

God's Faithfulness, Paul's Faithfulness and Our Joy

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Preacher: Joshua Russell

[0:00] Well, good morning everyone. Welcome any newcomers as well. My name's Josh. It's great to have you with us. I'm about to read our Bible reading, our second Bible reading for the morning, which will be this passage that I preach from as well.

But before we do that, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about these new bulletins. So when you came in, you might have noticed these new bulletins. No doubt you've got opinions about them. That's fine. That's good.

Lockie told me he hates the font. That's fine with me. Feedback is very welcome. But I want to tell you something about something more important than just the look or whatever.

It's these little slips that hopefully are perforated so that you can pull them off. Your connection cards. So last week I asked for help and I also said I want to talk straight with you and that's what I want to do this morning as well.

It seems to me that connecting today, that little spot we're used to, hasn't really been working for us. And there's just not a lot of uptake from it.

[1:11] But it's really important to me that there's a two-way dialogue between us. If I'm going to pass to you in a way that's helpful, genuinely actually helpful to you, I need to hear from you.

You know, you're going to hear from me most weeks a lot. Sometimes more than usual, but that's more than I'd want to, but that's not intentional. But I want to hear from you.

I need to hear lots of feedback if I'm going to teach you well in a way that you actually understand and is helpful and all those kinds of things. I actually need to hear what you're learning and how you're responding. And also, I want to pray for you.

And I can pray for you in general, but it helps a lot if you tell me what's going on in your life. So these connection cards, we've been doing this at UniChurch for ages.

Not forever, but we changed at 1.2 and we've been doing them for ages. And so basically, I get maybe 25 to 30 prayer points every week from UniChurches.

[2:15] And then maybe, say, 40 or 50 comments about things that they've learned, things that they were reminded of, that they'd known but they were encouraged by, and ways that they're going to respond.

It is one of the most deeply encouraging moments of my week, I have to say. Reading through the connection cards, hearing what people are learning, that they're loving about God.

Lots of the prayer points are about their godliness, about their evangelistic efforts. Things that otherwise I would never hear of because I can't get around the whole congregation to chat to them every week.

So I thought I would just bring some along and read them out to you. You won't know who these people are. But someone wrote, one way you could respond from last week, to intentionally be praying more about the non-Christians in my life.

Someone wrote, I really appreciate this one. One new thing you learned, how necessary it is for us to help pastor. One way you could respond, how specifically Josh would like help.

[3:24] You know, I think they were left after last week's sermon, feeling like I would like to help Josh, but I don't actually know from that sermon how I could help him. You know, that's helpful to me. One new thing you learned, we care about missions because we care about the church.

One new thing you learned, comfort is about fortifying. Yeah. Comfort is about warm empowerment through Jesus. Someone asked us to pray for managing time commitments in a godly way as uni starts.

You know, there are lots of these here. All the links to Isaiah. God's comfort overflows. One way you could respond. Thank God for sustaining us. Self-management as uni starts. Pray that I would trust God in my weakness and nervousness. And I do pray for them every week. And then we usually send people a little text, you know, just to say, hey, just prayed for you. If someone shares something more important, more significant, you know, that I think, oh, actually, I might need to catch up with this person or give them a call or see how they're really going. I can do it that way.

[4:33] Right? So I know that we're not used to this and it's a new thing and all that kind of stuff. I just want to encourage you, if you want to help me, and I think if we want to work together for your joy, you know, if you want to help me help you, this is actually a really, it might seem like a silly, insignificant thing, but it actually will make a big difference, I think, to me knowing you, me being able to pray for you and love you in that way.

So let me just encourage you. Lockie's going to talk us through it later on, or maybe I'll get up again. And you can start filling it out at any time during the sermon or, you know, at any time during the service, write down your prayer point.

But we'll give you a couple of minutes just before the last song. Oh, yeah, if you don't have a pen, you might need one. Do you want to hand them around now? Tom was going to bring these around later, but he can hand them around now. If you need a pen, get a pen, and then you can fill them out.

Obviously, I mean, it goes without saying, I hope there are lots of other reasons these things are good. It's good for you to actually reflect and engage on what we're learning, you know. It's a little thing. I'll speak for 30 minutes or sometimes more, rarely less, but anyway, I'll speak for 30 minutes. But if you write down, you know, 30 seconds of content, that just helps you engage and learn and grow.

