

Shine as Lights in the World

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[0 : 00] Everybody ready to jump into the book of Philippians? All right, if you're not there yet, go ahead and open up your Bibles to the book of Philippians.! We're looking at Paul's letter that he wrote from jail, writing to the Christians in Philippians.

We're in Philippians chapter 2, where Paul is giving some instruction here, giving motivations for how we ought to live as Christians. In light of what Jesus did for us.

And the passage that we're going to read today is continuing on that subject. We're going to go ahead and read. I'm going to go back here a little bit, just so that we can get the context in our minds.

Let's go ahead and... Where should we start? Let's go to verse 5. So, Philippians 2, 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.

But he made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

[1 : 21] Therefore, God also has highly exalted him and given them the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth.

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for his good pleasure. And then our verses for today. I think we're going to finish up there this morning.

Going through this passage, where we've come the last few weeks is Paul is pointing to the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made.

The humiliation, the condescension, that's another word that's used of Christ. First, in going from his place in glory as the creator of the universe and humbling himself to become a man, to become like one of us.

[3 : 01] And ultimately, laying down his life for us in the most really humiliating type of death that was really available at that time.

But there's encouragement in here in chapter 2 to live our lives in the same way that Jesus did.

In that same humility. In the same sacrificial service. And so last week, we looked at how we ought to obey. To be obedient.

To work out the salvation that God has worked in us. God has provided us with a great salvation that's totally free. We don't have to do any religious rituals.

We don't have to do any good deeds to earn it, to merit it. All we have to do is say yes to God's offer of salvation. And we can have eternal life forever with God because of that.

[4 : 05] But once we've received that salvation, how ought we to live? Should we just live the same way that we did before? Or should our lives change?

And so we ought to work out that salvation. The salvation that was worked in us, we ought to work it out in how we live our everyday lives. And not just in our own strength, but looking to the Lord to allow Him to work in us.

To not only do what He asks or what He expects from us, but He actually puts the will in us. The want to. To do and to will of His good pleasure.

And what we're, the passage or the section that we're looking at today is continuing on that same stream of thought. And so it's going to start with asking this question, or I'm going to ask this

question.

As we do the will of God, with a willing heart, how or in what way should we do or live this Christian life?

[5 : 17] And that's what this passage is going to answer. And so starting with verse 14 here, it says this. Do all things without complaining and disputing.

So in everything that you do as a Christian, do it without complaining and without disputing. Now, let's look at these words just briefly.

That word complain, many of you have different translations. So you might have different words. Some of the ways that that word complaining is translated, in some translations it will say without grumbling, others without murmuring.

Or in some translations it says not begrudgingly or not reluctantly. So the way that we ought to do good is not reluctantly, but with fervor instead.

The other word there, disputing, is this Greek word where we get our English word, dialogue. To have a conversation.

[6 : 26] And it's sometimes translated as evil thoughts. Don't have evil thoughts. Or sometimes it's translated as doubts.

So disputing. Having doubts. Having evil thoughts. Reasoning. If you go, and this is where I think, I think a better, I don't want to say better translation, an interesting translation from way, way back. You know, the original language of the New Testament is Greek. And we have our translation in English today, but that translation is actually not that old.

Maybe hundreds of years old. But the Bible was translated from Greek into other languages of the day. Many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago. In fact, within just a hundred years of the Bible being written in its original language, it started to be translated.

So some of the ancient translations, for example, into Arabic, the language of the Ethiopians. And then also in the Latin, which was one of the language.

[7 : 37] Today it's a dead language. But it translated that disputing, without disputing, as without hesitation. And so, where does that come from?

Well, if you think about complaining, or dialogue, or evil thoughts, when there is something good for you to do, something good that you ought to do, a lot of times, we have this reasoning in ourselves. Ah, I don't have time to do that. Oh, they don't deserve my help. We have this reasoning with ourselves that would cause us to hesitate.

And I think that's really what these two words are getting at. The things that we ought to do, the good that we ought to do as Christians, we ought to do it without complaining, without murmuring, not begrudgingly, but instead with joy, with patience, and then not reasoning in ourselves about why we should have an excuse, why we shouldn't do this or that.

And really, to kind of sum up all of this, I think what this is about, these two words, is about our attitude. Our attitude.

[9 : 01] And so, we ought to obey the Lord, we ought to live lives as Christians, doing good to others. But is what we do the only thing that matters?

