the best answer is simply this. Paul is exaggerating to make an effect, to have an effect, to make his point.

[14:51] It's a hyperbole. So kids, sometimes, and maybe after church tonight, you're going to say, oh, I'm going to starve to death.

Well, why don't your parents just run and like, oh no, he's on the brink of death. Because you're literally not going to starve to death, are you? You're exaggerating. To make a point, you're saying, I'm really hungry.

Or you'll come home from school and you'll, I've got a ton of homework. And your parents don't look in your backpack and find 2,000 pounds worth of books in there. That's hyperbole.

And I think that's what Paul is doing here. The New Testament does this sometimes. It says, Jews from every nation under heaven were at Pentecost. Now, I'm not exactly sure what that could mean.

Is that literally true? But it's probably just saying, Jews from everywhere that you could think of, all over the place, were there. And so if Paul doesn't mean this literally, what does he mean?

[15 : 54] I think what he's saying is that the gospel is the gospel that is preached to every creature. It is the gospel that is of universal significance.

It's the universal answer to creation's need, to every person's need. It's the gospel, Paul could say, it's the gospel I preach wherever I go. So I find myself in different settings and I have the same gospel.

I find myself with philosophers and I can preach the gospel. And I find myself with rough and hard soldiers on a ship and I can preach the gospel to them.

The gospel is the answer for all of creation's need, to every person's need. It's a medicine for everyone. So if you have a stomach ache, what's a good medicine to take?

Can you think of one? So maybe Pepto-Bismol. You have a stomach ache, so you take some Pepto-Bismol. But if you've got cancer, Pepto-Bismol is just not going to do the trick.

[17 : 02] The gospel isn't a Pepto-Bismol. It's a medicine for every ailment. It's a medicine that fits every case. It's applicable to everyone.

And so parents, what do your children need? It's so hard to see them for what they actually need so much in the time. They need to hear about Jesus Christ and believe him.

They need to be reconciled to God just like you needed to be reconciled to God. And that only happens through Jesus Christ on the cross, dying on the cross for us.

And so you can go to work. Men, women, you're going to go to work tomorrow. And you're going to see all kinds of different people there. And you can go to work with all kinds of different people, with all kinds of different problems.

You're going to see educated and non-educated. You're going to see blue collar and white collar.

And you have the one answer. You have the gospel that's proclaimed to every creature.

[18 : 13] And you know, a philosophy is not going to cut it when you're talking to a non-educated, blue collar, salt of the earth kind of guy.

You're not going to be talking about some philosophy. And if you're talking to someone who is sunk in sin and addiction, a few good rules is not what they need.

It's not going to help them. Only the gospel will do. Only the gospel can save that blue collar, salt of the earth kind of guy. And only the gospel can save someone who's sunk in addiction to sin.

The gospel is the one answer to everyone. So we ask, how does this help? How do we, how does this help us find wholeness where the dots are connected?

Well, this helps us because this shows us that whatever situation we're in, and we're going to find ourselves in all sorts of situations with all kinds of different people, you have to see that the gospel is the answer for that need.

[19 : 18] In some way, in some facet, you have the answer. Paul says, I proclaim this to everyone. It's not just for religious people. The gospel is not just for religious people. It's not just for the non-religious.

It's for philosophers in Athens. It's for soldiers and Caesarea. And so I don't have to switch my medicine. I just need to think about how my medicine applies to this situation and to them.

And so that brings my life into some sort of wholeness where I'm not having to switch all the time. I know what I'm about and I'm beginning to understand more and more how the gospel fits in.

So I don't have to switch to my medicine. The one gospel is the one answer to the most fundamental need everyone faces. The people that you are going to face tomorrow need the gospel. They need the gospel.

So tomorrow you're going to be with people and they're going to be in front of you. So can you picture the people that you're going to run into tomorrow? There are going to be all kinds of different kinds of people.

[20 : 25] They're going to be really smart people and not so smart people. They're going to have their lives together and some of them are not going to have their lives together at all. Some of them are going to be hurting and some of them are going to be on the high of sin.

But the answer that they need is Jesus. It's him. It's him. So Jesus called people to him and we point people to him.

And so we aren't telling people to do something new. We're telling them to find life in him. We're not the good news. Our lives aren't the good news.

But Jesus Christ is and they can find life and blessing in God because of him. And so we're not putting a burden on their back. There's enough burdens out there.

We're not putting in you got to do this and you got to shape up and you got to you're giving them Jesus. They need good news. You found good news.

