

Good morning.

I'll be reading from Ephesians chapter 4, verse 12 through 16.

Ephesians 4, 12 through 16.

To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,

to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly,

makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

That view should be good to go.

Yeah, there we go.

All right.

Let's pray one more time.

Need the Lord's help this morning.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word.

And we do ask that you would speak this morning.

Lord, we trust that as we read your word, you are speaking.

And Lord, we trust that as insofar as I accurately describe and explain the meaning of your word,

and what Paul, inspired by your Holy Spirit, intended to communicate through your word this morning, that you are speaking to us.

Lord, we're thankful for your word.

We're thankful for your church.

We're thankful for the Holy Spirit that indwells us and inspired your word.

And Lord, we just ask that you would move in our hearts, that you would renew our minds, that you would shape and fashion us for your glory.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

All right, we're wrapping up our little mini-series on our new vision statement.

New vision statement is summed up in three words.

It's more than this, but three words that sum up the vision statement for your remembering convenience.

That's not really a sentence, but I'm just going to be making up a lot of sentences today, I've decided.

Is hear, hope, and help.

We hear the word of God, right?

We hear the word of God because God creates just as we sung.

He creates through his word.

He spoke the world into existence, and he's still creating by his word in our hearts, like in people's hearts.

The God who said, let light shine out of darkness, who spoke light into being at the beginning, is still shining that light into the hearts of people through the word of Christ, through the gospel.

which is the second one, hope, right?

So it's not merely enough to hear the word of God or to hear sounds come out of somebody's mouths or see inkblots on a page or to hear those certain sounds in an order, but there has to be understanding.

And from that understanding, a vision of God, right?

We behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

And when we see his beauty and we see his worth

We're moved to hope and we're moved to trust and put our life in his hands and we're transformed from the inside out.

We talked a little bit about how that works last week.

We're actually, for half of the sermon today, gonna talk about how that works again from a different angle.

But when we run at it from this angle,

we'll see how we're called to help each other in that endeavor, right?

How we're called to help each other hear and hope, hear the word of God and hope in God as we hear it.

And not just here within these walls, but around the world as well.

We'll apply it a little more broadly as we get to the end.

Have you ever noticed that certain people do things in a uniquely beautiful way, right?

That there's a lot of people do things, do certain things, like a lot of people play basketball, but Steph Curry in particular, we talked about him a little last week, we'll just bring him up again.

You'll notice that I'm not talking about LeBron James because I'm a bitter Cleveland fan, so...

We'll talk about Steph Curry, made my peace with him.

He's loyal.

Steph Curry plays in a really beautiful way, right?

Really beautiful.

He plays basketball, does a thing that a lot of people do, but in a uniquely beautiful way.

Or Taylor Swift in singing and writing songs, right?

Now, I know there's mixed opinions on this,

Exactly how beautifully she does this.

But I mean, selling out lots of stadiums and stuff like that, not an easy thing to do.

She does it in a uniquely beautiful way.

Or Frank Lloyd Wright with houses.

You know when you look at a house.

Generally speaking, you know that it's a Frank Lloyd Wright house because he designs houses, builds houses in a uniquely beautiful way.

And I think one of the reasons that we appreciate these people so much is that at some point in our lives, we've tried to do these things, right?

Or we've tried to do something that requires skill.

Maybe even you've had lessons in certain areas, like music lessons or cooking lessons, or maybe you played basketball and you had a coach who was trying to teach you how to play the sport.

Well, typically, when you get lessons, the first thing you do

is that you learn some basic rules and fundamentals, right?

Rules and fundamentals of the trade.

You gotta dribble the ball when you run, or you gotta keep your elbow in when you shoot.

Or if you're writing songs, you gotta write with a consistent meter and rhyme scheme, and that's gotta match your melody, right?

Or, you know, if you're building houses, you've gotta know the strength and the capacity of your materials and how they're best utilized.

There's just basics, right?