Not to the Lord. It doesn't just matter that we do the right thing, it also matters that we do it for the right reasons and with the right attitude.

This actually comes up a lot with children. In fact, this passage is one that friends of ours put together to song.

And it goes like this. Do all things without murmuring. Come on, everybody. Without murmuring. Without murmuring. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

That's a great song, isn't it? It's a great song for children. And so, and by the way, this is, as we raise our children, we ought to teach them how they ought to obey.

[10 : 14] When teaching children to obey, it's important that they know exactly what that means. And so, we have taught our children over the years that there are three aspects to being obedient.

Three aspects. The first one is that you obey in the right way. The right way. The second one is that you obey right away.

That has to do with time, right? And the third one is you obey with the right attitude. And those three aspects of obedience are all important part of the equation.

So, you might think of an example for children, right? It's time to clean our room, right? And so, if we think about doing it the right way, how do we clean our room?

Well, we do it according to the instructions that mom and dad gave. Do we take all of our toys and just shove them under the bed? That's very convenient, but is that the right way to do it?

[11 : 22] Or do we take all the toys and we shove them into the air vent? I've seen that in my house a time or two over the years. That's not the right way to clean up our toys or clean our room.

We need to do it the right way. The second, right, is we do it right away. So, you might ask the kids to clean the room.

And do you do that after you've finished reading the book that you're in the middle of? No. No. Do you wait until you feel like cleaning up your room?

No. That's not obedience. Do you wait until it's a more convenient time for me? No. You do it right away.

When mom and dad ask you to do something, you say, yes, ma'am. You close the book. You put away whatever it is you're working on and you diligently go and do what mom and dad asked. And then the third one is with a right attitude.

[12 : 27] And that's important. And to be honest, that is one that many parents miss. They forget about. Because it's important not only that children obey, but that they do it with a right attitude.

And so, what are some examples of a bad attitude? But mom, is that a good attitude? No. Or how about, well, that's not fair.

So-and-so never has to do that. Is that a good attitude? Or how about just a... Or sometimes, you know, they can become more and more subtle.

Like a pouty face. Or sometimes just a frowny face. Or sometimes it can be very subtle, just the shuffling of feet.

All of those are signs of a bad attitude. And attitude is important. The attitude is the aspect of the heart.

[13 : 42] The heart is what's most important when it comes to obedience. You know, what I've observed over the years is that those children who are raised to be compliant, and not even all children are raised to do that.

Sometimes they're just left to do whatever they want. And that really is destructive towards the life of a child. But those who are raised to be compliant, yet they never learn to have the right heart attitude towards doing what is right and what is good, when they become adults, they throw off many of those things that they were taught because their heart was never transformed.

And you know what? As parents, we actually do not have the power to transform our children's heart, do we? We can't do it. Now, we can show them, right, that they ought to have a transformed heart.

In fact, as a parent, it is good that we teach our children you have to have the right attitude. In fact, you can, and I've done this before, oh, you're going to show me a pouty face?

No, that's not how we obey. You need to obey with the right attitude. And at least while I'm here, you're going to at least fake it, right? So I can't change your heart, but you're going to at least pretend that you have a good attitude.

[15 : 02] So what's a good attitude look like? All right, I want to see a smile on your face. Can you show me a smile? Yes, Daddy. Okay. And so we can train our children on what a good attitude looks like, but we cannot change their heart.

And really, what do children need for them to have that right heart change, that willingness of heart to obey their parents and to do what is right?

You know what? It's the same thing that we need as adults. We need God to do a work in us. We need that, what chapter, or verse 12 said, we need God to work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

And our children need that as well. And that's why it's so important among all the things, the responsibilities that parents have, not just to teach them to obey, but to lead them to the Lord, to lead our children to Christ.

That they might, one, have the same salvation that we do as their parents, but also that their heart would be changed from the inside out so that their obedience, their doing of good, is because they want to, because they have a willing heart, the same kind of willing heart that the Lord had when he came down from his place in the heavens and gave up his life for us.

[16 : 41] But having good attitudes is important for children, and that's probably what this is about, right? This is a passage about children having good attitudes. Actually, no, right?

This is a passage for everybody. And so good attitudes aren't just for children. Children, adults should have good attitudes as well, and God wants us all to have good attitudes.

And so what are just some examples as adults where we have opportunities to maybe shuffle our feet or put on a pouty face just like our kids do?

