

Through The Weekly Church Gathering

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Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. How y'all doing? Good. A little soggy? Good? Dry? Nice? Yeah. It's good to be together. Glad you're here with us.

If those of you who are listening online, you may have made the better choice today. Just kidding. We miss you. Wish you could be here. And those of you who are new, man, we are so glad you are with us today.

And we are, like Bear said, continuing in our short series called The Way, which is the Way, meaning a path, meaning following Jesus. And what we're talking about is we're following Jesus. We're following him into these specific environments and places where we could see him, behold him, to become more like him. Like we don't follow Jesus to do anything else. The goal is to become like Jesus.

So last week we looked at this place where we behold Jesus and become impacted by Jesus and are formed more into his image. And that place is called Solitude. It's that kind of daily alone time with him.

[0 : 58] And I just want to say I realize that was a very long sermon. Many of you were gracious enough to tell me that, but thank you. The good news is today is a much shorter sermon.

And all the kids ministry volunteers are saying amen and hallelujah to that right now. So today we're not looking at Solitude. We're looking at the weekly church gathering.

Probably you couldn't get a bigger gap between size in that, right? And when we talk about weekly church gathering, we're talking about this right here, what we're doing today. And you would probably agree with me if you've been going to church for a long time, been a Christian for a long time.

It's probably one of the ways that we follow Jesus most often. Most Christians do this. We go to church on Sundays. But I also want to step back and say, man, that's not true for everyone. Maybe this is your first time in church and you're just checking out Christianity. We are glad that you are here and I hope from today that you get a good, robust theology of what this weekly gathering is all about and how beautiful and wonderful it is.

[2 : 02] And for those of us who may be in the camp of like, oh, I do this because I guess I have to, I really don't want to. I really like the solitude with Jesus. I really like the time with friends with Jesus, the small group stuff.

Can I just like do that stuff but not come to this as much? And I would say, well, the Bible explicitly says in Hebrews 10, 25, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

And so you look at that and, you know, I've heard people interpret that to mean, oh, it just says meet together, right? And they connect that to another verse where Jesus says we're two and three are gathered in my name. There I am also.

And they're just like sweet. So it doesn't matter how much or how little. We can just anytime, anywhere show up and just be the church and be a church. And I get that. And there's some truth to that. But actually what this verse is saying is very different because the word meet together there, the use for meet together, it's a Greek word.

And that Greek word means more than just gather. It means a full collection, a full accounting of.

And so you have to realize that that Hebrews letter is written to a church struggling.

[3 : 12] There's disciples in there that are struggling to keep the faith. And some of the evidence of that struggle is that some have abandoned regularly participating in that church's full weekly assembly and full collection.

And so, and that was true then. It's a struggle back then. It's always been a struggle, right? Even today, if the guys that track these, these clever guys that track these statistics about church attendance and evangelicalism, they say, man, the trend for a long time now has been this move away from regular weekly attendance.

And the kind of the growing number is like, they call them two by fours. See people that show up, you know, every, every four weeks they're there twice or there's one by fours. And so those are the big demographic growing, attendance growing pieces in the American church.

And which probably means that really what this points to most likely, I want to be generous, is that more and more Christians just are having either little or very poor theology of the weekly church gathering.

Really, that's what it is. And so instead of, I want to just put this to us, instead of trying to figure out how little we need to attend the full gathering or to just push it out altogether, we should understand why God says it's so important.

[4 : 25] And I just want to say this. You can still go to heaven and have poor church attendance, okay? That is not going to earn you a place in heaven. So I want to say from the get-go, like, that isn't the argument we're having here.

We are not talking about salvation. We are talking about becoming more like Jesus. That's what this series is about. And so the weekly Sunday gathering has to be, for if you're a follower of Jesus, intending to become more like Jesus, want to be transformed more like him, that weekly Sunday gathering, it doesn't have to be Sundays, I guess, but that weekly church gathering has to be a regular rhythm for us.

It can't just be the solitude thing. In fact, I would say, like, man, both are so important because both feed into each other. A healthy diet of being with Jesus in solitude, you know, having your quiet times during the week, that's going to only increase and should only increase your desire for the weekly church gathering.

And then the reason for this is that when you spend time with Jesus, you can't help but ending up loving what he loves, right? And Jesus loves us. He died for us. He wants a personal relationship with us.