There's some fundamental basics you've gotta know.

And early on in your journey,

into these disciplines, you've got to consciously and strictly follow these rules in those disciplines.

You've got to think about it.

You've got to think about it a lot because they haven't become second nature yet.

You haven't had that repetition or that experience within that certain skill set so that it's become really a part of who you are.

But eventually, if you stick with it long enough and the Lord has blessed you with an opportunity

acumen, is that the right word, towards it, your skill will reach a point where you're no longer just doing the basics, you're no longer just doing things technically correct, but it becomes beautiful.

And I think we've all seen people that are really good at doing the technicalities correctly, like kind of Tim Duncan.

There's a certain beauty to Tim Duncan, but he was just basically technically correct.

And I know a lot of people that really hate Tim Duncan because they thought he was boring, right?

He's just, you know, mechanical, boom, bag shot in, right?

Whereas Steph Curry, beautiful, flowing, right?

Beautiful.

So yeah, there's a difference between beauty and doing things technically correct.

Again, Steph Curry definitely plays fundamentally sound basketball, but it's much more than that.

Taylor Swift's songs definitely rhyme, but they're much more than that.

Or Frank Lloyd Wright's houses are certainly structurally sound, but they're more than that too.

These people don't just know about basketball or about songwriting or about building houses.

They know them, right?

That's the kind of knowledge that Paul's talking about here in verse 13.

He describes this knowledge.

We'll reread 13 in a minute.

But if you go back to chapter 3, 14 to 19, he's talking about that same kind of knowledge that he mentions in verse 13.

He says, "...for this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all of the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge."

that you may be filled with the fullness of Christ.

How do you know something that surpasses knowledge?

I submit to you that Steph Curry, Taylor Swift, Frank Lloyd Wright knows something that surpasses knowledge about their fields, right?

They know those things in a way that transcends just knowing about them.

Look at chapter five, eight to 10.

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light.

And the Lord walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

So this is right after Paul gives one of his few ultimate lists of do's and don'ts.

So at the end of chapter 4 and beginning of 5, Paul's given out all the technicalities.

Don't steal.

Don't lie.

And live with one.

Don't get angry.

And if you do, don't let the sun go down on your anger.

He goes through all these lists of do's and don'ts.

And he gets to the end of the list and he says, try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Like, Paul, didn't you just tell us?

What is pleasing to the Lord?

Why do I got to try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord?

It's because there's a knowledge of Christ that surpasses knowledge, right?

There's a knowing Christ that surpasses knowing about Christ or just knowing the technicalities.

There's a being and a beautiful becoming that goes beyond just performance and checking the boxes.

So how do we do it?

How do we help one another do that?

Because in our passage here, in chapter 4, verse 13, we find out that the church is supposed to impart this knowledge to its members.

So how are we supposed to give this knowledge that surpasses understanding to our brothers and sisters?

Or another way to put it, how are we to help our brothers and sisters hear the word of Christ and hope

In God.

If this surpasses understanding, we can't just download this data into you in a Sunday school class.

It requires discernment.

It's not just a box you can check off and then move on.

But rather, it requires growth.

Kind of like an art.

You can teach technicalities like an art, but ultimately, you've got to spend time with a master and see it.

and absorb it that way.

So how do we do it?

I think Paul's telling us here in chapter four that we each help to bring the truth of Christ to bear on our hearts and lives by speaking the truth in love or truthing in love.

We'll look at that in a second with our unique gifts, with our unique gifts.

We're just basically gonna break up these couple of verses that Lee helpfully read for us and basically two parts.

Our goal, which we've kind of already stated, but we'll look at it real quick from this new angle that Paul gives us.

Our goal, but then also our role in how we bring about that goal.

So our goal here is stated positively in verse 13 and then negatively in verse 14.

So look at chapter 4, verse 13.

And we'll see this goal that we're working towards.

It says, until we all attain to the unity, or let's go back to verse 12.

