

2/21/21 - 1 Thes. 3:1-5 - "The Paradox of Christian Maturity"

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[0 : 00] I got to ask you a moment. I need you to think in your archives of your memory, certain seasons or different time periods in life where it seems as if you've reached a specific destination.

When you think about those experiences, you may recall the famous vacation, that moment where you get down to Florida, after all the stress that you've just walked through in Youngstown, you just leave it behind and you're looking forward to that destination being a time where you kick your sandals off, dig your feet in the sand, sit on that beach chair.

And yes, I'm lusting right now. And yeah, I love vacation. It's been a couple of years since I was able to do that. But man, just a relief, right?

Getting on vacation. Yes, many stresses along the way at times. The family members that always constantly have to use the bathroom every couple of miles, that can't hold their bladders.

The breaks. And obviously, when you're trying to get through Ohio and West Virginia, you're dodging cones basically all along the way, depending on what season you're traveling.

[1 : 28] Vacation destination. Getting to that moment where you're just, we've finally made it. We're here. We can rest and relax. Let's take a load off and just relax now.

Let's get comfortable. As we go into the third chapter, specifically the second half of this third chapter, we enter into what seems to be a section of passage which places great emphasis upon time, which places great emphasis upon the moments that we have on this earth.

And we're going to see that in just a moment as we open his word in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, starting in verse 6. But we're going to see something vital, is that every moment on this earth should never be taken for granted.

Every moment on this earth should never be taken for granted. And in context with my story of the vacation, even our times of reaching a certain destination should not be taken for granted.

And we'll tell you why in just a moment. Let's turn to the Lord's word in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, starting in verse 6. And we'll be reading all the way to the end of the chapter to verse 13.

[2 : 58] 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, starting in verse 6, reads, For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before the Lord. As we pray most earnestly night and day, that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Now, may our Lord God and the Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you.

So that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. This is the word of the Lord.

The sermon title today is Pressing Forward in Our Faith. And this text, I believe, helps us clearly see that even though Paul was forced out of Thessalonica prematurely, we see that each moment of that separation was spent in prayer day and night.

[4 : 42] We see that from the passage today. Earlier in chapter 2, verse 9, we saw that even the moments with that church, he was laboring very hard day and night as well.

So he wouldn't cause a financial burden to that young church plant. These moments of prayer, of work, were times that Paul could have acted upon his own agenda.

Did what he wanted to do. He could have financially benefited from this church. Or in his separation, he could have just kicked off his sandals and said, Well, I guess that's not my problem anymore.

I'll go on to Athens, right? Instead, we see his heart was committed to the work of the gospel regardless of what moments he faced.

We've had numerous opportunities to look over our own lives over the past several weeks to challenge the depths of our affections that we have for one another, as Paul was an imitative example of those affections that we should share in our midst.

[5 : 48] And additionally, we have had opportunities to grow in our mental preparedness for afflictions that we are promised will come along our way in our walk, in various severities depending upon our immediate circumstances.

And as we look upon God's word today, we are challenged in our faith as we analyze that our very moments on this earth are to be handled in a stewardship sense.

And hopefully, it will weigh our stewardship against what the Bible says we should be weighing that stewardship against. We will balance that and compare it with the word of God today.

And today, we will see the progressive nature of our faith journey, and that this will often be a never-ending pursuit of progress and growth in holiness, as each moment on earth is an opportunity to be used in the maturing of our faith.

It's a continual process. We're going to talk about that today. But I must say, because of the content we're going to be discussing, I want you to be informed that I stand here before you today as a man making progress along with you.

[7 : 07] I am nobody special. And I would be a fool to think that I don't need the very words that I preach. So while it might be a couple steps up here, just so I can see all your wonderful faces all the way in the back, it means nothing.

We're all in this together. And I hope that you sense that in the sermon today. So let's do that right now. And as we do, pray that the Lord may open our eyes, our hearts, and our ears to the message that he has for us through the Bible.

And help us be changed by it. Let's have a word of prayer as we go into a couple of sections of passage. We're going to break this up into three different sections and various verses.

Let's pray at this moment. I'm reading an excerpt out of The Valley of Vision by Arthur Bennett.

Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, thou hast brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths, but see thee in the heights.