But that's not all. Jesus died to create a connected, loving family, not just individual disciples, okay? And nothing expresses this more clearly than in Ephesians 2, verses 13 to 19, it says this, but now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

[5 : 49] For he himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.

And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and he preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

For through him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father. Father, so then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

And we see this beautiful truth that Paul is holding out to the Ephesian church and the Ephesian believers, right? Both individually but corporately, talks about them being far away, but being brought near to the blood of Jesus.

They were once separated from God and separated from his people, not part of his people, but in Jesus's broken body, a sacrifice for them, they are brought together now. They are united in him.

[6 : 55] And so like that, we are, and it says, it goes on to say, we are fellow citizens. We are saints. We are members of God's household. This is a beautiful picture of thinking of the church and the weekly gathering and being a part of a local church.

It's like being a part of a household, being a part of God's household. And hopefully that's helpful for some of us, but I'm sure for some of us, that's not helpful. It could be a struggle because we all grow up in different types of families, right?

Some of us grow up in great, connected, wonderful, loving families. Other of us have grown up in dysfunctional, disconnected families where, you know, you didn't enjoy spending time together.

There wasn't a lot of quality time and attention given.

And that's tough because what that does, it doesn't disciple you towards valuing household time. It actually, it pushes you towards independence.

You, that may have been not, it may not have been natural for you in the family of origin you grew up in to have time together because that time just wasn't peaceful. It was just like, man, we, there's a good reason that we stay in our rooms because when we get together, it always ends up in yelling and screaming and arguments.

[8 : 01] And you know what, man, I'm just not going to do that. And so that experience can grow us as we grow up in that experience. It can really shape us in an unhelpful way.

But in God's family, that's not what it's meant to be. We come together and there isn't, there isn't like lack of peace. There actually should be abundance of peace.

God brings us together through peace, not that we make, but that Jesus has made for us. We are, we are saved. We are baptized into that peace. We are upheld in that peace by our unity with Christ that brings us together.

Okay. So that means there isn't a different version of Christianity, of Christian fellowship that is, that looks like me, myself, and Jesus. Right. Man, sometimes we'd really like it to just be that, but it's not.

And we get to be a part of this amazing household. And what I'm holding out to you, God says, like, this is actually part of the good news of being saved. This isn't bad news. It's good news.

[9 : 00] But often, man, the way the big assembly, the weekly church gathering, the way it's been practiced and the way you may have experienced it over the years, we might walk away this perception of thinking like, man, man, Jesse, man, the stuff I've been a part of, that hasn't been good news.

It's actually been bad news. And maybe that's because, man, over the, what can happen is we can drift into some healthy things as churches. We can move from what's supposed to be to what it isn't supposed to be.

We can move from like coming to, drifting from worship, right? We're supposed to come to worship God and praise him. And that can easily just become about entertainment, right? We get a slick band, a slick sound, good lighting, all that stuff.

So we can drift from worship to entertainment. We can, we can come to hear an inspired message that hypes us up as we get out there, or we can come to be challenged and changed. We can come to consume rather than to serve, right?

And on all these ways, we can drift from a healthy version of church that God intended to be, to be a very unhealthy version of church that God hadn't, he hadn't purposed for at all. And when we buy into that version of church, that's consumeristic, that's about me, of being inspired and hyped up and entertain me and all that stuff.

[10 : 11] When we buy into that, it's, it's easy to walk away from because friends, if we are trying to compete with the entertainment quality out in the world, we're going to lose every time.

Okay. We just will. If we are trying to, to just be inspirational, hype it up kind of people, man, nobody at, in the end, people are just going to walk away.

And we are not going to create a great consumer product because our whole society is built on consumption and making you consumers. And it is very, very good at it.

That is not God's household. And when we buy into that, man, it just degrades what church is meant to be. And it's not how God designed it to be. But here's the thing.

One of the greatest expressions, what church is supposed to be, one of the greatest expressions of God's grace that makes church so powerful that should, should be coming and pulling us back in for every single Sunday, uh, requires something from every single one of us that come.

[11 : 13] And that's this, when we come together for the weekly church gathering, we are supposed to bring our best. Okay. Not dress your best. I'm not talking about, oh, we got, you better come suiting it and booting it next time.