To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness.

So he basically uses three phrases here to describe this positive goal that the church is building itself up towards.

That God has equipped certain people with unique gifts that we'll look at in a second to build itself up towards.

One, the first way he describes it is unity of faith.

Unity around our hope in Jesus.

And his work in our new birth that he brings about in each of us that are members of his church.

And essentially united around what he did in the past.

United around what he did when he died on the cross and what he did when we responded in faith and were born again.

As we become more and more assured of that promise and work that he did, our hearts and in our lives will increase in love toward one another the way that Christ has loved us.

So as we grow into and experience more fully what he did, that will further unite us.

Another way that he says it, or rephrases it, is the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.

So this is not just, as we've said, knowing a lot of stuff about Jesus, though it is important to know stuff about him, but really we're talking about what it's like to be like Jesus.

What is it like to be like Jesus, to walk like him?

to talk like him, to think like him, to love like him, to comfort like him, to rebuke like him.

Your life and your behavior, believe it or not, is a direct, though often imperfect, reflection of how you view Jesus.

What our lives often reveal, how we're viewing Jesus, at least in that moment, more clearly than our words do.

R.C.

Sproul puts it this way, he says, no Christian can avoid theology.

Every Christian is a theologian.

Perhaps not a theologian in the technical or professional sense, but a theologian nevertheless.

The issue for Christians is not whether we are going to be theologians, but whether we are going to be good theologians or bad ones.

How we live communicates how well we know Jesus, and we need others to help us grow in that.

We need others to help us grow in this knowing Jesus.

Again, not just knowing about him, but knowing Jesus.

So the last way that Paul describes this goal positively that we're working towards is mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Jesus is the perfect embodiment of godliness because he is God in the flesh.

He is who we look to as a standard of full, mature spiritual adulthood.

He's much more than that.

He's our atoning sacrifice.

He was a substitute, took our place, all that stuff.

Yes, I realize that.

So those of you that are hot on substitutionary atonement and all that stuff, that's fine.

I understand that.

But also, he is, God in the flesh, the embodiment of mature manhood, what it looks like to live a godly life.

So that's the goal, spiritual maturity, the full life of Jesus.

What's the opposite of that goal?

Or like, you know, this is what we're working towards, but what are we kind of moving away from or what are we trying to avoid here?

Well, he states it negatively in verse 14.

So that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

So the first way he describes what we're moving from and what we're trying to avoid is basically twofold, two characteristics that we would not be indecisive or easily fooled.

So two characteristics of childlike immaturity.

Probably the most vivid example of this in my mind was, we've gotten better at this over the years, but a few years ago,

decided to have leftovers for dinner.

We had a lot of leftovers in the fridge.

So it was choose your own dinner adventure.

Put everything out on the counter.

You got to pick it, heat it up.

So I go down the row with one of my kids in tow.

I won't name them because I've been told I'm not allowed to name my kids from the pulpit when I'm talking about this stuff.

So I go down the row with one of them.

We'll let you guess which one.

And I'm like, okay, you know, you got to pick some food here.

And they're like, well, I don't want any of it.

I'm like, well, you got to eat some of it.

And they're like, okay, I'll take some of that and I'll take some of that and I'll take a little bit of this.

So they picked their own plate.

I put it in the microwave.

They stood there right next to me, watched it in the microwave.

They didn't go anywhere.

I pulled it out of the microwave and you would think that it did some kind of magic act on it because they're like, that's not what I wanted.

I'm like, yes, that is what you wanted.

You just went and picked all of them and you put it in there and they're like, no, I'm not eating any of this.

And I'm like, forget it.

You know, like you can either eat it or you're not eating anything else the rest of the night, right?

So

This will be here for you if you want it.

Yeah, indecisive, right?

A sign of immaturity or easily fooled.

I mean, every grandpa loves playing jokes on their kids, right?