[5:58] And don't we all have lots of things to learn and grow in? All right. Thanks. Thanks, Tom. And so, yeah, we'll pick them up, the order of service thing. We'll pick them up during the last song.

Right? That's the plan. And again, Tom will come around and go down the aisles and pick them up for us. All right. Let's turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 1, and I'll be reading from verse 12 into chapter 2, verse 4.

Paul says, For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom, but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.

For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand, and I hope you will fully understand, just as you did partially understand us. And on the day of our Lord Jesus, you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

Because I was sure of this. I wanted to come to you first so that you might have a second experience of grace. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea.

[7:11] Now, was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say yes, yes, and no, no, at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, that word to you has not been yes and no.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not yes and no, but in him it is always yes. For all the promises of God find their yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our amen to God for his glory.

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us and who has also put his seal on us and given us his spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me. It was to spare you that I refrain from coming again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you, for if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?

And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice. For I felt sure of all of you that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

[8:32] This is the word of the Lord. Well, it seems to me that this is a very odd part of scripture. Why do we need to know about Paul's travel plans?

It reminds me of that little comment in 2 Timothy where Paul tells Timothy, When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

I mean, I know, of course, that Paul was a real person living in a real time and place, and it would be quite normal for him to include these kinds of things, practical things and personal requests, in his letters.

But I think what makes these little details odd, at least to me, is something that Paul says earlier in 2 Timothy when he tells Timothy that all scripture is God-breathed and is useful or profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, training, and righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.

So I guess my question is, when I read these sort of passages, why are Paul's travel plans or clothing needs useful for me to know?

[9:41] How do these little details help to equip me for every good work? Have I forgotten my cloak somewhere? I mean, these are the words that God has chosen to record for all time in his special book.

I take it that not a drop of ink has been wasted here. But then again, if these words are inspired, then why at times do they seem so uninspiring?

Of course, I need to repent of such foolishness. And actually, when we start to look at the passage more closely, I think that its usefulness becomes increasingly clear, and I start to feel silly forever doubting it.

In particular, I think that one of the reasons this weird passage is so helpful, is so useful, is because Paul seamlessly integrates the mundane with the sublime.

The ordinary, practical travel plans with his theology. So did you notice, when we come to the heart of the passage, verses 17 to 22, that Paul's travel plans have everything to do with the triune God?

[10:56] Paul mentions the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, because he wants us to know that his travel plans are Trinitarian in nature. Anchored and grounded and shaped by the very person of God.

The Christian life, in all its little practical details, needs to be one where we're constantly integrating our theology, our understanding of God, with our behavior, and right thinking and right doing.

So I wonder if your travel plans are Trinitarian in nature. Is your breakfast routine theologically sound? Have you considered your bowel movements in light of the resurrection?

Luther likes to talk a lot about his bowel movements, makes him a riveting theologian to read. Have you tested your renovations against the cross? Do you garden to the glory of God?

Do you study in the name of the Lord Jesus? You see what I'm getting at? I think in this passage what Paul gives us is a masterclass of practical theology. Paul is not just a doer, is he?

[12:11] He's a thinker. But he's not just a thinker. No, he's also a doer. And the truth is that we all need both. We all need teaching in both so that we can integrate them well.

In particular, in this passage, what Paul wants to teach us about is the faithfulness of God and how that has shaped his ministry and everything he does and what that means for us.

What does the faithfulness of God mean for your day-to-day ordinary life? So we'll look more closely at that as we go through. Knowing that God is faithful, if you really know that, that will make a huge practical difference to your life.

The context, as we considered last week, is a rocky relationship on the mend. 2 Corinthians is actually Paul's fourth letter to the Corinthians, at least of the ones we know about.

I don't know if I've got the timeline, do I, Simon? Yeah, thanks. He's writing it in response to a report from Titus that his previous letter, the severe letter, was received well.

[13:18] Which is good news because it means that Paul and the Corinthians can begin rebuilding their relationship and their partnership in the gospel. And even more importantly, it's good news because Paul is the apostle by the will of God.

Thanks, Damien. That's very helpful. I can't get out of the way though, so you're going to have to stand there. But anyway, it's good news because it means that Paul and the Corinthians can begin rebuilding their relationship and their partnership in the gospel.

But even more importantly, it's good news because Paul is an apostle by the will of God. And Paul is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. So for the Corinthians and for us, there is really no way of having a relationship with God that goes around Paul.