It's like, that's not what I'm talking about. Bring your best, bring what God's given you. Okay. That's what it's talking about. This is where we have to step back.

Maybe we have this misunderstanding of church and we have to enlarge understanding of church, but also enlarge our understanding of God's grace towards us. We often narrow it and kind of compartmentalizing it into our sins being washed away, being made a new creation, being justified, being adopted, being given this promise of this amazing inheritance, uh, that we will one day step into for eternity.

And I want to say yes and amen. That is a beautiful picture of God's grace. I'm not saying that's not it, but I'm saying there's even more. There's even more. He gives us even more grace. That word for grace, right? It's all throughout the New Testament and it talks about God's grace all the time. Uh, that word for grace throughout the New Testament is this word, this Greek word, charis, right?

[12 : 19] Which is always connected with God and his salvation, but often refers to his disposition towards those who he has saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

And, and that word, when it talks about God's grace, it talks about his favor, his loving kindness, his goodwill, his work towards you, his delight towards you, the things he has done for you.

That's his grace. That's working for us and working in us and working through us. And, and we live in that, not because we earned it, right? It's because what Jesus did for us.

But here's the beautiful thing. Not only is God's disposition toward us, that of grace, that of charis. We see in the New Testament that he gives to the church gifts of grace, which are called charismas.

See the connection there. It's another Greek word, charismas. You have charis, a God who is full of grace, who gives charismas, gifts of grace. Romans 12, six says this, having gifts, he's writing to a church, Paul's writing to a church, you guys having gifts, charismas that differ according to the grace, the charis, charismas from God given to us, let us use them.

[13 : 33] If prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in his generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who, who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

There's another place. In 1 Corinthians 12, charisma occurs, that word charisma occurs five times. And we'll just look at one place. It starts in verse four. Now there are varieties of gifts, charismas, but the same spirit.

And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all and everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

So most churches, we look at that, most believers, we look at that, we have no problem saying yes and amen to the, to the variety of services, to the variety of activities. We get that, we do that, boom, bought the t-shirt, signed up for it, let's go for it, right?

But man, man, the thing we get a little spooked about is that variety of gifts part, right? Like what, what, what does that mean? But why do we get spooked at that? Because it's listed right there with everything else.

[14 : 41] It's listed right there with the activities and the service, right? Opportunities. Well, I think for many of us, it could be that, well, one, maybe you're not spooked.

You're just like, Jesse, this is all new to me. This is pretty cool. All right. Awesome. But for some of us, we're like, you know, we're connecting some dots. From the word charisma, you get the term charismatic.

Pathetic, okay? And under that stream of Christianity, under that banner, some really, really amazing good stuff has happened over the years. I don't want to discount that, right? But let's be honest, there's been some weird kooky stuff that has happened out of that too.

There's been a lot of abuse that has happened in that stream of Christianity. There's been a lot of heresy that has come from that stream of Christianity. But here's, let's be fair to them.

I could look back at church history and point to some bad practices in any camp, the Reformed camp, the Baptist camp, the Presbyterian camp. What I'm saying here is just that we shouldn't chuck the charisma baby out with the dirty charismatic bathwater, okay?

[15 : 48] Just think about this. To be very fair, just think about church in whole. It has not been too long since some churches in America, like, justified segregation during their services, okay?

And they used the Bible to do that, okay? So that was not Bible. That was not God. And this is what it should show us if we want to be generous to one another and to our charismatic brothers and sisters.

Abuse and misuse has to be repented of. It has to be corrected. But we don't chuck out the Bible, you know, just because people mishandled it and applied it back in the day. We don't chuck out church just because it was done wrong by some people throughout history.

What do we do? We go back to living in the truth. We go back to what the Bible says. And the same goes with God's charismas here. And think about this. If an undeniable, unchanging attribute of God is his grace, is his charis, then logically we should expect a God of unchanging, undeniable charis would still be giving his people his charismas.

Right? They haven't dried up. Let's relook at verse 7 as to why God does that. Why would God still be giving his church his charismas, his gifts of grace?

[17:09] Verse 7 of 1 Corinthians 12, to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Not to make yourself look good, not to grow your ministry and your profile, not to hope that like one day you might get on a conference to or a speaking to or you could just like, you know, like get a blog where you got people paying for your prophecies.