[21:32] You have good news. So how do you live a life reconciled to God integrated with this wholeness that we're talking about where you're not getting pulled in different directions where your brain isn't trying to figure out how to live in totally different realms.

Remember the gospel. That's the first. See that the gospel applies to everyone. That's the second. And now third, see yourself as a servant of the gospel.

That's how Paul ends this verse. Of which I, Paul, have become a servant. I think one of the most encouraging and inspiring and convicting things about Paul is that, you know, he always knew what he was about.

He was a man on a mission and nothing ever got him off that mission. He knew what he was about. He wasn't living a scattered life. He was living a life that was like an arrow and it was pointed and it was going somewhere and he knew where it was going.

He says, I'm a servant of the gospel. This good news is not only something that you remember for yourself, it's not only something that you see for other people, it's thirdly, something that you actually serve.

[22:49] You serve the interest of the gospel. And so Paul says, this good news isn't just something I rejoice in. Obviously, he rejoiced in the gospel. He not only said, this is the gospel that needs to be proclaimed, that is proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

He says, I live for it. And now, the question is, and the possible objection might be, well, Paul is an apostle.

He's a missionary. He's obviously a servant of the gospel. I'm none of those things. So, does this really apply?

Does this really apply to me? Should I think of myself as a servant? Maybe pastors? Maybe missionaries? Maybe evangelists? But what about me?

Should you see yourself as a servant of the gospel? A servant of the gospel? Or was this just for him? Just for a few other people? My answer is yes.

[23:55] You should see yourself as a servant of the gospel too. If you're a Christian, you should see yourself as a servant of the gospel too. Why?

Why? Let me just give you three reasons. One, the gospel is the gospel of the kingdom. You have been brought into the kingdom. And if you're going to serve the kingdom, you will, by necessity, be serving, have to serve, the gospel.

There's no separation. If we're going to be servants of the king, that means we need to be the servants of the gospel. Two, the gospel is the gospel of the glory of Jesus.

Paul tells us that in 2 Corinthians. The gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ. If we're going to live for the glory of Christ, we have to live for the gospel, for the spread of the gospel.

We have to live so other people can hear and believe the gospel for themselves. People don't glorify Jesus apart from the gospel.

[25:08] So if you live this really great life, but you don't tell anyone about Jesus, they don't glorify Jesus. And if you say, well, I'm doing it for Jesus' sake, but they never come to believe in Jesus, then they don't glorify Jesus.

If we care about the glory of Jesus, we have to care about the spread of the gospel. Paul wanted people to hear the gospel and believe the gospel.

His first big reason was because he loved Jesus. He loved Jesus. He wanted Jesus to be famous. He wanted people to look on Jesus with new eyes, eyes of love and eyes of worship and adoration. And that was only going to happen if they believed the gospel for themselves. And so he served the gospel. Three, to join the church is to join those who are sent into the world with the gospel.

To join the church means that you join yourself to the group of people who are sent into the world with the gospel. people. Now, again and again in the book of John, and I would encourage you

sometime to read this, this is a good assignment, skim through, look through the book of John and look how many times Jesus talks about, I'm sent, I'm here, the Father sent me, I didn't come on my own, the Father sent me, I'm from the Father, I'm from heaven.

[26:37] Jesus says, the Father has sent me. Jesus himself was on a mission. He was sent, he was sent into the world and so he went right into where people lived and he went to where people were and he got next to them and talked to them and got next to their lives and spoke one-on-one with them and he met them where they lived and he met them with salvation even in the midst of their sin and he did it to save them.

But in John chapter 20 after the resurrection and this is sort of John's version of the Great Commission, Jesus says, just as the Father has sent me, so I send you. He's handing the baton off, so to speak, to the disciples, to the church. Father has sent me and now I am sending you. Just as the Father sent me, so I am sending you.

Just the way that I came, you have to go. And so when you join the church, you become a servant of the gospel. You get sent too. Now some people were sent in all sorts of different ways.

I'm not saying we're all missionaries or something like that. Some are sent directly, some more indirectly, but all together we are a city on the hill. And you yourselves are a light in the places of where you live in your neighborhood in your communities.

[28:04] You have access to people with a gospel that I will never have access to that no one else will have access to. You have been sent there. God is sovereign and his sovereignty has put you there.

And so when you have joined the church, you get sent too. You get called to serve the gospel. And we don't get a chance to decide if we're going to go or not. We don't get a chance if we're going to live in this world.