Okay, so let's dive into it. The text now, I think that's enough of an orientation. The text in front of you, I want to work briefly through four points.

As Paul kind of answers, he's slightly on the defensive here, if you know, trying to explain and help the Corinthians process what's happened. And he answers four questions for them. Okay, so number one, in verses 12 to 14, Paul explains why he behaves simply.

[14:36] That is the year. Good question. Okay, so in verse 12, In other words, he's saying that there's no shades of secret, shades of meaning here.

There's no hidden agenda. You don't have to read between the lines with me. You know, I'm not sort of being tricky with you. Paul is saying, I'm just telling you like it is, plain and simple.

And that's how we've always behaved towards you. And notice why Paul behaves simply, right? Or sincerely, transparently. He behaves, he just, what you see is what you get with Paul.

Why does he behave simply? Well, he bookends this little section with boasting. Right, in verse 12, our boast is this. Or in verse 14, We're not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand.

I hope you will fully understand. Just you did partially understand us. That, or in order that, This is why we're behaving this way. In order that, On the day of our Lord Jesus, You will boast of us as we will boast of you.

[16:01] So Paul's big picture Is that a simple, sincere, honest ministry Will ultimately lead to mutual boasting On the day of judgment.

Now, we often think of boasting in entirely negative terms, I think. But here, it's obviously positive. And it just means to kind of speak exultantly About something you're proud of.

Something that, again, we think of pride Maybe always in negative ways. But about something that's connected to you And you're pleased with And you participated in And that the Lord Jesus will approve of And all of that kind of stuff.

Okay, so it's not about stealing the glory from God. Obviously, that would be wicked. But it's about enjoying and marveling at What God has graciously done in and through us. Like, when your daughter scores a goal on the football pitch And, you know, you taught her everything she knows about football.

You know, you were there. You boast. You get excited and you're really proud of her. Or your son finally passes his driving test And you survive the many hours of perilous practices with him.

[17:11] So a win for him is a win for you. And you can boast together, right? It's perfectly good and natural and godly To speak exultantly about your son or your daughter.

And Paul, of course, has had a big influence on the Corinthians. He was the founding father of their church. And on the day of judgment He is looking forward to presenting them to the Lord Jesus And saying, look, here are my Corinthians.

Look at all the good works that they do And the love that they do That they show for one another And the gospel partnership that we've had together. Paul wants to be really proud of the Corinthians on that day.

And likewise, he wants them to be proud of him. To be able to boast in him. And of course, you know, I think this is kind of obvious. Paul is saying this all depends on him speaking sincerely and honestly to them.

You can't form a truly mutual partnership When there are lies and manipulation and shady dealings And, you know, the back of house is so completely different from the front of house.

[18:22] You know, all of that kind of stuff. And on the day of judgment The secrets of our hearts are going to be exposed. All the things that are in the darkness are going to be brought into the light.

So if there is any manipulation or pretense In our ministries It will turn out to be a day of shame and sadness and disappointment. You were using me.

You weren't straight with me. It'll be a day of shame rather than joyful boasting. So Paul is saying That he always tries to act with integrity With sincerity With honesty With simplicity Because he knows that in the end That's the only way to bring about This mutual partnership of joyful boasting Between brothers and sisters And so obviously, I mean just If it's not obvious The point of application The same thing still happens today This is how I intend to treat you And need to treat you It's how we need to treat each other We're not manipulating each other We're not putting on a show Or a pretense The way to love and serve one another The now The only way that this will last

In a meaningful way Even on the day of judgment Is if we treat one another With honesty and simplicity What you see is what you get Number two Why Paul wanted to come So this is where Paul starts

To talk about his third visit The one that he postponed Or cancelled It's obviously caused some angst Among the Corinthians Why didn't Paul come As he said he would Maybe he doesn't really care about us He just says he loves us How can we trust him If he doesn't keep his word And so these are the kinds of charges Paul has to answer And first of all He wants to reassure the Corinthians That he really did want to come And in fact in verses 15 and 16 He wanted to come twice Both for their benefit So that you might have A second experience of grace He says And also for his benefit In a way And for the benefit of the churches In Judea in verse 16 I wanted to visit you On my way to Macedonia And to come back to you From Macedonia A double visit Right That's the second experience Of grace stuff And have you send me On my way to Judea So this was Paul's plan Originally Or actually he's talking about Version 2 of the plan But anyway You can read version 1 of the plan

