

1 Corinthians Chapter 5

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, welcome, particularly those visiting us this evening, we do welcome you in the name of the Lord. I wonder if you'd turn with me please to Psalm 47, it's a short Psalm 9 verses, but a Psalm which is full of rejoicing, joy, praise, thanksgiving to our God. And it'd be good for us to read it together, Psalm 47, as we come to worship once more tonight.

So let's read it all together out loud if you've got the New International Version that's helpful. And let's read together from verse 1 through to verse 9. Clap your hands, all you nations, send to God who has sacrificed joy. For the Lord knows the hand. The great King over all the earth, He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loved. God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of the trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth. Sing to Him a psalm of praise.

God reigns over the nations. God is seated on His holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham. For the kings of the earth belong to God. He is greatly exalted. God is worthy of our praise and our worship because not only do we read here that He is the God of great power, but especially because He is the God of great grace.

And our first hymn reminds us of that. God of grace. Amazing wonder. We're going to sing that as it comes up on the screen. Bibles to 1 Corinthians and chapter 5. And if you've got one of the church Bibles, then you'll find that on page 1147. Page 1147 in one of the red or the blue church Bibles. And if you've got your own Bible, then that's 1 Corinthians chapter 5. And I can't tell you the page number in your Bible. Only in the church Bible. Now we've been looking at this letter. It's a letter written by the Apostle Paul to Christians in Corinth, a city in what would be now western Turkey. And we've seen that Paul has had to write this letter because there's all sorts of problems going on in the church. All sorts of things that are happening that shouldn't be happening. And particularly, as we've seen in the last few chapters, there's divisions in the church. People are falling out with one another and fighting with one another and saying, well, I think this is the best preacher and I think he's the best church leader and I think this. And Paul has been showing to them that God is the one who has the wisdom.

God's got the corner on the market and that we shouldn't look to people, look to men or women, but we should look to God alone. And we saw that the importance last week particularly of having lives which show the reality that we are God's people. The importance of showing by our lives that we belong to God and that is seen and that is real. So we're going to pick up from chapter 5 and verse 1. If you've got the church Bible, it's got that disturbing, in one sense, subtitle, dealing with a case of incest. And Paul is then moving on then from division and to deal with other real problems in the church. Here is what God's word says.

[4 : 1 9] It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate. A man is sleeping with his father's wife and you are proud. Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who's been doing this?

For my part, even though I'm not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in spirit, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who's been doing this. So when you're assembled and I am with you in spirit and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast so that you may be a new unleavened batch as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral

people, not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters.

In that case, you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.

Expel the wicked person from among you. Well, a very, very difficult passage, isn't it? A very, very hard, perhaps, part of God's word in the Bible. But we trust that the Lord will help us to understand it and apply it to our own lives as well as all of God's word is meant for.

So if you do have a Bible, please turn back to 1 Corinthians and chapter 5, where we read just a little while ago and continue to look at God's word, God's church and problems that it faces.

[7 : 02] There is no perfect church. There is no perfect Christian. We know that is true. And so when we read the Bible, we shouldn't be surprised when we read problems, difficulties. That's life, isn't it?

Life is not something which, as it were, skips by and everything is hunky-dory and everything is lovely. Life is problems. And even as Christians, there are problems. And so when we come to chapter 5, we come to a very big problem in the life of the church in Corinth. A big issue. A big issue, even today, in our world, in our society, in, yes, the church as well. Big problems. And we shouldn't hide away from them. We mustn't sort of stick our heads under the table or put our heads in the sand. But we have to face them. And God's word faces them, gives us much help with them. There are some things in this world which spread rapidly. Some things which have this innate ability to grow and increase and to permeate all the way through. Rabbits, of course, are very well known for breeding quickly and can have all sorts of litters of rabbits every year. The fastest growing plant in the world is a type of bamboo that can grow up to three feet in one day.