Hemmed in by mountains of sin, I behold thy glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way up is the way down.

[8 : 20] That to be low is to be high. That to have a broken heart is a healed heart. That the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit.

That the repenting soul is the victorious soul. That to have nothing is to possess all. That to bear the cross is to wear the crown. That to give is to receive.

That the valley is the place of vision. Amen. Let's go into the first section of passage today.

It's titled Timothy's Triumphal Return to Paul. We see in verse 6 as we read, but now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you.

For this reason, Timothy's report, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith. But now we live if you are standing fast in the Lord.

[9 : 28] If you recall last week, it was Timothy who was commissioned to be a messenger for Paul and Silas. They've departed.

It is a forced departure to Athens. And so they sent Timothy back and that he was to serve at this moment in time as not only a messenger to gather some intel of the status of how this church was doing, but also to walk alongside of this young church plant and to encourage them, sort of like an interim encouragement at this time.

You know, back in the day when sending U.S. mail was a thing, you know, now we got email these days and text messages.

It used to be a pretty exciting process. The process of preparing a letter and writing it out, spending time within that letter and stamping it, putting it into this land of unknown, you know, the scary moment of you second guess if you put everything in that letter and you drop it in the thing.

And I mean, at that point, it's too late. It's gone. This used to be a thing. Now that we live in a very technological era, it might be uncommon.

[10 : 44] But there's great anticipation when you sent that letter back, especially when you're awaiting a return, a reply. And often that would take up to three to four weeks to get a response back.

And if you were in the military back in the 60s and 70s, this was a time where you're wondering if the person out in battle is still breathing.

And so you send those letters out similar to how Paul and Silas have sent Timothy out. I could imagine the great anticipation of waiting, those minutes turning the hours, the days to weeks, the weeks to months, waiting for Timothy to return with a report.

And it was this anticipation that Paul sent Timothy. Paul was supremely concerned about the potential of the faltering of this church's faith that we saw last week, that Satan maybe has capitalized and created an opportunity of dissolving that church and weakening the witness.

But to Paul's great relief, according to this passage, Timothy returned to him with two reports in verse 6. Can you find him? He reports good news about their faith and their love.

[12 : 01] And also, not only that, but they remember Paul and also long to see him. You see, deep, there's a deep connection within the relationship, the connection between a pastor and his congregation, isn't there?

Paul was greatly comforted, according to verse 7, by this report. He was greatly comforted by his spiritual children in Paul's distress and affliction.

And amid such hostility against the message of the gospel during this day, even knowing the fact that Christ's church is united in mutual affection and mutual affliction is a marveling connection stirred by only God.

Not only was this church standing, according to this verse and this passage, they were standing fast. We see that in verse 8, or in some translations, if you have another translation, they were standing firm.

They weren't just standing. And for this reason, Paul felt, Paul's very life was contingent upon the steadfastness of this church.

[13 : 17] Wow. Think about what he's saying in this passage for just a moment. I think we have to pause and really marvel at the reality that Paul says in verse 8, for now we live if you are standing fast in the Lord.

What a connection. Many in our day might label that as codependency. That really, Paul, you live depending upon what's going on over here?

Paul's saying yes. Yes. One of the things I love most about Paul's writing is how he's a real person. He's raw in his writings. He's the most honest about himself, his feelings, his fears, his doubts, his shortcomings. And this is why his example leads, kind of piggybacking off of the message last week, a paradox of how we can embrace that which the world tells us to avoid.

Avoiding those negative emotions. Knowing that God uses those in a paradoxical fashion. That what brings us low, God uses to bring us to our knees in prayer.

[14 : 38] And Paul knew this and he embraced that very element. Wouldn't that be such a relief? Wouldn't that be such a relief? Knowing that the very doubtful thoughts of potential suffering of this dispersed church in Thessalonica, the potential, the thoughts of that possibly being so, but also having being met, those doubts being met with the joyful reality that it is not the case.

They are standing strong and they are standing firm. This imagery brings to mind that of a military army standing at attention.

Our backs completely straight, chin up, ready with a weapon in hand. They are all lined up, ready for the next charge from their commander.

So you can imagine, they're standing firm. They are standing firm in their faith in the gospel. We might often ask at these moments in time, looking around for the commander, asking, now what? Now what? Paul received a message. Maybe this will help him sleep at night. Your codependent relationship that you have with us, now you can sleep at night, Paul.