In 1 Corinthians 16 He wanted to In version 2 He wanted to visit Corinth twice Because his aim Was to bless them And then to bless the Judeans See how he's always Trying to focus the Corinthians On the mutual partnership And mutual joy Of working together For the gospel But of course This still doesn't quite Answer the question Does it So if Paul wanted to come Well he didn't actually End up following through With his plans So the accusation In verse 17 Is that Paul was vacillating Now the Greek word here Has to do with Treating a matter lightly Right Changing your mind Frivolously Or rashly Or for no good reason Being fickle So it's not quite That Paul is not allowed To change his mind at all Right But the Corinthians Or at least some of them Think that he wasn't Considerate Or thoughtful enough About his plans

[21:51] Or something like that Maybe he was even Being dishonest with them When he communicated With them Ready to say Yes yes And no no At the same time You know So Paul wants to Strongly refute this And just think about The gravity of his comment In verse 18 He says As surely as God Is faithful Our word to you Has not been yes And no And Paul is really serious About this isn't he That's a bold thing to say As surely as God Is faithful So his big point The big picture again Is that Because God is faithful He has always acted Faithfully Towards the Corinthians Even though sometimes His plans have changed Because the circumstances Have changed Actually Paul has never You know In his heart He's never changed His basic posture Of love And truthfulness

And service Towards the Corinthians That has never changed And never will So now we get This sort of digression About God's faithfulness Except that It's not really A digression It's just a glimpse Into Paul's Practical theology How he thinks About his travel plans He thinks about The Trinity And he thinks about Where he's going He wants to say Just as God Is faithful We have been faithful And in verse 19 Just as God Has fulfilled All his promises To us In Christ So we never Brought to you A word Of broken promises This is kind of His idea Think of all The promises Of God In the Old Testament The promises To Adam and Eve Of a serpent crusher The promises To Abraham Isaac and Jacob Of an offspring Who would bless All the families Of the earth The promises To David Of an immortal And eternal king In his line The promises God made Through prophets Like Ezekiel And Isaiah

And Jeremiah Promises to atone For our sins To write the law On our hearts To bring in A new heavens And a new earth Paul is saying That all of those promises Are all fulfilled In Jesus And crucially He wants to remind The Corinthians It was him It was we Who proclaimed Jesus to you So the essence Of his argument Is that we didn't Come bringing a word Of broken promises We came bringing A word of Promises fulfilled Our ministry To you Right Our words And again He blurs the lines I think Because he doesn't See the difference Between his Kind of personal words And his public Proclamation He says Our words to you Were not Broken promises But promises Fulfilled And to go One step further I think he's saying Actually We were the very Instruments God used To be faithful

To his promises To you Right Think back to Last week again And the allusions To Isaiah God God said He would bring Comfort And restoration To Isaiah God said Sorry To his people Through Isaiah And not only To his people But to the nations To the ends Of the earth Through the servant And now How did God Do that For the Corinthians This is why We can't have A relationship With God That goes around Paul Because How did God Do that For all the Gentiles It was through Paul

Right In other words Paul sees His faithfulness Not just As a parallel Imitation Of God's Faithfulness But actually As a direct Expression Of God's Faithfulness To the Corinthians God is Faithful And he has Been faithful To you Through me

That's what Paul is saying So in verse 21 again He says It is God Who establishes Us with you In Christ And has Anointed us And who has Also put his Seal on us And given Us his Spirit In our Hearts As a Guarantee So you See how Paul completes The Trinity God is The chief Agent In these Verses And God Does four Things He establishes Us Anoints Us Seals Us And puts The spirit In our Hearts Paul's Point you See is That God Is faithful And that Actually It's God's Faithfulness That upholds Him Which brings Us finally To the last Section we'll Study today In verse 23 In a sense Paul gets To the Punchline In verse 23 Having just Named God The Father God The Son And God The Holy Spirit He then Says I call God To witness Against Me It was [26 : 55] To spare You That I Refrained From coming Again To Corinth Not that We lord It over Your faith But we Work with You For your Joy For you Stand Firm In your Faith For I Made Up my Mind Not to Make Another Painful Visit To you For if I Cause You Pain Who Is There To Make Me Glad But The One Whom I Have Pain And I Wrote As I Did So that When I Came I Might Not Suffer Pain From Those Who Should Have Made Me Rejoice For I Felt Sure Of All Of You That My Joy Would Be The Joy Of You All For I Wrote To You Out Of Much Affliction And Anguish Of Heart And With Many Tears Not To Cause You Pain But To Let You Know The Abundant Love That I Have For You So Paul Be This Section With A Oath Formula The Kind Of Thing You Might Say In A Court Of Law He's Wanting To Reinforce The Trustworthiness Of His Testimony And His Comments Here He's Only Telling The Corinthians The Truth The Whole Truth And Nothing But The Truth He Changed His Mind About Coming To Corinth Because He