But there are things which are very alarming which spread quickly that are a concern. The ability of diseases and bacteria to spread and infect with devastating results and death. Just think of a few years ago, even just recently, the Ebola crisis in West Africa. How even just being in the presence of somebody meant contagions and almost certainly death. Or even that continuing fight that crops up within our hospitals to eradicate the MRSA virus and other potentially fatal diseases. They are a problem.

They spread and they harm. And of course, the only way really to prevent contamination and cross-contamination is quarantine. To place those who are infected away from those who are healthy. To make a separation, a gap.

[9 : 19] Now when Paul writes to the church here in chapter 5 of his letter, if we to understand that importance of separation and the importance and the danger of contamination, then we'll understand what Paul is going on about when he speaks what seems to be very severe judgments upon the church. If we recognize that sin is the most contagious illness and disease and the most fast spreading, then we'll understand why Paul writes what he does. Here in verse 6 he likens sin in the church to yeast in a batch of dough.

Now, not many of us make our own bread. Some of you may still do that now. Most of us go to the baker. But we know that you need yeast to make the bread to rise. And a little yeast can work all the way through the whole batch. Throughout the Bible, yeast is used as a picture or a picture language for sin.

God spoke to the people in the Old Testament about them not using yeast in their bread when they brought offerings to him. And special feasts and activities whereby yeast was to be got rid of. We'll come back to that in a little minute. Not because yeast itself is bad, but it was to picture, to illustrate how easily wickedness can spread through people's lives and hearts. Now, the people who were in Corinth, to whom Paul is writing, lived in the most debauched city in the first century. Corinth, as we thought the other week, was a byword for immorality of the grossest kind. Their practices were truly deplorable, probably because a large part of what Corinth was about was about its religious activity. The worship of various gods and goddesses, whether Roman or Greek, included temple prostitutes and all sorts of activities which were immoral.

But, says Paul, as he writes to the church in Corinth, he finds that there is immorality in the church which is so bad that even the Corinthians, who were not Christians, wouldn't even consider it.

The immorality is so awful that it's beyond what they would tolerate. Look at what he says in verse 1. It's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate. It's so bad. What's he talking about? A man is sleeping with his father's wife. Now, this isn't his mother, clearly. Yes, that's what he would say. This is another wife.

[12 : 05] This is his stepmother in one way or another. And he is having consensual sex with her. Now, what is so terrible, not just that this was happening because the reality is, as we say, there are no perfect Christians, there's no perfect church. All of us sin in many different ways.

sexual immorality is just one of the problems, one of the sinful activities that we see around us today, even in the church. But what was so bad was this, verse 2, you are proud. There are people within the church in Corinth who were elevating this man in his relationship, in his immorality and saying, what a wonderful thing this is. It's great in our church we've got a man who sleeps with his stepmother. They were proud about it. Why? How on earth could you be proud about something which is so obviously wrong? Well, because they believed that by accommodating this action, they were showing just how good God's grace is, how liberating it is to be a Christian. They boasted about how they're free free from all restrictions, free from all laws, even God's law. You see, they rejoiced in God's grace.

God's grace accepts us, not on the basis of the good things we do. He accepts us in spite of our sins. And they twisted that truth, that wonderful truth that God is gracious and loving towards even sinful people to make it seem as if they could boast about this sinfulness. In one sense, they were almost saying, where sin abounds, grace abounds more. But that's not what we're to understand. Paul writes to the Roman Christians a similar thing. He says, what shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means. God forgives us whatever our sin. God accepts us whatever we've done in the past and forgives us. But that does not mean that we continue in that sin as we shall see.