[16 : 03] All right? I gave you good news. No, it's not it at all. Here's the thing. The mutual edification between a pastor and a congregation never reaches sort of this relational plateau or spiritual climax that until our lives are actually united with Jesus Christ in eternity towards that inheritance that lays waiting ahead.

So the reality of standing firm in our faith, it is often at times when things are going well, church, hear me today, that things begin to fall apart for those who become comfortable.

For Paul, he knew this intel was not simply to bring him rest. It was great joy that his doubts were met with assurance that God was continuing that work, and it was indeed they were standing strong.

For Paul, it wasn't just collecting intel to help him sleep, but to direct what his next step would be to care for this church. They're standing strong, ready for a commander to direct the next step.

So he continues with what that next step will be, and we see that in the second section of passage as we continue in verse 9, where he says, For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you?

[17 : 21] For all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day, that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Verse 9 and 10 in the second section offer a rhetorical question that can be summarized similar to, what would be an adequate thanksgiving to offer to God for all the joy that we feel to God because of you?

That hearing this report, what can we do? We can't just, it's not good enough to go to a mountaintop and shout, Great is our God!

Should we dance? Should we pray? What should we do? What can we offer to God because of the joy that we feel from this report? And the moment, as we're speaking of moments, that Paul capitalizes upon after receiving his report is utter thanksgiving.

And this is a huge element, and actually it's interesting how the Holy Spirit works and is alive in this church. I'm reminded of it specifically in our gatherings on Sunday morning because what Rick said, without him knowing, is literally what I had planned to say at this moment about thanksgiving.

[18 : 47] Because this is an offering to God, our thanksgiving. That we bring to God, similar to the sacrifice in the Old Testament, that is a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

And we learn that about thanksgiving in this passage of how Paul received that news. And we ought to heed those moments of returning our thanksgiving back to him as well, similar to that of our first fruits, giving back to God.

Because the reality is this church, an adequate offering of thanksgiving, is a heart consumed in adoration of who God is. It's the condition of your heart which drives your thanksgiving.

And Paul was not concerned about his sleep at night. I'm sure it was a problem for him. But what he was concerned about were his spiritual children.

And in addition to the offer of thanksgiving, Paul and Silas use this moment to offer prayers night and day. Meaning without ceasing.

[19 : 52] When they wake up in the morning, they offer their prayers. When they go to bed at night, they offer their prayers. That they may see them face to face. And get this. Look in verse 10.

And supply what is lacking in your faith. Say what? To supply what's lacking in our faith, Paul. You just said yourself we're standing firm. What else do you want us to do? Right? From the Thessalonians audience's perspective of this.

Supply what is lacking in our faith. Paul, things are going great. People are coming to know Jesus. They're getting baptized. We see this revival happening.

Even some of those Jews that you were debating in the synagogue have come to know Jesus.

What are you talking about? Supply what's lacking in our faith. We're standing firm just like you said.

[20 : 55] Church. It's at times when the church is standing firm that we often get comfortable and begin letting our guard down. When our guard lets down, we get comfortable.

And when we get comfortable at the church, disaster only awaits. What Paul is saying here is that he knows the pride that has a tendency of creeping in when things are going well.

He's not a victim of that reality. And in turn, Paul wants his spiritual children to continue walking in the truth. The church that stands firm in a progressive corporate endeavor that is carried out through continual commitment as a family of God.

This is sort of what is tying all the work of faith, the labor of love, and the steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that they weren't standing firm in the latest book that they got from Barnes & Noble that had a couple good points of how they can stand firm. The 10 steps to standing firm in your faith. It was something outside of anything carnal in this life.

[22 : 09] It was supernatural that they were standing firm. It was standing firm. Look in your Bible in verse 8. They were standing firm in the Lord. In the Lord.

Something outside of themselves. If you can remember back to chapter 1's sermons. The first step of standing firm is understanding that it is not the finish line.

That we're not working to a certain end of standing firm. It should be a goal, but it's not merely the finish line. It's in reality of sanctification, it's the starting point.