Swears To God Because He Didn't Want To Cause Them Pain On The Contrary His Great Desire Is To Bring The Corinthians Joy And He Explains His Severe Letter To Them That Must Obviously Have Been An Emotional And Difficult One Paul Says It Was Ultimately Written To Let The Corinthians Know Of His Abundant Love For Them So Again I Think Paul's Big Point As He Tries To Help The Corinthians Process The Last Few Months And!

Their Rocky Relationship His Big Point Is That Although His Tone Sometimes Changes And Has Changed With Them Although His Plans Have Sometimes Changed With Them He's Actually Always Acted With Honesty And Integrity And Love Towards Them With Their Best Interests At Heart And It All Goes Back To This Idea Of Mutual Joy For Him We Don't Lord It Over You But We Work With You For Your Joy He Wants To Boast With Them On The Day Of Judgment And Now In Verse Three He Says I Felt Sure Of All Of You That My Joy Would Be The Joy Of You All So Paul Sees That For Him And The Corinthians Their Joy Or Pain Is Tied Together And I Think That's What It Means To Be In Real Intimate Loving Fellowship Sharing Together That's What This Letter Is

All About I Think It's Really Important For Our Church To Think About At The Moment Paul Wants To Rally The Corinthians Together To Be Faithful Gospel Partners With Him And Through Him Of Course With God And What Fellowship Means Is That Our Joys And Our Pains All Get Tied Together You Know Like Belonging To A Team Or A Nation Or Even The Way A Husband And A Wife Share Their Intimate Fellowship Together This Is The Kind Of Joyful Partnership That Paul Has In Mind And Wants To Share With The Corinthians Okay So That Just About Brings Us To The End Of Our Time Together Let Me Wrap Up With A Few!

Pointers About Where I Think This Lands For Us Primarily This Passage Is To Teach Us About God's Faithfulness Like The God Who Made Promises In History Is The God Who Then Keeps His Promises In Jesus Christ So I Wonder If There Are Some Of Us Here This Morning Who Are Doubting The Faithfulness Of God Perhaps Because You Been Praying For Something For Many Years But God Doesn't Seem To Have Answered You Or Perhaps Because You've Been Rocked By A Shock Recently An Illness Or A Change In Circumstances Again I Know That Our Church Has Gone Through Lots Of Changes Recently And That Could Be Unsettling For Some Of You For What It's Worth I Really Do Hope That I Don't Add Sometimes Inevitably Sometimes Intentionally I'll Be Bringing You About Some Of Those Changes Not Always Sometimes

[31 : 18] By Accident Unfortunately But I Think We All Go Through Doubts From Time To Time I Certainly Do About God's Faithfulness And Where Is God In All This So We Need To Preach To Ourselves We Need To Remember That God Is Faithful I Can't Help But Think Of Some Of Those Old Hymns That Express This So Well When Other Helpers Fail And Comforts Flee Help Of The

Helpless Oh Abide With Me Change And Decay In All Around I See Oh Thou Who Changes Not Abide With Me God Is Faithful And He Does Stay With Us Even In The Deepest And Darkest Of Trials Even In Death God Holds On To His Saints And He Brings Us Through To Triumph On The Other Side To The Light At The End Of The Tunnel At

Just The Right Time He Sent Our Lord Jesus Christ To Die For The Ungodly And At Just The Right Time Though It May Still Be Thousands Of Years From Now God Will Send The Lord Jesus Again To Establish His Kingdom On Earth Our Job Is Simply To Wait Patiently For Him Resting Confidently In His Faithfulness And Please Sing Abide With Me At My Funeral The Second Point Of Application To Consider Though Is The Faithfulness Of The Apostle Paul Again This Is Actually Really Important In Our Own Day Isn't It Paul Is Always Under Attack People Call Him A Misogynist And A Homophobe!