All that stuff's out there. Okay? It's for the common good. And this is what God wants us to know. When each of us bring his gifts, God's gifts, his charismas, everyone experiences more of God's grace.

And that's what we're meant to do when we come in this weekly Sunday gathering. Let me explain this. It might be helpful, a little helpful analogy. And I think this fits well because it connects with the idea of church being the household of God.

So I was lucky enough to grow up in a family that had extended family. We all lived nearby each other, right? And we also really loved to be together. We got along well. And so one of the traditions, every year at Thanksgiving and Christmas, we'd flock to our grandparents' house on my mom's side.

And we would have dinner together. And what made that special was that we were all together. We loved being together. But what took it to the next level was that everybody brought their best dish to share.

[18:35] Okay? Grandma, she made the turkey. Nobody else was going to touch that turkey because she had that thing refined and perfected. I would venture to say, you might say, Jesse, I hate turkey.

You just haven't tried my grandma's turkey yet. That's your problem. So my Aunt Jody, she would bring these rolls. She had these rolls on lockdown. We called them once-a-year rolls because, like, you could not find them any other time of the year.

You would not eat them any other time of the year. They came out at Thanksgiving, and they came out at Christmas, and you better get it while the getting was good. And she would come and make sure there was, like, 20 for each one of us because we would, like, attack those things.

They were amazing. My Aunt Vicki, she is, like, to this day, the most amazing cook. This woman can cook some amazing food. She would bring green beans and mashed potatoes and do things to them that would make your taste buds just jump for joy.

I mean, it was just beautiful. We even had this Jell-O mold. And you think of, like, Jell-O mold? Jess, how can you get excited about Jell-O mold? Let me tell you about our Jell-O mold. There was, like, I don't even know, but there was this infused foundation of whipped cream upon which the Jell-O mold was built.

[19:42] And it was sprinkled throughout, this, like, fresh-cut, beautiful, just delicious fresh fruit throughout the whole day. I mean, it was amazing. Like, every part of that meal was amazing. We drank Martinelli's apple cider, you know?

And it was, like, we bought cases of it to bring because it was just, like, keep pouring, keep pouring. That's the beauty of it. We would come together, and we would play, and we would laugh, and we would have fun, and we would feast.

And it was all on the best food that we got all year. Some of my fondest memories was around that table. I would walk away from that time with a stomach full for sure, right?

Seconds, thirds, especially when you're a teenager, you really get down on some of that and make a dent in that food. Full of love, secure, and love of my family, joyful. And when I think about it to this day, you could tell, like, it fills me with joy, those moments.

But here's the thing. I tell you that because that is a beautiful picture of coming together around the weekly gathering every Sunday. Every part of my family was counted at those holiday dinners.

[20:44] Every part of the family should be counted in these moments. But we just don't come. What do we come? We come bringing our best to share, right?

We come bringing God's best that he has given us. Because we are this loving, connected family created by God's charis, his grace.

And he gives us these variety, these differing charismas, these evidences of that grace, so that when we come together, we bring it. And through that, we're all blessed even more.

It's working through. He's working through us. And just imagine, man, when we all come with that mindset. Like, man, God, you can give me your best. You give me these charismas, and I can come, and I can bring them, and they can be utilized on the weekly gathering.

Man, it turns this moment not into consumerism. Man, it turns this moment into this beautiful buffet of God's grace that we all get to feast on. That's what's happening. So that's what that's about.

[21 : 48] I hope that that stirred your hearts for what can be and what might be. But as stirred as our hearts may be, our minds might be wondering, well, that's great, Jesse. What does that exactly look like?

So does that mean I got to smile bigger? Does that mean I got to get way more huggy now? Like, what's going on? Do I got to sing louder? Like, does this mean, like, I got to raise my hands?

When I speak to everyone, do I now have to start my sentences with, thus saith the Lord? Like, help me out, right? What does it mean to bring what God's given you? Well, let's start with considering just the gifts that God lays out and points out to us, right?

Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, they're not the full exhausted list of God's gifts, but they're a great start. And it says, man, there's prophecy, there's teaching, there's exhortation, there's serving, there's generosity, there's leading, there's acts of mercy.

We see that in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. We see some of those, but also added to that words of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, distinguishing of spirits, tongues, and interpretation.