It's a continuous movement of work, of prayer, of bumps, of bruises. It's because the truth about it is when we're standing firm, we know we are standing firm because the enemy never sleeps.

And he hates the church. He hates us. There's no, there's so much truth in the saying that goes, we have never arrived.

[23 : 19] You ever hear that saying? That we will never arrive. We have never arrived. If any way tells you you've never arrived, you should probably have something to repent of.

Probably some spiritual pride or something along those lines. Well, I'm here to tell us and to remind us that we too have never arrived. You may have read the Bible from front to back.

You may have a bookshelf full of all these archives of all these theology books and things of that nature. But by no means have you ever arrived because of that.

We never arrive at a certain spiritual plateau or a spiritual climax. Maturity begins knowing that there is always much work to be done in our faith.

And we will never arrive this side of history. The beginning of standing firm in your faith is knowing you have not arrived yet. That's the beginning of standing firm in your faith.

[24 : 31] We live in a world of accomplishments. We celebrate accomplishments and things of that nature. And working towards goals.

You know, we had, my wife and I had a five-year goal of just, you know, not having kids and everything like that. And, you know, two years in the Lord told us, you know, may have known us that change of plans.

As Micah came merrily along. We have those accomplishments, those goals in life. And what we're going to call them in light of what we're titling this passage and this section is milestone moments.

Milestone moments. And these milestone moments in life in general, you don't have to be a Christian to experience these milestone moments. There's times with great joy.

With great accomplishment. With great achievement. Similar to those times of walking down the aisle at graduation from high school. Or college.

[25 : 37] Those milestone moments of getting married. For the first time ever. Your parents just simply joyed. It's just being a time of rejoicing.

Having your first kids. Having your first grandkids. Buying your first house. Having your first job. All being those milestone moments that you reflect back on.

And there's even milestone moments in our faith journeys. There's those times where we have come to know Jesus Christ. That milestone moment.

When you got baptized in Jesus Christ. When you've read the entire Bible from front to back. Milestone moments. Or maybe finishing a book.

If there's anybody else in here that has the half book syndrome. You start a book and then you get bored. And then you start another book. And so you got bookmarks halfway through a bunch of these books. I guess that's probably just ingrained with our culture of getting bored very easily.

[26 : 39] But I'm just interested in a lot of topics. So I'll swing that in a good sense. Yeah. These milestone moments.

And we have to ponder at this moment. When we reach those milestone moments. Could you imagine the disaster that would await for a graduate from college.

To all of a sudden work and study so hard to get that cum laude ribbon around their neck. Just to walk with great honor.

And then just to maybe go sit on their butt the rest of their life. Maybe spend the next year of just relaxation. Kicking back a little bit. Eating Taco Bell.

You know. Just relax. Live the college life. Could you imagine getting married during these milestone moments. And thinking that marriage is the finish line.

[27 : 35] Well I guess the. You know. I don't have to fit in my wedding dress anymore. You know. Well. Taco Bell. Here we come. Right. It's been a while since I used a Bob Evans reference. Maybe Bob Evans.

Here we come. Or maybe those milestone moments of having kids. Just neglecting parenting. Just let the kids do whatever they want.

Forget parenting. Forget raising them in the Lord. Now could you imagine getting to milestone moments in our faith. Reading the Bible from front to back and saying. Whew. I guess I could be a little bit easier on myself. I don't have to read as much this year. Ooh. Maybe I hit a chord with you. Or maybe thinking that. Oh. Once you finish that book. You're good. That was your book for the year. You can just put on cruise control. Milestone moments. Milestone moments in our lives.

[28 : 32] Can lead to momentum. Or it can lead to laziness. However. Knowing that we will never arrive.

Church. Open your ears today. The church keeps pressing forward. To always supply. What is lacking in our faith. Because on this side of history. Our faith is going to be continuously lacking. That we have to continuously be working at. It is a very challenging process. Which is why Paul's heart seemed to stress.

The corporate. There is a lot of one another. In this passage. The corporate communal endeavor of the church. Knowing God has organized us together for this very purpose. For our health. So that we stand firm. Not only solo. But corporately. Standing firm. Standing firm. Is a corporate endeavor.

[29 : 30] It is not solo. As we reach verse 11. We see the testimony of love. And we're going to talk about what that corporate endeavor looks like.