I think about work responsibilities, and many of us have had jobs or responsibilities, whatever it might be, in a work setting or maybe a volunteer capacity to where we have to deal with challenging and difficult people, or maybe we have work to do that is just not all that fun and exciting.

And as Christians, we ought to have a good attitude in everything that we do. When we show up, for example, to our job, regardless of what's going on, we can show up with a ready and eager heart to serve.

[17:57] Because that's what jobs typically are, right? Jobs are just opportunities to serve one another. The kind of service that gets us a paycheck, right? We should have a heart, an attitude, towards making our boss or our company, the company that we work for, successful.

That's the kind of attitude that we ought to have. We should have the kind of attitude where we make the customer happy, right? And if you work for a company where your boss owns the company and he wants it to be successful, his whole focus, right, is making the customer happy, serving them.

And so he wants you as an employee to have that same attitude. And really, we ought to have grateful hearts no matter what's going on, no matter how hard our day was.

grateful hearts for the opportunity to serve other people and also the opportunity if you're in this position to provide for your family.

Because not everybody has those opportunities. I think about in marriage or in family life, we have lots of opportunities to serve one another and we have lots of opportunities to complain about it.

[19:12] We were talking about the chores earlier where so-and-so doesn't have to do this. That can happen in marriage too, right? Where we think, oh, I'm doing more than my fair share of work around this house.

And that's not the kind of attitude that we have. Now, here's a question. Does this mean that we should never have disputes or complaints that we bring up whether it's in a work setting or even in a family setting where we think maybe something's not fair or there's some injustice or something to that effect.

And I don't think that's what this is saying at all, right? I think what Paul is getting at here is about attitudes of the heart. If we need to bring something up, if there is some complaint that needs to be communicated, whether it be to our colleagues at work or to our spouse or our family or maybe even you're at a restaurant and you're getting bad service and you need to talk to the manager and complain.

Those things are appropriate. But what Paul is talking about here is our general heart attitude in life. We do it with a positive attitude towards others.

And what does a positive attitude look like? Because he's talking about what a negative attitude looks like. Not complaining, not disputing, not, what was the King James muttering?

[20:50] Murmuring. Muttering. Muttering and murmuring kind of the same thing. Not murmuring. And so a positive attitude looks like an attitude where we have joy, where we have humility, where there's patience involved, where there's love and care involved, kindness.

That's the kind of attitude that we have in the work that we do and in doing the good things that Christians ought to do, doing it with the right attitude.

And the next part of this verse talks about the next aspect here and that's this. What happens when we as Christians do good with the right attitude?

What happens? Here's what it says, verse 15. That you may become blameless and harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

When we do what is good, we do what is right with the right attitude. That has a tremendous impact on those around us.

[22:13] It impacts our witness as Christians in the world. Notice how he says, so that you may become blameless. This is what happens.

And when he says that you may become blameless, I don't think he's talking about that this will transform your life. I think he's already talking about a transformed life.

But I think he's talking about the perception of others. Right? Perception matters. how people perceive us and hopefully perception and reality are the same.

But when other people perceive us, we want them to perceive us in the right way. We don't want to fool people. We don't want them to think that we are this way.

We want them to just see how we really are. That we have truly been transformed by the Lord because of his love for us. These words, you know, translation is difficult and as I was looking at some of the words here, the word blameless actually means exactly that, without blame.

[23 : 22] And that one can be difficult. It's actually used frequently in the New Testament and it can be a little bit intimidating, right? Because it sounds like I have to make sure I don't do anything wrong, whatever. And well, you shouldn't do anything wrong ever, right?

But this is not necessarily talking about perfection, being perfect in all of your doings. You know, unfortunately, most of us are not there. I would venture to say all of us are not there.

But rather, blameless as far as when it comes to accusations. There are many people who would love to accuse anybody, but especially a Christian, right? And so we ought to live the kind of lives in which if somebody would want to blame us, if they were to look around and sneak around our house and look for evidence of something that this person did wrong, that they're really, truly a hypocrite and they're just faking it, that they would come up empty handed, that they would not find anything with which they could use to blame us.

And then that next word, harmless, is a word that literally means without mixture and or unmixed, literally.

And that's a word that's really talking about sincerity, sincerity of heart, that the reason you do things isn't like you've got, what do we call it, you're double-minded or double-tongued, sometimes we use those words, where you have two things going on that you mix together.

[24 : 51] No, that there is a sincerity with which you are doing the things that you're doing. You're doing the right thing for the right reason. You're showing care and love to your neighbor.