And just making, you know, just my grandfather, I remember sitting on his knee and him, you know, talking circles around me, you know, like with little word plays and jokes or, you know, little magic tricks and fooling us as kids.

We loved it, you know, but it's cute for a time.

But we grow out of that.

And if we don't grow out of it, there's a problem.

So childish immaturity, being kind of wishy-washy, indecisive, easily fooled.

And there's really two factors at play in that.

Two factors at play in being spiritually wishy-washy and gullible.

One is a lack of assurance of God's promises.

A lack or a failure to trust that God will come through on his promises.

and a lack of knowledge in the Son of God, or knowing stuff about Jesus, right?

So there's one, a lack of a willingness to embrace Jesus and to fully trust his promises, and also sometimes just a lack of awareness about what he said and actually promised.

There are people in this world, you know, on top of just like ignorance and our own not putting ourselves in a position to be able to hear those things and to be able to trust them, there's actually people who are actively trying to deceive you in the world, right?

That's why he says being tossed to and fro by the waves of this world, that there's actual spiritual warfare going on and there are people, forces trying to deceive you to use human cunning and craftiness

to sway you for their own gain.

So we need discernment, right?

We need maturity.

We need the wisdom that comes with maturity.

All right, so to sum up the goal is immaturity is being tossed to and fro by every new teaching or philosophy, not really knowing who we are or what we want.

Maturity, though, is the stability of a full life in Jesus and the full life of Jesus that comes to us through hope in his promises and knowing him.

right, and embracing and entrusting of his promises and knowing him.

All right, so again, last week, we looked at how we grow from the inside out.

How do we get up and grow into that maturity?

It's by beholding the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus.

So the question that Paul is bringing up that goal, you know, in the context of is how do we help each other experience that and grow up into community?

Or like, what's the role that we play in helping each other grow up into maturity in Christ?

Well, there's like an umbrella role, like a common role, and then there's our unique roles.

So if you want to think about it

There's like the one fundamental, right?

And the one basic rule.

And then there's us living it out beautifully in the unique situation and with unique giftings and personality and all that stuff that God has given us.

The common role is the one that pertains to all of us.

So we'll spend a little more time on that than the unique giftings.

But the common role is speaking the truth in love in verse 15.

It says,

Instead of being tossed to and fro and all that stuff.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ.

So this word, speaking the truth in love, that whole phrase actually comes out of one verb in the Greek.

And it's alethuetas.

It's my niece's name, not that way.

It's aletheia, it's truth, right?

So it's my niece's name.

And if I mispronounce it, I'm going to get in trouble.

So the verb is, though, truthing.

We kind of added speaking the truth in love because truthing sounds weird in English.

But the verb is actually truthing in love, which includes speaking, but it also includes more than that.

It's speaking and living the truth with others.

I had a professor who was living on campus at the time.

He and his wife were dorm parents for one of the girls' dorms on campus.

And a friend and I were going to go over and watch some football.

He's a big Steelers fan and a Browns fan.

I think the Steelers were playing the Browns.

We were going to go watch the game.

And my friend and I had found, this is before you could just share things via text or upload things onto Facebook, like

All you could do on Facebook was write some things and then create an album.

That was it.

And so there wasn't real easy ways to share videos and stuff like that.

But we found, I think on YouTube or something, something at the time, I don't remember, a video of this guy who was preaching.

And we'll just say that he was a very angry preacher and got very, very, very, like more than I've ever seen anybody angry in the pulpit, like violently angry in the pulpit.

And he was saying some of the most, like he was interpreting the word of God in the most ridiculous way I've ever heard anybody, no, I shouldn't say the most ridiculous, but one of the most ridiculous ways I've heard somebody interpret the word of God.

So he's saying these ridiculous things and he's saying them in a ridiculous way, very angry, like kind of scarily angry from the pulpit, like thought he was gonna break the pulpit type of thing.

And so my friends and I find these videos online and we think they're hilarious, right?