[22 : 51] Now, I'll admit, some of those that I read, they sound way out there, right? If you heard me say distinguishing of spirits, some of you are like, I'm sorry, what now? Like, are we playing with the Ouija boards when we come here?

Like, what's going on? No, no, that's not it at all. And I don't have time to, like, unpack every single one of these, because we'll be here till, you know, we'll be here till dinner time. And I told you this was a short sermon, so we're not going to do that.

But we're probably cozy and comfy with the preaching and the teaching and the serving and the leading and the generosity and the acts of mercy that were listed. And we're really familiar with those things.

Like, a lot of that stuff happens every single Sunday already. Some of the other stuff, a bit weird, maybe a bit scary, we might be a bit uncomfortable with. We don't know how that really works out. And it involves a degree of when we do those things, it could possibly go wrong, right? Blow up in our face or make really awkward moments. But the other part of this that might be a little difficult with those ones that are kind of out there where we're a little bit confused about or uncomfortable with, it's not like you can just turn them on and off, like the gift of serving.

[23 : 56] And I would say, like, hey, if that's where you're at and those are your concerns, those are legit concerns. And it's helpful to remember that it is the Holy Spirit who enables to manifest these gifts, right?

We don't turn them on and off. Like, I don't get to just be like, well, I want to prophesy, so I'm just going to start prophesying right now because I just feel like prophesying right now. That's not how that works, right?

The Holy Spirit is sovereign. And he's the one who determines when it happens. And Jesus said about the Holy Spirit, like, he's like the wind. He blows where he wants to. Like, nobody controls him.

You and I don't get to control him. And I think that's where some of the bad charismatic baggage comes in for us because what's been pitched by them is like, I'm a prophet. Therefore, like, I can turn it on and off anytime I want.

There is no acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Spirit. But again, let's not throw out the charisma baby with the charismatic bathwater, okay? So, we shouldn't try to force them, these things.

[24 : 58] But, but, I would say we should live with some expectation that the Spirit can operate this way with anyone and at any time if he so chooses to do so, right?

As much as we say we can't control the Spirit and turn it on and off, I think we're more in danger of controlling the Spirit by saying, no, you can't. It got really quiet.

I was hoping for an amen there. So, that's some concern. Here's another concern we might have. Okay, Jess, let's lean in. Let's say these gifts for us today. Okay, how do they get worked out, right? Well, here's a helpful little thought. God's gifts are brought humbly and must yield to order and peace.

Okay, which means that our gatherings aren't open mic night, right? 1 Corinthians 14, 26. It's stuff on the gifts, but also particularly how you, like, bring these things into order.

[26 : 01] And he's, Paul is writing to a Corinthian church, right, that is full of these charismatic gifts. And he says this to them, what then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

So, Paul's kind of like, he knows them. He's like, I know when you come together these things are happening. Then he says, let all things be done for building up. Because the Corinthian church needed to know that.

But first, we got to come thinking, like, there's a possibility that we could carry these things with us from our week. As you're at time, as you're time with the Lord in solitude, you should be thinking, like, he's going to be stirring stuff up in your heart as you're spending time with him.

Why? Because he not only loves you, he loves his church. And sometimes he could put something in your heart through the week that you're like, man, that verse was so amazing. That was so powerful. That just ignited something in me.

And you'd be, thank you, Lord, I really needed that for today. But what you don't realize, sometimes you're bringing that in with you on Sunday. And then God says, hey, that verse that I put in your heart, that's not a you thing.

[27 : 04] That's not just a you thing. That's a we thing. The church needs to hear that. And because it could be a word of encouragement. Or it could be a word of admonishment. It could be a lot of things.

And so people can bring that kind of contribution. All of a sudden, God is speaking to somebody in the room that needed to hear that. Or several people in the room that needed to hear that. Or maybe it's a season of the church where it's just like things are difficult.

And the church just needed to know that God was thinking about them that way. But what it does, God brings that and you receive that gift from him. And what it does, it elevates your faith in him. You're reminded, oh, God is the God who sees. God is the God who's there. God is the God who knows. It's an amazing thing. But when you bring these things, and how this works out, I want to say is, you don't show up and it's not like, hey, we're just going to pass the mic around, see what anyone's got.