Jesus says, God sent me in the same way I'm sending you. This is not something you choose. This is something that you obey. And so are you in Christ's kingdom?

Do you care about Christ's glory? Are you a part of the church? Then you are a servant of the gospel. And so the question is, have you seen that?

Are you living that way? Is that part of your identity that you carry along with you? And you should ask, am I being a good servant?

[29:07] Or not? So if you want to live an integrated, a single, a whole life where you're united with God, you're living under his blessing, and your life is making sense with that, this is where it happens.

Not only, it doesn't happen just remembering the gospel for yourself. It doesn't happen just seeing that the gospel applies to other people. The rubber actually meets the road when you translate that into action.

You have to go from that to actually serving the gospel. And so we need to think about that practically. What does that look like? What did it look like in Paul's life?

What did it look like in Jesus' life to be a servant for the gospel's sake? I think the first thing, and let's just say, what would that look like? What does serving the gospel look like?

I think the first thing that we say is that serving the gospel begins with believing on it for yourself, living on it for yourself. So let's go to a castle.

[30:19] Let's go over to England, and there's the queen in the castle, and I don't know if this is actually how it works, but for the sake of illustration, we're going to use it this way. There is a servant in the castle. There's a servant in the castle.

Now, this servant, does that servant get to live off the wealth of the queen, of the king? Yes. So if this servant is living in the castle with the king, then he gets his food from the king, he gets his clothes from the king, he doesn't have to pay for these clothes himself, they are provided, so the king provides for her clothes, her food, her housing.

Now, if you're serving the gospel, you get to live in the goodness of the gospel yourself. You get to enjoy it. There's a principle even for pastors, if you live off the gospel, the gospel should provide for you.

Well, that's true in a sense for everyone. The gospel that you give to others is a gospel that you get to live on for yourself. And so if you're serving the gospel, you aren't a servant that has to worry about where her or his next meal is coming from.

You've been loved. You have been cared for. You have been provided for. The gospel has met your needs. The gospel of Jesus Christ has brought you to God.

[31:41] And you get to live in that. You are secure in him. You're secure in him. And I think one reason we struggle with evangelism and serving the gospel is that we don't have the assurance of salvation.

We're so worried that our house might catch on fire at any moment. We don't leave our house to go to our neighbor's house, which is on fire. Because we're so worried, is this going to happen to me? We're so worried that we might be lost that we don't have the spiritual energy and the joy to go and seek the people that are lost. We aren't resting in our salvation so we can't work for others.

And so if you're a servant of the gospel, you can start living in it. That's where serving the gospel begins, enjoying it for yourself. Your house isn't going to burn down. You're safe in Jesus Christ, but your neighbor's house is on fire.

So what are you going to do? And secondly, what would it look like to be a servant of the gospel? Well, just very obvious.

[32:57] It means putting the gospel in the controlling position in your life. If Paul was a servant of the gospel, what is he saying is his master?

Driving him, ordering him, compelling him, moving him. It was the gospel. gospel. And that meant he put his desires and his preferences and his privileges below the gospel, below the spread of the gospel.

And do you want to live a life like Paul lived, where it was all pointed, it was whole, it was going somewhere, it wasn't going in a hundred different directions? Well, it begins by putting your desires under the gospel's desires of living for it instead of for yourself.

You have to become like Paul. We have to become like Paul. He said this, though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

What's his goal? To win as many as possible. To the Jews, I become like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I become like one under the law so as to win those under the law.

[34:15] To those not having the law, I become like one not having the law. To the weak, I become weak to win the weak. I become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some.

I do this all for the sake of the gospel that I might share, have a share of its blessings. Do you see what Paul's about?

He wasn't about his privileges and his rights and his preferences. He was about winning the people, winning people for the gospel. And so you might prefer, it might be easier not to meet your neighbors, not to say anything to anyone, to keep your money for yourself.

You might prefer to live a certain way, have a certain life, getting out and meeting people, being brave and crossing the line, facing down the fear, living an outward life.

those things are all very uncomfortable. And that's not natural for us. That's not anyone's preference. But since when is a servant being asked what his preference is?

[35:31] Paul had given up that. And so maybe one reason we struggle with evangelism so much is simply that we don't realize that the gospel is the master and we are the servants.

and maybe one reason we struggle with evangelism is because we put our privileges, our privileges, my privileges, my preferences for what I want to do, how I want to spend my money, what I want to do with my time, what I want to do, what I find comfortable, we hold too tightly to what we want, what we prefer, instead of actually letting go of these things for the gospel's sake.