All Sorts Of Nasty Things They Try To Separate His Gospel From The Gospel Of The Lord Jesus As If They Preach Quite Different Things But It's All Nonsense And It's Important For Us To Recognize That And To Call These Out As Malicious Lies Just As The Corinthians Relationship With God Actually Depended On Their Relationship With Paul So Does Ours If Paul Was Not A Legitimate Apostle Of The Lord Jesus Christ Then We Gentiles Most Of Us Have No Business Even Being In The Covenant But Thankfully He Was The Apostle Paul Was God's Chosen Ambassador To Extend The Work Of The Servant To The Nations And He Was Absolutely Marvelously Faithful By God's Grace To The Task!

That Was Entrusted To Him God Has Shown His Faithfulness To Us Through The Apostle Paul We Can't Have A Relationship With Jesus If We Reject His Ambassador But Finally I Just Want To Think Briefly About What Partnership In Gospel Ministry Looks Like For Us Built On The Foundation Of God's Faithfulness And Paul's Faithfulness I Wonder If You Might Pray That Our Church Will Be A Place Of Ever Increasing Because I Think One Of The Things This Passage Is Telling Us Is That In The Christian Fellowship All Our Joys And Sorrows Are Tied Together So Of Course We Want To Be A Church Of One Mind To Be United In Doctrine That's Really Important And I Don't Want To Put It Down For One Second!

But That's Not The End Of The Matter Paul Goes Even Further Than That Doesn't He To Shared Feeling So That When One Of Us Hurts We All Hurt Together When One Of Us Rejoices We All Rejoice Together Because We Love One Another And On The Day Of Judgment That Joy Will Reach Its Climax When We Will Get To Mutually Boast In Each Other And All The Times We Shared Loving One Another Helping One Another To Live For Jesus Encouraging Each Other You Know In Growth Groups Over Morning Tea And The Like Just By Turning Up You Are Great Encouragement I Will Boast In You You Will Boast In Me We Will All Boast In Each Other As We Thank God For His Work In And Through Each One Of Us So I Don Know How You Are Feeling! [35 : 43] Church At The Moment I Just Feeling Physically Cold But Emotionally Mentally Spiritually I Know That This Kind Of Thing Takes A Lot Of Time And Investment And Actually Going Through Hard Patches And Rocky Periods Together Ultimately Brings A Lot Of Strength Again Like A Good Marriage You Stick At It And You Have Hard Times Together But In The End Those Bring More Joy As You Remain Faithful To One Another But I Think If I Could Exhort You To Do One Thing In Response!

To God's Word This Morning You Don't Have To Write This Down On Your Connection Card As Your Way You Will Respond But You Can As Well That Would Encourage Me Love One Another Love One Another And Don't Wait For Others To Love You Or To Reach Out To You You Know If You're Feeling Lonely Or Disconnected Why Don't You Be The Person To Make The First Move To Work For The Joy Of Others Forget About Yourself For A While In Fact Constantly Forever Keep Thinking About How You Can Love And Serve Others And I'm Sure You Will Find Love And Joy In Return But Don't Wait For Others Express Your Abundant Love For Those Around You Let Love Start With You And Pray That By God's Grace It Might Spread Out From You And Fill Up The Rest The Congregation!

Loving Father We Thank You For Your Faithfulness To Us For Your Mercy To Us In The Lord Jesus That You Did Ultimately Bring Comfort And Salvation Through Him We Thank You So Much For Our Apostle That You Would Appoint A Specific Man To Bring The Gospel To Us Gentiles Even Though We Were In Darkness And Not Your Ancient People Chosen And Trained In The Law And All Those Things Thank You So Much For Ultimately Sending The Gospel Even As Far As Australia To Bring It To Bring It Here And Rescue Us From Our From The Lies And Wickedness And Things

That We Were We Were In Under The Devil's Rule And We Do Pray Father For Help To Be Faithful With Each Other Be Honest And Sincere To Be Full Of Love That We Might Serve One Another For Our Mutual Joy And That Even On The Day Of Judgment When All The Hearts Of Man Are Exposed That We Would Be Able To Rejoice And Delight In Each Other In Your Presence And Thank You For All The Things That You Have Done In And Through Us We Pray These Things In Jesus Name Amen