Why? Not so that you're going to get a reward, or maybe avoid a punishment, but you're doing it because you truly love your neighbor.

The next word we'll look at, he says, without fault, and that actually is almost the exact same word as blameless. Again, not perfection, but again, people are looking for faults and we don't want people to find that evidence that they're looking for.

You know, every religion in the world promotes good deeds. I mean, there's probably exceptions, right? There's probably some bizarre religion out there that does not promote good deeds, but almost all religions promote good deeds, and the people that belong to those religions are expected to do them.

But you know what? there is only one religion in the world that empowers its followers to not only do the good, but to have their heart transformed to want to do that good, to love doing good, to love others, just as, you know, we love ourselves.

[26 : 27] And that is Christianity. That is Christ working in us. And you know what? When people see that in Christians, it causes people to stand up and pay attention.

When people see a lack of hypocrisy and a lack of of this mixture of motives, when they see pure motives and sincerity, it causes people to really pay attention.

And I mentioned those two authors, Josh McDowell and who's the other one? Lee Strobel, thank you. And I wanted to give their lives as an example, because as I was thinking about this, I was thinking of both of their lives.

Josh McDowell was somewhat of an academic in college, a skeptic, an atheist or an agnostic of sorts, in which he was not really impressed with the claims about God, especially the God of Christianity.

And so he wasn't really a big fan of Christianity. But he noticed some people in the school that he was at, in the college or university, university that he was at, who were Christians, and he noticed that they were just different from everybody else.

[27 : 54] That their faith actually made an impact in their life. And that the things that they did were from a sincere attitude. They really did love people.

People even that seemed not very lovely, not very lovable. And he started having conversations with these Christians. And he was at first, you know, pretty, he didn't really like the religion that they espoused.

But he asked them, why do you do the things that you do? And the response was, it's because of Jesus. Because of Jesus. And it caused him to really start his investigation into the claims of Christianity.

And he took an academic route and spent lots and lots and lots of time investigating the claims of Christianity. And finally, after some amount of time, realizing that the claims of Christianity are true, that Jesus was really who he claimed he was, that he really did rise from the dead.

And if he really did do that, then the claim that he made, that the death that he died was for the sins of the world, to provide eternal life for us, had to be true.

[29 : 08] And he became a Christian. And in the same, in a similar manner, Lee Strobel worked at a, he was a journalist. Both him and his wife were both atheistic, did not really have any interest in religion, but over time, early on in their marriage, his wife became a believer.

She was invited to a Bible study and was just overwhelmed with the love she experienced there and the sincerity of heart and was exposed to the gospel message, the message that Jesus had died for her sins.

And rather quickly actually became a Christian and came home and told her husband and was he overjoyed? He was angry. He was upset.

He did not marry a Christian woman on purpose. That's not how he wanted to live his life. And so we had a lot of anger about this and, you know, there was years actually, I think it was several years in which they had this dichotomy and he continued in their marriage.

They both continued in their marriage, but there was a lot of conflict and challenge there. And she would try to gently in different ways share with him the faith that she had learned.

[30 : 19] But he was quite, he was a drinker, he was abusive, angry at her, would punch holes in walls. And you know what he saw?

That even though he acted that way towards her, he saw the way that she responded in true love and care for him, despite all of that.

And you know what? That attitude that she had really softened his heart. And it gave him pause to say, wait a second, I'm going to go ahead and investigate this.

I'm sure what I'm going to find is that it's all bunk. But I'm going to spend the time, because, you know, my wife's really into this, I'm going to spend the time investigating.

And he spent two years using his journalistic skills to investigate the claims of Christianity. And as he did, he found more and more evidence, pile up again and again, about the claims of Christianity and the claims of Jesus Christ.

[31 : 20] And after two years, decided, I can't not be a Christian anymore. I can't not be a Christian. If I were to live any longer denying the claims of Jesus Christ, I would not be living true to myself, because I cannot deny the evidence that I see before my eyes.

And so, the way that Christians live their lives around these two men, Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel, caused them to look into the things, the cause of the faith of the Christian, to see what it was all about.

It says here that we might be harmless or sincere children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

He's describing the world around us, the generation that we live in. And, you know, this was 2,000 years ago. Is the generation that we live in any different from his?

Is it any less crooked? Is it any less perverse? No, I mean, you can try to balance and judge for yourself. Is it worse or better?