And it certainly does not mean that we glory in that sin or boast about that sin. It is something we should be ashamed of. They were saying, look at how liberated we are. But rather, Paul says, shouldn't you, verse 2, rather have gone into mourning? Shouldn't you have been grieving about this? Shouldn't it be breaking your heart? Shouldn't you be upset about this? That there is this man engaged and this woman engaged in terrible sinfulness. In one sense, he says, you should be mourning as if somebody was dying. Because that is the consequence of sin, isn't it? As he writes elsewhere in Romans, the wages of sin, the consequences of sin, the end result of sin is death. Now this section in the New Testament that we have, part of God's Bible, is one of the most severe, one of the most serious parts of the Bible. But sadly, it therefore is also one of the most ignored parts of the Bible. It's one of those parts of the Bible that is not acceptable nowadays, really, in the majority of churches, majority of people's thinking. You see, the solution that Paul gives to this evil behavior in the church is so alien to our society, so alien to our generation and the way of thinking. For he says the solution to this is this, you kick the man out of the church. He says there himself in verse 2, shouldn't you have rather gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who's been doing this? And at the end of the chapter, verse 13, expel the wicked person from among you. That's so harsh, isn't it? That's so severe. And many people, when they read that, perhaps even you might cry out, that's not being tolerant. That's not being Christian and showing love. That's despotism. It's unjust. It's bigoted. And particularly, people would point the finger and say, that's definitely not what Jesus would want. But the truth is, they're wrong. We only need to look at the life of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus to see that what Paul is saying is in line with what Jesus himself would do. There's an incident particularly that speaks clearly of this in the [16 : 49] Gospel of John in chapter 2. I'll read it to you, though you probably will have read it or heard of it before. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, get these out of here. Stop turning my father's house into a market. Elsewhere, he calls it a den of robbers. This is not gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is it? This is not gentle Jesus looking at something wicked and wrong and saying, oh, well, I'll turn a blind eye to that. It's not important. This is Jesus revealing the very holy nature of God, that God hates what is wrong. He hates what is sinful.

He hates what is evil. He hates what is destructive in the human nature. Jesus himself was all too aware of how virulent a disease, sin is. A spreading poison that dwells within the human nature, but affects and infects all those it comes in contact with, whoever they are.

So Paul is writing this word about this evil. You see, for the Christian, there should be a difference. That's why he's writing to the church.

That's why he's condemning them in one sense and judging them. See, though, when we become a Christian, something incredible happens to us. We don't suddenly become a goody two-shoes. We don't suddenly decide, I'm going to live a better life.

Rather than when we become a Christian, the Bible talks about new birth, new creation, new life, a new heart. God, by his Holy Spirit, empowers us to resist and to overcome temptation in our sinful nature.

[19 : 04] He gives us power from the Holy Spirit, power from God. That doesn't mean that we become perfect. It doesn't mean that whenever we face a difficulty or temptation, it's easy for us to say no to or to walk away from.

Our sinful nature, the Bible teaches, is always there. Paul likens it to having to carry a dead body on your back. The old man, the old self is there. Not until we are free from this physical body, not until we are in the presence of God or we receive our new resurrection body, will sin not be a problem for us.

So whoever tells you that they don't have a problem with sin, whoever tells you that they do everything right all the time, you can be sure of one thing. They're lying through their teeth. And if anybody says to you, I'm living just the life I should be living for God, then don't believe them. Because they're deceiving themselves and you. We are failing people.

We are sinful people. We do get it wrong. We do make mistakes. But, but, that doesn't mean that we should, therefore, just accept the way it is.

[20 : 18] Accept the status quo. Imagine that you were in the situation, and many of you may be in the situation. You've got a recurring problem with your health. Perhaps it's a recurring problem with your back.

And it keeps cropping up, but then it goes away. And then it crops up and goes away. And you can say to people, how are you? Oh, I'm perfectly well. I'm fine. But really what you need to do is see your doctor, isn't it?

What you need to do is seek help. Not just leave it as it is, to keep on recurring, but deal with it, and deal with it once and for all. But we are people who like to put things off.

And really, God's word, the Bible, challenges us and says, you can't keep putting things off. You've got to sort things out. Now, before it's too late, when we stand before God. Some people have suggested that the church is very much like a ship.

A ship which is on the sea. The sea is a picture of the world, and the ship is a picture of the church. Now, as long as the ship is in the sea, that's fine.