Verse 11. It says. Now may our God and Father himself. And our Lord Jesus. Direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase. And abound in love for one another. And for all. As we do for you. So that he may establish your hearts. Blameless. In holiness. Before our God and Father.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus. With all his saints. Verse 11. And we see the communal endeavor of pressing on. Is done so. By our God and Father himself.

And our Lord Jesus. Directing their way. That Paul was saying. Essentially. Putting his money where his mouth is. That he can make his plans all he wants.

[30 : 31] He knows beyond a doubt. That the Lord directs his steps. As the Proverbs say. In verse 12. He continues. That standing firm.

Is not only. Known as this mindless. Sort of ritualistic. Corporate endeavor. It's not just a checklist item. The least bit. But rather it is driven.

It's driven by something. It's fueled by something. It's fueled by love for one another. And this love is experienced. Internally. Within the assembly of the church.

From within. And also externally. Outside of the assembly of the church. So around us. Verse 12 says. That this is imitative. As we do.

For you. Love is a testimony of a church. Love is a testimony of a church. That their. Their hearts are established.

[31 : 32] And blameless. One of the health of the church. One of the health of the church. See how much they love. Established and blameless.

In our corporate pursuit. Of holiness. Until the eschatological. End of life. Or the second coming of Christ. That while we are. While we are working.

And laboring together. In our faith. We are never arriving. The least bit. We are always striving. To push forward. We are doing this. In a manner.

That we're doing it together. The love of a church community. Is the testimony of grace. To the watching world. The world's watching us. And specifically. If you're a high profile church.

They're watching you. With a microscope. Waiting for. Waiting to destroy. And distort the message. Of a church. And no wonder. It seems like churches. Are at each other's throats.

[32 : 27] You know. These days. I mean. Satan wants to destroy the church. Just as it was hindering the church. Back in this. First century. Thessalonian area. Satan's been at it.

For a very long time. And you can see it. All over the news. And all over social media. It's like. There's always something going on. With arguments within the church. And now this isn't saying. That the church.

Isn't naturally divided. By sound doctrine. It is. When you start proclaiming. Jesus Christ. It's like the threshing floor. Of sound doctrine. That the chaff. Will be blown away.

The things that aren't biblical. The things that don't align. With scripture. And scripture's intention. Will blow away. Like chaff. And the Lord will make it so. But sound doctrine. Is that which.

Which separates that. So. We should never. Divide over. Non-essential issues. Of non-doctrinal issues. Similar to like. What music style we play. Or maybe.

[33 : 22] What amenities. We have available to you. We have mints. Fresh mints. At the counter. For when you walk in. Enjoy your time. And stay. And we have a butler. For you. A concierge. From Youngstown Metro. To serve your every need.

Welcome to Youngstown Metro. How would that be. How would that be. We should divide. On sound doctrinal issues.

Because. I want us to connect this. In this passage today. If you haven't. If you're just waking up. From your morning nap. In the sermon. Wake up now. Because it is a profound reality. Church. It's a profound reality. To understand. That sound doctrine. Is the fiber. Of love. And unity. Of a church. Any means.

Of love. Or unity. Within a church. That isn't based on. On sound doctrine. Is just a facade. It just works. Without any. Any conviction. It's uniting.

[34 : 19] We all want to be united. In this country. Right? But there's going to be. Certain tensions. That will divide us. Especially ones. That are relating to. The issues of sound doctrine.

This is because. You cannot have sound doctrine. Apart from Christ. And this world. Doesn't want Christ. It was clear. On the cross.

Of Calvary. But we know. We need to connect. The testimony. Of love. Of the church. Knowing that. Love is impossible.

To achieve. Without sound doctrine. And so. If the testimony. Of the church. Is love. We can apply that. Meaning that. That is an expression. Of sound doctrine. The most unloving thing.

That we can do. For one another. And the world. Watching world around. Is too marginalized. Sound doctrine. This was the essence. Of Paul's prayer. In verse 11. Through 13. For the Thessalonians.

[35 : 18] Not only. To see them again. Which was actually granted. Seven years later. He did see them again. In Acts 20. You can read about it. Later today. But also.

That they would. They would love. They would have love. For one another. And that they would have. Love for all. And not only that. But that it would grow.