And Paul let it go. He found purpose and unity and wholeness as he said, I'm a slave to everyone. I'll live however I have to. I'll do whatever I need to do so that by all possible means I might save some. Paul didn't hang on to his privileges and preferences.

He wanted something better. He wanted to win people to Jesus. He wanted to be able to present people to Jesus who now love and adore him.

[36:49] So Paul had the right to get paid for his work, but he said we do not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. You see how broad and expansive Paul is being.

We'll put up with anything for the gospel's sake. And so who was the master for Paul? Money or the gospel? It was the gospel. And so you could look into your checkbook.

Who's the master? Who's the servant? Well, what else does being a servant of the gospel look like? Well, it means that you join every part of your life to the gospel.

You put every part of your life under the gospel, under the drive to win people, to meet people. And so are you working outside of your home? That's a lot of you. You have jobs outside of your home. You have jobs in a secular world. Now, how do you live in such a way that the gospel fits in with that? That you're not living these two separate lives. Paul in Titus 2 says, teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything.

[37:54] Why? To try to please them. Not to talk back to them and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted. Why? So that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

Good work, honesty at work, ethical behavior at work, working hard at work, not just for your sake, but because that makes the gospel attractive.

So can you work hard and do it for the gospel sake? Paul says, yes. So you have a job. Use your job for the gospel. The way you work should make the gospel of God our Savior attractive.

And that means that they should, they need to know, they need to know that you are a Christian.

They need to know that the reason you are working that way is because of what Jesus has done for you.

And if so, if you do a good job and you don't tell people about Jesus, you might as well go down to the trophy store and buy a trophy and put your name on it. Because it doesn't do Jesus any honor if you're just silent about your testimony.

[39:06] So do you have a home? Do you have a neighborhood? Well, do you have a place in your society, on your little street, in your school? Well, be a servant of God and the gospel in those places.

See yourself as a servant in those places. So let me challenge you this week. Cross your fence. Cross your street. Meet your neighbor.

Bring them some cookies. Learn their names. Serve them in some way. Do it this week. Why? For Jesus' sake. For the gospel's sake. These are just baby steps. So you have a home.

Use it for the gospel. Use it for the gospel. You have a grill in a front yard. Use it for the gospel. Don't live on an isolated island.

Don't live an inward life. A city on the hill does not shine for itself. It shines for those who are outside of it. So invite some people in that you normally wouldn't ever invite in.

[40:09] Invite them in. Watch a movie. Eat popcorn. Play a game. Watch a game. Get to know them. And you can do it this week. And why? Why should you go out?

Well one good reason is that Jesus came into our neighborhood. And he crossed the street to come to us. And he served us. And he stood beside us and became our friend to bring us back to God. He didn't do it from far away. He didn't do it from across the street. He did it walking the streets with people. So being a servant means you cross the street.

You take the step. You go the extra mile. We can't wait for them to come to us. I wonder who are we asking to be the servants?

Are we asking them who have no life? Who have no hope? Who are spiritually dead and have no spiritual resources? Are we asking them to come to us?

[41:19] And to come on our terms? And step up for us? Are we waiting for them to come to us? Brothers and sisters, it's us. It's Christ who is in us.

The spirit of God is in us. We have life. We have resources that they can't even possibly imagine. And so Jesus calls us to join him in what he's doing in the gospel, to join him in serving.

He's not telling us to do anything that he himself didn't do. And so do you want a whole life, a life where all the parts go together? Then join Jesus in the gospel.

So my question is, is this week going to be different because of the gospel, because of what Jesus did for you?

Are you going to serve him this week? It starts tomorrow morning. It starts tomorrow morning at Monday morning. That's when it begins.

[42:19] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that when we were in no condition to come to you, you came to us and your son, you sought us and you saved us, not from afar, but in your son.

So I pray that we would find courage and grace, not only to look our failures in the face and ask for forgiveness, but then to find hope that we, because of who Jesus is, because of what we have in

him, we can begin to live a different life.

We can continue to live a new life. We can take further steps. And for those who are walking in these things, encourage them.

For those who need to be taking the first steps, let's please encourage them. Please overwhelm them with the humility of Jesus Christ and the way he served them.

And I pray that you would cause us to be servants of the gospel, always ready, in season and out of season, to say why we have hope, why we're different.

[43:41] Help us to live lives that would beg for that question to be asked. Pray that you would work in us and you would work for us. And we ask these things in Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.