[21 : 22] The ship can move with the waves. It can cross the Atlantic Ocean or whatever. But once the sea gets in the ship, then the ship is in grave danger of sinking. And so it is with sin.

When sinful and worldly practices are accepted by the church, when the church says it's okay to be as deviant as you want, to do what you like, then it can only lead to a disaster.

The ship sinking. The church being destroyed. And therefore, as Paul writes here, sin and those who practice sin must be removed from the church.

Have to be separated. Have to be quarantined if they continue and are determined to continue to do the things that are not right. In fact, Paul writes here, doesn't he, in verse 11, I'm writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, that's a Christian, but is sexually immoral, or greedy, an idolater, or slanderer, a drunkard, or swindler.

He's saying they've got no place in the life of the church. And he's not saying those people who are not Christians aren't welcome in the church. Everybody is welcome in the church. Everybody, no matter what their sin, whatever their failing, whatever their past is, they are welcome to come and receive the forgiveness and the new life of Jesus.

[22 : 46] But if you say that you're a Christian and that Jesus has changed your heart and your life and you're following him and seeking to please him, then these things are inconsistent. They have no place within the Christian heart and within the church.

And Paul has written this already, he says, in verse 9, I wrote you in a letter already. We know he's written two letters before this one. They still haven't understood it. They still haven't grasped it. But Paul has another strong reason.

Not only the reason that sin is infectious and it is destructive and harmful, but he has another reason why we must not allow sin in our church and in our own lives, where we must rid it and chuck it out.

And he uses this phrase here, verse 7 and following. Get rid of the old yeast so that you may be a new unleavened batch as you really are.

For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the festival, not with the old bread, leavened with malice and wickedness, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. [23 : 53] What's he talking about there? Some of you will have an idea because he's talked about the Passover lamb. Every year in the Old Testament, God lay down a stipulation that on the Passover, that all the people, all God's people, would celebrate a feast over seven days.

It was a time for them to remember how God rescued them from Egypt and brought them into the land of freedom, the land of promise. For seven days before that Passover, the people were to search their homes and remove all the yeast.

They were to get rid of it, throw it out, put it away. Then on the Passover night itself, a lamb would be eaten and shared amongst the family, eaten along with unyeasted bread, unleavened bread. This was to be forever an opportunity to remember that first Passover night in Egypt when the blood of a lamb was sprinkled over the doorposts and the lintel, protecting everyone within from the judgment of God so that it would pass over them and that they could then ultimately be set free from Egypt.

You can read about it in Exodus and we've been looking at that as a church on Sunday mornings in the past. What's Paul saying? He's urging the church and the believers to live a life which is in constant remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins.

[25 : 21] That's what he's saying. When Jesus died on the cross for us, when he suffered as the Lamb of God and his blood was shed, he did so as our atoning sacrifice.

He did so as our substitute. He did so dying in our place to set us free from God's judgment against our sin and set us free from slavery to sin.

That was the great thing with the people. As they left Egypt, they were leaving behind slavery for freedom. Slavery to sin and freedom to live for God. He says that we are a new batch of dough. As he says, verse 7, as you really are. We are new creations. We are people that God has come and dealt with, removed the guilt of our sin and placed it on Jesus and removed the power of sin over us so that we can live for him.

We are those who have been born again of his spirit so that we live a new life. Not with the old wickedness, remember he says there, the old yeast of wickedness, but rather, verse 8, with the bread of sincerity and truth.

[26 : 26] There's a change that's taken place. So if we allow sin to live in our hearts and lives, and if as a church we allow sin to be practiced openly and overtly, what we are doing is this.

We're denying what Jesus has done for us at the cross. We're saying that the power that Jesus bought, sorry, the work that Jesus did at the cross for us in delivering us from sin was ineffective. We're saying that actually he hasn't changed us and we're showing the world that Christianity and Christ are unworthy of honour because there is no power to change lives, no power to make a difference.