That's not how this is working, right? That's not how this is working. Because what follows the verse I just read, Paul gets into some like, hey, here are some boundaries and some control mechanisms so this doesn't devolve into chaos.

[28 : 08] Okay? And in essence, what he gets at is every gift isn't one that you just get to shout from the rooftops whenever you want. It's got to be humbly submitted.

And it's got to be humbly submitted to trusted leadership in the church. And we do this with serving gifts all the time. Think about this. We have people leading these various serving ministries, hospitality, kids, you know, our music and media team.

They're the people that come in and they kind of set the buffet table of God's grace for us before we get here. And both for the adults in the room here, but with the kids over there. And that's what's happening, right?

There's these amazing surf teams. And there's a lot of you that have come in and tucked into that to bring that gift of serving to the church to bless us with it. And it does. But what you're doing, you are coming and submitting your gift to the order that has been established, right?

That makes sense. Man, imagine how chaotic it would be if we were just like, everyone just do what you want, serving wise, right? So, you know, I could show up and be like, well, you know what? What I really want to do is I'm going to go out and pay that wall yellow.

[29 : 13] Who cares about what the chairs look like or if there's enough? It's like, as long as that wall's painted yellow, I think that's what God wants me to do today. No, it's like these things have to be submitted in orderly fashion to good, trusted, loving leadership.

And that goes the same for all the other gifts that we see as they work out in the weekly gathering. If you feel you have a prophecy or an encouraging scripture, revelation from God, like we had just talked about, right?

You don't just shout it from your seat. You bring it and you submit it quietly to the leadership in the room. That would be the elders at our church, myself or Alan or Freddie or Elliot.

And you would say, man, I don't know what's going on, but I just want to submit this to you. Take it or leave it, right? And that is helpful. And I've seen this work effectively in churches, right?

There have been contributions that are given publicly during service that were vetted by the elders first. And you know what I want to say? It's like, it's even more powerful and often works out this way is that there's not just one contribution.

[30 : 19] There's often another one or even maybe a third, which Paul says like, hey, cap it at three. Because, man, you don't want to have like, you don't want to go into 10 to 20 because, you know, again, we need to eat lunch at some point.

But he says two or three is enough. And it's kind of based on the Old Testament, the Old Testament statute that out of two or three witnesses, every testimony is confirmed. And so I've seen this work out where somebody comes up and I see them whispering to the elder.

And I was like, oh, the person has a contribution. Cool. This is going to be interesting. And then another person comes up and whispers into that same elder, you know, here's what I'm feeling. And it is amazing. It is amazing how often without fail that the Holy Spirit is speaking to separate people in the room.

But he's speaking about the same thing. And he's trying to get their attention. And so they're not saying the exact same words, but they're saying the exact same thing in essence. And so those people now get to come up and say like, man, hey, God's wanting to highlight something here. Maybe that's for all of us. Maybe that's for some of us. Maybe that's for one person. Here's what it is. And it's submitted humbly. And it's submitted orderly. And it's like, it's in there and it's out there. It's not a 30-minute sermon.

[31 : 27] It's usually like one-minute contribution, somebody saying something to your scripture and another, the same thing. But God gets to move mightily and go public in those ways to let people know that, hey, I want to speak to you today.

In this manner. All right? And so he puts these boundaries in and we would adhere to these boundaries and recommend them. Not because like we're uptight control freaks that are trying to quench the spirit.

Actually, it should be this way because as Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 14 verse 33, he says, God is not a God of confusion. Like his whole thing about putting in boundaries and having orderly worship.

In this way, he's like, man, God is not a God of confusion. He is a God of peace. He's a God of order. So where does that leave us? Where does that leave you and I right now? Well, I want to say this. If you're a Christian, man, lean in.

Like lean in and desire the gifts. And if you've been despising them, I would say repent of them, right? But we should be eagerly desiring and asking God to give us his spiritual gifts.

[32 : 31] We should want them. Paul says this to the church in Corinth at the beginning of chapter 14. Pursue love and, not or, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts.

So what's keeping us from doing this? Well, maybe up to this point, this is, you just never knew about this. Cool. Now you do. Maybe you've, you've seen it done poorly.

Maybe you've even been hurt by some of this. Man, I get that. And, and I am so sorry. But again, I want to encourage us, man, that when we encounter abuse and misuse of something, it is, the response should not be neglect.