We're mocking him and just laughing at him, you know, and doing what,
immature college kids do.

And so we think my professor will enjoy this.

So we bring our laptops over because again, this is how he did it.

And we brought the laptops over and we're like, Hey Steve, check out this video.

And so we show him the video and instead of like yucking it up with us and mocking the guy along with us, he just kind of looks at it and he's just like, yeah, you know, just kinda with a, with a concerned look on his face.

So we didn't get it right away.

We were like, no, no, wait, you don't get it.

Let's find another video.

And so we found another video and we showed it to him and he responded in the same way.

And, you know, Steve didn't have to in that moment, he didn't have to say to us, you know, like, hey, you guys really shouldn't be laughing at this guy and mocking this guy.

this kind of anger and this kind of falsely representing, you know, God's word is going to have, you know, really severe impacts on both his life and the people that he's leading, right?

And there's just going to be some really negative consequences, both in the present and in the future for how he's behaving and handling God's word.

And that's just kind of sad, right?

We shouldn't be laughing at this guy, but we should be more concern for him and his congregation.

You didn't have to say any of that.

That was downloaded and registered immediately the second time.

We didn't get it the first time, but we got it the second time just by the way he acted.

That's truthing in love.

Sometimes we've got to say it, and often we've got to use words to truth and love.

We've got to speak the truth in love.

But sometimes just living a beautiful life and responding beautifully when others are responding in an ugly way and a sinful way is enough to convey that truth, right?

And is enough to help shine a light into that dark area.

So speaking or truthing in love is living a true life, a life that's true to our knowledge of Jesus, which I would just say often involves speaking.

I'm not trying to download the speaking...

you're gonna have to say hard stuff at some point in your life to people.

And we don't just say the hard stuff, right, though, but he says, in love, that we truth in love, that we speak the truth in love.

What happened when Jesus lived a true life here on earth?

He was despised, right?

John puts it this way, and this is the judgment.

The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things, here's the principle, hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed.

But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

So this is gonna happen

When we're truthing in love out in our communities, out in the world, I mean you can ask Jim Elliot and Nate Saint, right?

Truthing in love, killed for it.

You may lose a job, you may lose a position, you may lose status or be made fun of in your place of work or in your community.

But sometimes it even happens here at church.

It will happen.

I shouldn't say sometimes.

It will happen here at church because it's not easy having a light shine on the dark parts of your life and heart and have your faults exposed.

That's not easy.

Nobody wants to see their faults and their blemishes for what they really are.

And sometimes when somebody says something, even gently and in love, or somebody acts loving and is loving around you, sometimes it's hard to take.

It's hard to take and be confronted with your own sin.

I think you basically have two options, right?

When somebody confronts you with your sin, you can humbly acknowledge the sin and repent of that sin, knowing that all of our shame, all of our shame

was taken by Jesus on the cross and that we can experience his grace.

And however good you thought you were before your flaws were exposed, however good you thought you were, you were still accepted by grace in the first place.

Often the reason we have problems admitting our own flaws and our own shortcomings and sin is because we fail to remember

the grace that we were shown at the first, right?

We fail to remember of who we were and still are in our struggle with the old man.

Or we can respond stubbornly, right, in anger and bitterness, refuse to see, blame it on everybody else, and say, you know, it was because of them, or, you know, just come up with a million excuses.

And parents, you know, sometimes out of the mouths of babes, right?

We see ourselves and our kids as they do the same thing.

Likewise, though, there's two ways that we can speak the truth.

We can speak it with a harsh...

in a harsh, condescending, judgmental way that's more just me unloading, right?

I think I gotta do this and just get it off my chest, or even worse, I'm feeling bad about myself right now.

I need to feel a little better, so let me knock you down a peg, right?

There's a way to speak truth in a selfish and a harsh, condescending way, but there's also a way to speak truth that's loving, often marked by patience,

and not needing to get things accomplished right here this minute, but let's start a journey together with gentleness, genuinely seeking the other person's growth and maturity, not just you getting one off your chest for them.