See, the church is God's message to the world. As Christians, we're his letter written to the world. That's what Paul says later in his next letter in 2 Corinthians. He says, you show that you are a letter from Christ written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God.

[27 : 32] The church and every believer is part of the light of the world. We are his voice to the world. Yes, we are his visible presence to the world because where else will the world see anything of Jesus except when they see him exhibited in your life and mine and in the church of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if the world sees no difference, if the world looks at you, dear Christian, looks at me and it says, well, they do the same things as me. They get drunk and they gamble and they swear and they're immoral and they're careless and insensitive and all these other things.

How on earth can the world say that God has made a difference in our lives? How on earth can we say that we are Christians? And why on earth would the world want what we have?

Why would the world want to put its faith in Jesus when actually they can see that Jesus has done nothing for us? Rather, dear friends, your life and mine is to be attractive.

We may be naturally attractive. Some of us are blessed with good looks. I can't deny that. But our lives are meant to be attractive in the sense of a gospel attractiveness.

[28 : 48] And it doesn't matter how we're tall, fat, thin, ugly, or whatever. This is what Paul writes to Titus. He's writing to Christians who are slaves that they should live in their workplace in such a way that they make the teaching about God, our Savior, attractive.

The world is not going to find the church attractive or the Christian message attractive or you and I attractive if we've got nothing to offer them except the emptiness that they already have.

So this matter of church discipline that Paul's talking about here is something that's so important because it affects not only the church, but it also affects you and me as individuals.

So just as he deals with, speaks against sinful practices in the church. So he's speaking about sinful attitudes and practices in my life and yours.

Are there things that we have allowed to live in our lives? Are we allowing things to stay where they are? Or have we actually kicked them out, thrown them out, got rid of them, habits, attitudes, temperament, and so on?

[29 : 55] And this is where I believe we see that the teaching of the Lord Jesus is exactly in line with the teaching of Paul or rather the teaching of Paul is following on the teaching of Jesus.

If you turn with me for a moment, if you can, to Matthew in chapter 18. Matthew 18, Jesus is teaching his disciples about what will happen when they are a number, when they're a group together, when they're a church, and when one of them sins.

So Matthew 18, if you've got the church Bible, it's page 985, and verse 15, it's got a subtitle again in bold, Dealing with Sin in the Church.

We'll read from verse 15 to 17. If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their faults just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

If they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. That's a quote from the Old Testament. If they refuse to listen, tell it to the church.

[31 : 03] And if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. So let's put together Paul's teaching and Jesus' teaching and see how we are to apply practically what the Bible teaches about how the church is to operate, how we are to operate in our relationship with one another.

First of all, when somebody sins, clearly it's something that we know about. It's something that's happened. It's something that's come out. Something that they've spoken about perhaps or something that we know about.

Paul says, before we do anything publicly, now we're not talking about crimes here. We're not talking about, you know, a crime being committed like a murder or anything like that. We're talking about a sinful attitude, a sinful practice, which maybe other people in the world would accept, but the Christian can't accept and mustn't accept.

Paul tells us, sorry, Jesus tells us that we are to go and speak to them as we would to a brother or sister, to point out to them their fault, not in a way that says, look, I know what you've done, you're an awful, terrible person, so and so, so and so, but rather to point out to them sin, longing that they should turn away from it, repent of it.

And in one sense, Jesus goes further and if they don't listen to you by yourself, go with somebody else. Perhaps that they will be persuaded by the fact that two believers care for them enough to ask them and tell them to turn away from their sin.

[32 : 28] If that happens, then nothing needs to go any further. Nobody else needs to know about it. It doesn't have to come before the church. It mustn't be a matter of gossip. It's merely between them and the Lord and you if you've been the one to find out.

What happens though if this sin is a very public matter? It's something that's been done outwardly so that people can see that it is something which is shameful and is bringing shame upon the name of Christ, bringing shame upon the church in the community or in the world around about.

Well then, Jesus says, there must be public action, doesn't he? As Paul does. If they refuse to listen, that's to the two or three, tell it to the church.