[32 : 44] No, it's all just the same. The world has always been crooked. It's always been perverse. And as Christians, as children of God, as it describes us here, we can be as lights in a dark world.

The world can be dark at times, and we can be lights that shine in that dark world. When we do good things, and we do it with the right heart and the right attitude.

You know what? As we shine as lights, we shouldn't think that that will always mean that people will be thrilled with us. Sometimes when you shine as a light, people don't like the light.

It's too bright. They prefer darkness over light. In fact, Jesus said that. John 3, 19 says this about Jesus himself because he is described as the light of the world.

And this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. And what did they do with the light of Jesus?

[34 : 00] Well, many were angry with him and ultimately killed him. And so we should not expect that as we are lights in the world, that we will always be returned with joy and happiness and good cheer.

But that some people will respond to that with hatred and mock, mockery and ridicule. And you know what? That's just the occupational hazard of being part of God's family.

Jesus said, hey, if they hated me, guess what? Many of them will also hate you. And the last verse that we'll look at in verse 16 here goes like this.

Holding fast the word of life. Holding fast the word of life. You know, I actually, in looking at the original languages and some of the other translations, I'm not really partial to this translation, holding fast to the word of life.

The King James actually says, holding forth the word of life. And that's actually a very different idea. Holding fast to something and then holding something forth are two different things.

[35 : 08] And as I read this, I think the context really seems to indicate a holding forth or a presentation, I think is what this is talking about here. That as we live the Christian life and we do good and we do it for the right reasons, that we do it not with our mouth shut, but with our mouth open.

That we speak up when we have opportunity to hold forth the word of life. The gospel of our salvation. And what is the gospel of our salvation?

It's simply this. that Jesus Christ, the God of the universe who created all things, humbled himself, became a man, and he died the death of a criminal on a cross for a reason, for a purpose.

Not for kicks and giggles, but because he wanted to accomplish something to pay for our sins. To make the payment so that we could live forever just by receiving that gift on faith alone.

That is the gospel message. You know, Jesus said, by all, this is John 13, 35, by this all men will know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another.

[36 : 27] And so, those of us who follow Christ, those of us who follow Jesus, should be known by our love for other people. Especially people who are not very lovely, not very lovable. people. But you know what?

And it's good and important that people see what we do, and that that has an impact. But it's also equally important that we open up our mouth and tell them the message that we heard that transformed us, that made us the way that we are.

There's a saying that is attributed to a guy years and years ago. His name was St. Francis of Assisi. At least they call it, the Catholics call him a saint. Francis of Assisi.

And this is attributed to him. I don't think it's accurate at all, as an attribution to him anyway. But it goes like this. Preach the gospel at all times and use words if necessary.

Anybody ever heard that? It's the idea that, hey, we can share the gospel of Jesus with how we live our lives, and occasionally we might use words. And I get the message behind that, that the way we live our lives matters, and it does.

[37 : 41] But you cannot preach the gospel without words. Right? How we live our life may give, may pique someone's interest. Right? It may remove barriers to listening to what you have to say.

But how we live our lives cannot tell someone about what Jesus did for them, and their need to trust in Christ for themselves.

In Romans 10, 14, this is what Paul says about the gospel message. How then, this is talking about unbelievers. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how shall they believe in him in whom they have not, what? Heard. And how shall they hear without a preacher, with someone who will proclaim?

And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings or news of good things.

[38 : 48] Jesus. But they have not obeyed the gospel for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report. Then he finishes up with this. So then, faith comes by hearing.

When we trusted in Christ, we did it because we heard a message about the gospel, about what Jesus did for us, and we believed it. And if we want other people to believe that same message, then we need to open up our mouths and give the same message.

So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. So, as we live the Christian life doing good, having a good attitude, doing it with a willing heart and with the right heart, we need to at the same time, open up our mouths as opportunities present themselves, and even at times

when opportunities don't present themselves, right?

To share the good news about what Jesus Christ did for us and did for the world in our day-to-day conversations, maybe just sharing our personal testimony and including the message of the gospel with that.

Sometimes just handing out literature, a gospel tract with the message of the gospel in it, or just handing somebody a Bible. Many ways to share the message of the gospel.

[40 : 15] And then, to what end? Well, this is what Paul says that he's looking for. He says this again in verse 16, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

He is looking forward to a future day, here called the day of Christ. Now, there's some theological disputes about what exactly that means. There's also a reference to the day of the Lord.