God did not arrange. On earth. A social club. Known as. The church. Or Youngstown Metro. God didn't arrange. A social club. We do socialize.

At our gatherings. But it's not merely. A social club. It's not for our entertainment. While we wait. For the day of glory. To come. Many treat church. In this manner. Not here.

But just generally speaking. In Western culture. John MacArthur says. In light of the fact. That God loved the world. And sent his son. To die for human sin.

[36 : 14] As John 3.16. Illuminates. Believers are. Who were loved. When they were unloving. Are to love. Unbelievers. Did you catch that?

There's a lot of. Word play there. Believers are. Who were loved. Previously. When they were still in sin. When they were unloving. According to Romans 5.8. Are to love.

Unbelievers. In the same. Love that God. Lavished upon. Us. When we were still. Sinners. And church. The sincerity. Of our commitment. To Christ. Is not only tested.

Within the church. But equally. In our commitment. To those around. The church. This is a testing ground. You want to know. How you're standing firm. How you're growing. In your faith. Well this is the testing.

Now this is ground zero. Within the life of the church. This is a litmus test. For growing. In holiness. God has. Multipurpose. Love. Within the church.

[37 : 11] Body. Not only to dwell. With among us. That we should be connected. And united in love. And that being sound doctrine. But also. It should spill. Outside. Of our assembly. Whether these walls.

Are here or not. The government. Might take away our walls. But we'll still. Figure out a way. To meet. As the church. Has endured. Throughout the ages. It should spill out.

From our assembly. So by logical conclusions. If sound doctrine. Is the driving force of love. Then it takes more. Than just acts of kindness. We can't just be a good person. And help the lady.

Across the street. Hold the door for somebody. But it's rather words. If sound doctrine. Is intact. And it's supposed to be. An expression. A testimony. To the watching world.

And we are commanded. According to the scripture. To love all. As we love one another. We know that it takes words. We can't be silent. In that endeavor.

[38 : 05] And it takes. Proclamation of Jesus Christ. Now. Of course. This is only true. Once we understand. The progressive nature. Of our sanctification.

That we have not arrived. Standing firm. Is not the starting line. It's the starting line. It's not the finish line. But in fact. If there is any holiness.

In man. It is found on the basis. Of love. It's found on the basis. Of love for one another. Which stems authentically. From your heart. And this aspect.

Of sanctification. Is where we are at now. Church. This is us. Here and now. Between the already. The cross of Christ. And the not yet.

The second coming of Christ. As this passage talks about. And it will continue. Until our last breath. Or until Christ's return. This is the progression. Of our lives. As Christians.

[39 : 01] Being among other believers. And until then. Church. We stand firm. Knowing that the enemy. Never takes a vacation. In this life. And nor do we. In our faith.

Take a vacation. We continuously work out. Our sanctification. As we close. I want us to. To consider. An excerpt.

Paul David Tripp. Is one of my favorite authors. And one of his resources. Is called Dangerous Calling. And it's been an encouragement. I wanted to share. A couple tidbits out of that.

In an article. From him. To help us. And to challenge us. As a church. Of if we're sort of. Using these milestone moments. In life. Sort of as a.

An opportunity to say. Man finally. I made it. And we've been kind of. In this season. Of just laziness. And lack of motivation. And those milestone moments.

[39 : 56] Moments haven't like. Propelled us. To continue on. I believe that these. These couple points will. These five points. Will help us. To think. And to foster. An attitude of growth.

So Paul says. If you think you've arrived. Number one. You won't feel the need. For daily meditative. Communion with Christ. He says. It's not about.

How many times. You read through. Your Bible. Or how much. You are working. So we can. Practically say. Maybe in our context.

Maybe. It might be a good routine. For us to. Review. Sermon notes. Throughout the week. Maybe it would be a good time. To start. Taking sermon notes. If you're not a note taker.

Right now. To review. Throughout the week. Or maybe look around this room. There's quite a few people. Around this room. Who might you be able to meet with. For coffee. Throughout the week.

[40 : 49] Maybe after you get off work. And just meet. Meet with. And read over the Bible. Or just be mutual encouragement. To one another. Or. Maybe you have trouble. Reading the Bible.