The response should be, okay, God, if these are good things, then what is the right way to use them? Right? That should be our response. And I hope for all of us, we've moved toward a more robust idea and heart of embracing and desiring the gifts now.

And, and I want to say like, one of the things that could keep us from doing that, from desiring and asking is, is that we just need to deepen our relationship and faith in God as a good father, right?

[33 : 40] Because when we are detached from this idea of God as this benevolent, caring father that gives amazing, lavish, good gifts, when we lose sight of that, we end up living more like orphans than as children, right?

And man, when you have an orphan heart, you kind of have this idea of I don't deserve good things. Because you have grown up in scarcity, you have become so used to growing up without that it's hard to believe in a father that is so good that he would lavish grace upon grace upon you just because he wants to.

That's hard for us to reckon with. That is really hard for us to reckon with. A lot of us, we grew up with fathers that were harsh or they weren't around, they were distant, or if they did give us gifts, it was always connected with some kind of performance.

I had to accomplish X, Y, and Z, and then I got something. There was this never this unconditional, lavish generosity bestowed upon us. And so we take that into our relationship with God, we take that into our Christianity, and we say like, okay, you know what?

I probably don't deserve these good gifts because I haven't been good enough. The good Christians, they probably deserve them, but I don't. I'm saying, no, no, no, no. Man, the father is saying, no, these are for you.

[35 : 01] Not because anything you've done, because Jesus died for you. Everything you have, anything you could ever want, he has earned in your place. I want to read, end with reading this amazing, amazing passage from Ephesians that talks about how wonderful and talks about the scope of the blessings of God, the father that flows toward us.

It says this, Ephesians 1, verse 3. Just listen to all these blessings, and as I read them, say, okay, yes, God, you give that to me.

That is for me, that is for me, that is for me. Not because of what I have done, because of what Jesus has done. Blessed be God the Father, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Not some, all. Even as he chose us in him, adoption, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love, he predestined us for adoption to himself. Not to be orphans, to be sons, his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has been blessed, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

[36 : 26] God, our father, friends, God, our father, who adopted us, who chose us, he brings us into his family.

Not to make us slaves and workhorses, but because he wants us to be his sons and daughters. He calls us to be his sons and daughters. And you know what he does? He lavishes grace upon grace upon grace so generously.

He is not withholding. He is not withholding. What does it take from us? Well, we don't have to do anything. You don't have to earn that. You just gotta believe that is true and you gotta receive that. As the band comes up, how do we respond? I wanna speak to you in the room, any of us in the room. If you're not yet a Christian, I wanna say, man, I'm so glad that you're here. And I'm so glad that you got to hear about what it looks like, what God intended for this weekly Sunday gathering. I want you, I'm glad that you got to hear how much he dotes on his children and loves on them and is lavish and generous toward them. And I wanna say, man, he is offering that to you today.

[37 : 34] He is holding out to you. You don't have to be an orphan anymore. You don't have to run. Come back. Come back to your home. Come back. Be a son in the house. Be a daughter in the house.

And all that takes is faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And that will happen for you. And if that's you, there's gonna be a prayer. We're gonna take a moment, all of us, to pray in a moment. There's gonna be a prayer up on the screen that you'll be able to pray in response to that. But if you're here and you're already a Christian, man, I hope you heard today how good God is.

How amazing he is as a father that lavishes his love and his grace and his gifts upon us. And just receive it today. Live in his grace. Live in his grace.

Just give up trying. I wanna pray bold prayers. Man, Lord, I don't know. Father, I don't know how this looks or what it looks like, but I want all that you have for me. I want all the gifts that you have for me.

[38 : 35] Let's eagerly, let's walk away from here eagerly desiring and praying and leaning into and pursuing those gifts. So, Father, we come to you. And this idea of stepping into the fullness of your grace, of your charis, being able and open and wanting and desiring and seeing all the charismas, the gifts that you have for us, Lord.

I pray that we would walk away from here, our hearts as sons and daughters, just wanting to receive all you have for us. Because we are absolutely convinced that you are good and you love us and you're not gonna be withholding.

Lord, I pray where we struggle, the bit of an orphan heart that we may have left over, some residue in there, that you would work it out. Work it out of us. That we be fully trusting.

We could be more childlike than ever in you. Amen. Amen. Amen.