Different personalities are going to struggle doing this.

If you tend to be a more relational person, you're probably going to have a

a hard time just speaking up in the first place and speaking the truth.

If you tend to be a little bit more of a black and white, right and wrong, let's get things fixed and done person, you're probably going to have a hard time speaking the truth in love and putting in the relational work that comes with bringing something to somebody's attention.

We're all supposed to be truthing in love, though.

Regardless of what our tendencies are supposed to be, we're truthing in love with our lives, with our words,

And we're each called to do it differently, though, in a unique role.

And we see this in verse 16 when he says, each part working properly.

He says, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped.

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

He describes this one more place.

We're going to flip to the left to 1 Corinthians 12.

I'm going to read one more passage.

When each part is working properly, 1 Corinthians 12 here, verses 12 to 26.

For just as the body is one, it has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made the drink of one spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

And if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

But if the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing, where would be the sense of hearing?

The whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose.

For all were a single member, where would the body be?

As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.

And on those parts of the body that we think less honorable, we bestow the greater honor and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which are more presentable parts.

Do not require.

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together.

If one member is honored, all rejoice together.

We're called to truth and love, but we're called to do it in different ways.

You know, some are better at putting things into words.

Others are more inclined to acts of service.

or even to relational acts of compassion and mercy and hospitality.

When we're all growing in the truth, we help to bring out true lives in one another through those giftings and personalities that God has given us.

Let me encourage you, if God has called you to a role,

that may seem weaker or more dependent on others than usual, or perhaps you're living with a disability or a chronic illness, don't despise that, right?

You're a gift to the church.

Yeah, we're talking about talents a little bit.

We're talking about personalities, but God has also called you to

certain circumstances within your life in which you're the truth and love, in which you're to work through a trial or a difficulty in such a way that it proclaims the truth and the reality of your Lord and Savior.

And you're an invaluable example in those times of what it means to live in the sufficiency of Christ,

despite hardships and trials.

And God puts some in the body in a position to receive service and others in the body in a position to serve all for his glory.

And at various points in your life, you may be in either of those, right?

You may move from being in the position to serve

to the one being in the position to receive service, both can be done though as a gift to the body as we truth and love, right?

As we live out those positions in love.

So how, let's just think practically for a second as I wrap up here.

How do I help others hear and hope, right?

How do I help others grow in the maturity and the fullness of Christ?

Again, we each help to bring the truth of Christ to bear in our hearts and lives by truthing or speaking the truth in love with our unique gifts.

So that means that the work of the ministry, if you want to be involved in ministry, if you want to be involved in helping, that means that that first work that you have to do, the first work that God has called you to do, is to live a true life that's full of the hope and knowledge of Jesus.

So how are you doing at that?

If you're leading a team or you're on a team or you're volunteering a lot, but this is slipping or this is taking a back seat to those things, we're not working towards the ultimate goal.

Leading a team, doing stuff, serving is to help others see a true life, a true life that's full of hope and knowledge and

in Christ.

And this isn't to make God happy with you, right?

We're not asking you to read your Bible, to pray every day and do stuff for the church so that God will be happy with you.

Hopefully what you've been hearing over the last three weeks is God is happy with you because of Jesus.

And this is how you get to experience more of that happiness, right?

By continuing to grow and mature in his word and living for him, acting out that maturity.

That's how you experience more of the happiness that you already have in God.

So as we live that life, right, that life that's full of maturity and hope in God and happiness in God, as an overflow of that hope and joy, we're called to speak and we're called to live that truth that's bringing about that happiness and joy to our brothers' and sisters' lives.

So how are you doing at that?

You don't have to be doing that perfectly, but there ought to be a trajectory there.

And as you're going, that ought to be spoken and lived out with your brothers and sisters.

Have you made time for your brothers and sisters?