Many people do. And this is actually. Something that's. That is being made. Known to me. More and more. As I go through life. Is just people. Open up the Bible. And they just don't. Understand how to. Necessarily read it. And apply it. Well I would encourage you. To possibly get a good. Bible commentary. To take that along with you. In your readings. And the commentaries. Serve as a good.

Conversation partner. About the text. Because we know. Awareness of sin. And the promise of salvation. Daily drives you. To Christ. Not to rush through. A passage in his word.

And say a quick prayer. But to sit at the feet. And grieve your sin. And give praise. For the grace. That meets you in it. Thinking you have arrived. Church. Crushes personal worship.

[41 : 45] The second point. That Paul mentions. If you think you've arrived. You will take credit. For successes. That only grace. Can produce. We cannot remind ourselves.

Enough. He says. That without. Without his presence. Power and grace. Our lives are empty. So remind yourself. Never to take credit.

For the powerful. Divine. Sovereign. Grace. In your life. A dead man. Can't make himself live. Right? Number three.

You will feel entitled. To what. You could never earn. Or achieve. Entitlement. Always seems. To follow pride. If you think.

You've earned. Blank. Then you will think. You deserve. Blank. If you're entitled. To anything. From God. There's any entitlement.

[42 : 42] That we deserve. It's his wrath. And that's the story. Of the gospel. And that. We can say. That we are entitled. To. Is God's wrath.

So be on guard. That's a smug. Expectation. Of blessing. Will cause you. To not only question. The appreciation. Of the people around you. But also. The goodness. Of God. And number four. If you think you. If you still think. You've arrived. You will be less watchful. And protective. When it comes to. Temptation. And sin. Arrival.

Causes you. To be. Too self-assured. Being. Self-assured. Causes you. To make. Unwise choices. Unwise choices. Expose you.

To temptation. And sin. And pride. Causes you. To think. You can handle. The exposure. And before long. You have. Fallen. Flat.

[43 : 38] Fight the temptation. Of arrival. So you don't forget. The daily war. In your heart. Or that war. Will overcome you. With greater force. Than your flesh. Can bear.

And then lastly. Number five. If you think. You've arrived. You still think. You've arrived. Arrival. Loads. More. In your life. Than you can. Responsibly.

Handle. Arrival. Loads. More. In your life. Than you can. Responsibly. Handle. Pride. Causes you. To accept. More. Responsibility. Than you can. Actually bear. The sense.

Of responsibility. Leads. To self-glorification. Which makes you. Think. That you're. An essential. To God's work. The danger. That you are. The center. Of his work.

In fact. That all. The. All the centuries. Of Christian life. Were hindered. Because. You weren't around. That everything hinges. On your involvement.

[44 : 32] Within kingdom. Work. How foolish. We can be. So create boundaries. Within your limits. And true character. And your strengths. Ask what.

Ask God. What he has created you for. And a specific service. And prioritize that. Appropriately. And try not to do everything. Lest you take all the glory.

I hope these. These points are helpful to us. As we ponder the sermon. Throughout this week. And maybe our own instances. Where we may think that. We arrive. Church.

We have to close. And I gotta say. That we are at war. We're at war. A war rages. Within our hearts. It wages around us.

But let this war. Never rage. Within us. Within the church. To ignore. Or minimize. Those wars. Will set. An eventual defeat.

[45 : 33] The very thing. That. That Paul. Was so doubtful. And fearful of. That would happen. In Thessalonica. Is the war. That. We cannot minimize. Within our own midst.

And let grace. And love. And love. And love. And love. Always. Abound. Within Youngstown Metro Church. Because we know. That forgiven people. Will be forgiving people.

And by that. We can be assured. That love. Will abound. May our milestone moments. Keep propelling us. Forward. In life. Keeping our gaze.

Upon God. And rise to the battle church. And let us always. Be growing. In what is lacking.

Together. Together. We've never arrived. And as we grow together.

In love. Which is sound doctrine. Let us do this. In word. And action. We have not arrived. But one day. We will. Let's pray. Let us pray.

[46 : 39] massa' Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. One day. Two day. One day. One day. One day. Two day. One day. Those day. Two day. And out there. Two day. One day. One day. One day. One day. Two day. One day. One day. One day. century.

Two day. One day. One day. Eight day. One day. One day. Two day. Three day.