Many people would say, especially in dispensational kind of circles like our church is in, is that the day of Christ is a reference to the rapture, whereas the day of the Lord is talking about the second coming or judgment day.

I don't think it really probably matters too much here. Paul's looking forward to a day in the future when everything's wrapping up, when the opportunity to present the gospel to those around us is over.

And he says, when that day comes, I want to rejoice. I want to rejoice in that day that I have not run in vain.

[41 : 26] In vain means without fruit. He wants his work, his toil, his effort to bear fruit.

And so he's looking for the Philippians to carry on the work, to continue to do the work of living lives as bright and shining lights and sharing the gospel with those around them.

And that's the same thing that we all should want. You know, when you run a race, you do it for a reason. This is what Paul's saying. Hey, I'm running a race. I'm laboring not for nothing, not in vain. Hey, I want some fruit. I want a reward. And what is the reward that he's looking for? Is he looking for some kind of riches in the afterlife?

I don't think so. He's looking for the same kind of reward that Jesus is looking for.

[42 : 34] There is a group of people back, what, 400 years ago? 300? Let me see if I can get my dates right. Back in the 1700s.

We'll just go with that. They were called the Morovians. They were known for being very passionate Christians. And missionary, doing a lot of missionary work.

And there were... There's a story, and some people question, you know, just how truthful there are. Some facts have been confirmed. Others are not necessarily confirmed.

But here's how the story goes. There were two men who wanted to be missionaries among some of the African slaves who were being carted off into the West Indies. Some of these islands of the West Indies.

To do hard labor. In order to... I don't know exactly what they were doing. Farming or taking things out of the ground. But they wanted to have a ministry to take the gospel to these slaves.

[43 : 37] And so they tried to inquire to look into what they could do to get passage to these islands so that they could live among them. And the people who ran these companies said, no, you can't do that.

We won't allow it. We have a business to run, and so we're not going to allow it. And they said, well, what about this? What if we just... We went as slaves.

What if we went with them and worked alongside them as slaves just as they are working? And then we can have the opportunity as we work among them as slaves to preach the gospel to them, to share Christ with them, to love them as God loved them.

And so they did. And as the saying goes, again, this might be not completely accurate, but this is how the story went, and this was an encouragement to the Morovians.

As they were sailing off and saying goodbye to their friends, they said this, and this became the motto of the Morovians. They said this, that the lamb who was slain would receive the reward of his suffering.

[44 : 51] Jesus died for the sins of the world. And what he wants more than anything as his reward is you.

And all the rest of the people out there, who many of them are ignoring him day in and day out. And many of them will ignore him to their grave.

And of course, that is on them. But he wants as many people as he can to listen and hear this gospel message, that he died for their sins, and come to him that they might receive eternal life, that they might live with him forever.

That's the reward that he is looking for. That is the reward that Paul is laboring for, is running for. And that is a reward that all of us as Christians ought to be looking for as well.

That the lamb who was slain would receive the reward of his suffering. Amen. Amen. Let's finish up there.

[46 : 08] Father, you sent your son Jesus, who did a work, an amazing work, an incredible work that's hard to even imagine. Going from heaven, coming to earth, humbling yourself, dying on a cross, all because of your love for us.

Father, based on this passage this morning, we ask that you would continue to work in us, to will and to do, if you're good pleasure, to live Christian lives that are pleasing to you, and that we would shine as lights in a dark world, that people would see that the work that you do in us actually changes people, changes our hearts.

And that would open up their eyes, and open up their minds, and maybe open up their hearts, Father, to inquire, to look into what it is that has changed us. The God and the message of the gospel that has caused us to go from death unto life, to go from hearts of stone to hearts that are soft towards others, that love even those who are unlovely and unlovable.

Father, I ask if there's anybody in this room that has not taken the message of the gospel to heart, maybe because they haven't heard it before, or maybe just because life's too busy, and there are other more interesting things, but might take that message that Jesus died for your sins, take that to heart, and say yes to that gift this morning.

Say yes, I want to receive the gift of eternal life paid for by Jesus Christ. Father, also work in us as believers to open up our mouth, even when it's difficult, even when it's challenging.

[48 : 07] I'm thinking of myself most of all. To speak the gospel message when opportunities arise, and sometimes, even when the opportunity isn't there, we'll make the opportunity, because it's that important.

Put a passion in our hearts for the gospel, that the lamb that was slain would receive the reward of his suffering. We thank you for all this. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Thank you, everybody.