Are you willing to spend time, resources, and the emotional energy to help them grow?

Listen, a believer is kind of a microcosm of the church in the sense, if we're never producing more spiritual maturity and spiritual happiness in our walks with the Lord than we personally need, right?

There won't be any overflow and growth into other people's lives.

Just like if a church is not producing more leaders and more support for the work of the ministry that it needs, the gospel will never advance right beyond these four walls.

So as we walk with the Lord, we do so personally, right?

our own happiness and edification.

We talked about that a lot last week.

But we also do it with an eye to who can I share this with?

Not in the notes.

Give me a second.

I know it's snowing.

But real quick, this is how this joy is fulfilled.

C.S.

Lewis talks a lot about why does God constantly command us to glorify him and to praise him and worship him?

Isn't he egotistical?

God knows

that what he's commanding and demanding our worship and demanding that we praise him and give him glory is our joy.

Because naturally, how we're built, when we love something and we experience something that makes us really happy, like what's the first thing you do?

You got to tell somebody about it, right?

You got to tell somebody.

You want to bring somebody else in to that joy.

And the observation Lewis makes that's really important is that that joy is then completed and multiplied when you bring somebody in.

That's why we want to bring somebody in because it's like it's a multiplier to the happiness and the joy that we experienced when we're doing that thing.

Unless you're fishing, then you want everybody else away from your spot.

You kind of want them to know that you caught a lot of fish, but you don't want them to know where or how.

You don't want to bring them into that, right?

Yeah, so that's where this help is coming from.

And even as we help, there's a joy in helping, and there's a joy in sharing our lives and our joy with other people that multiplies it.

And they need it.

We can't have this whole conversation without talking about our brothers' and sisters' needs, but also the needs of our community and the world around us.

Paul, we looked at this passage two weeks ago, but we need to look at it in this light.

He says in Romans 10, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

And how are they to preach unless they are set?

As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

You know, the rhetorical question here is answered with a, they won't, right?

They won't hear unless someone goes and preaches the good news, which is why we start with here and hearing by God's grace and his power leads to hope.

And then we realize that we need to help, right?

We need to help because there is that need out there.

Our brothers and sisters need it.

And then others outside of these four walls need to hear it for the first time.

But also we need it.

We experience and our joy is complete as we help.

So the reason we got these three words, they're gonna be up out in the foyer for us to remember them by, is every now and then we lose our way.

We get distracted, life gets crazy, we forget what's really important.

And so three words, right?

If you're coming here and you're like, my walk is dry, I'm starting to hate church, like it feels like a drudgery, like what am I doing here anyways?

Hear hope help, put yourself in a position to hear the word of God clearly

often by yourself but more importantly you need to hear the Word of God in community there's something that happens there's a reason we're called to meet together on a regular basis and to hear the Word of God preached because something happens when his people are gathered together and they hear God's Word proclaimed and then as you hear you're asking you know you're asking for it maybe even sometimes the desire to see the glory of God give me eyes to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus and

so that I put my trust and my hope in him.

And then again, what completes our joy, what brings us to that final stage, even if Paul says, make my joy complete by being like mine, right?

All that stuff.

What brings that joy full circle is when we help others to experience more of God with us.

Both our brothers and sisters, but our friends, our community, and the world in general.

Here, hope, help, just a little guiding phrase to help us keep on the right track over the next 10 years, 15 years, who knows?

All by God's grace, let's pray.

Lord, I'm excited to think about what 10 or 15 years of us truthing in love could look like.

So Lord,

we just ask for more grace to help us walk in the things that we've heard today, Lord, that we would walk away, not like the man who looks in the mirror and does nothing, but Lord, that we walk away beholding your glory and move to act on it as well.

Lord, we're thankful for the grace that you showed us at the first,

when you called us out of darkness and into light.

And Lord, it's by your grace that we will continue to take the next steps of faith to share what you've given us as well.

I pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.