It has to be dealt with within the life of the church. Again, not talking about crime, talking about something sinful that has come out is obvious and we can't turn a blind eye to or we mustn't turn a blind eye to.

Now again, Paul does not say and Jesus doesn't say, go and shout it out, go and write it in the newspaper what they've done, go and make a big to-do about it. No, bring it to the local church, bring it to the fellowship of God's people.

[33 : 39] Not so the whole world knows, but so the fellowship of believers know. That's why he says in verse 4, so when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit and the power of our Lord Jesus is present.

Something to happen in a special meeting of the church. The church members are together with a real sense that Christ is there. That he is the one who is the Lord of that church, that's the power of the Lord Jesus, the authority of the Lord Jesus.

And they are acting on his behalf in that sense. They are seeking his mind, his will and his blessing. Paul says that he was with them in spirit.

In other words, he was with them in agreement with what they were to do. Not that his spirit somehow departed his body and went there. We say about it, I was with you in spirit. It just means I was with you in that situation.

I was thinking about you and praying for you. And when they are warned before the church and spoken of of the need to repent as Jesus says here and Paul clearly here, if they repent and turn away from it then they are to be forgiven and accepted and restored.

[34 : 50] But if they will not listen, if they will not act, if they will not turn away from their sin, then what Paul says and Jesus says this, you have to treat them as if they never were a Christian.

You have to treat them because their life is to show that they are Christ and their life shows that they are not following Christ, you have to treat them as if they haven't actually come to faith in Jesus.

The privileges of being a member of the local church have to be withdrawn from them. Jesus says that we're to treat them as a pagan or a tax collector. Paul says handing them over to Satan but they mean both the same thing.

You see, when you're a Christian, when you're within the life of the church, you're within the kingdom of God. You're part of his kingship and you submit to his lordship. But when you're not a Christian, then you are in the kingdom of Satan.

The Bible makes that very clear. There's only two kingdoms in which we dwell, two spiritual kingdoms. One is when we come to Christ and Christ is our king and we are brought into his kingdom, a kingdom of love and of light.

[35 : 52] Otherwise, when we reject Christ and we live our own way, we are under the sway and influence of Satan, the devil, who is very, very real. So Jesus is saying, treat him as if he's just somebody who's a pagan, somebody who's an unbeliever, who's outside of the kingdom.

And Paul is saying the same thing. Treat him, hand him over to Satan. Give him back, in one sense, to the kingdom of darkness from which he came and in which he is showing that he's living. Is that it?

Is that all we're supposed to do? Is that the end of the matter? No, of course it's not. These things are to be done with the purpose of restoring that person. These things are to be the last resort in the hope and desire that that person who is locked into a sinful way of living may be brought back into the family of God, brought back into the life and fellowship of God's people.

It's restorative. So we read there in verse 4 at the very end, sorry, verse 5, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the sinful nature, his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

Paul is longing that these people will be so shaken by the fact that the church has had to take such a hard line with them that they realize that they need to put to death their sinful nature.

[37 : 12] They can't live for it anymore. It's taken control of them. that they might be saved and restored. If somebody is a Christian and they're disciplined in this way, then they will be restored.

It's happened many times before. It happens to this man as well if we read to Corinthians later on. If their people are truly saved, then they will be brought back no matter how far they've fallen.

But above all else, in these actions, it's so important that everything is done with gentleness and love.

There's to be no malice. There's to be no one-upmanship. There's to be no saying, we're better than you. Peter writes in his first letter, chapter 4, verse 8, above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

As a church, as Christians, in our dealings with one another, it is imperative that everything is done with love. When we love our children, we discipline them, don't we?

[38 : 22] When we love our friends, we'll say to them things which aren't always comfortable and easy. And because God loves us, he speaks to us uncomfortable and hard words as well, for our good, for our blessing.

May the Lord help us to live out his word in our lives and in our church. Peace to the brothers and sisters and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Amen.