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Father, we thank you for this day. Thank you for what you have given us. And Lord, we thank you for your son, God, we thank you for your son, Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord, that you did come on Christmas Day, whichever day that was.

We thank you that you came. We thank you, Lord, that you humbled yourself into the likeness of man and that you would dwell among us and that you would come here to reconcile God. Amen. Father, I pray as we come together today that your spirit will guide us in this message from your word. I pray that you will conform us to the image of your Son.

And I pray that you'll be glorified in us now and in this Christmas season and in your kingdom to come. In Jesus name we pray. Pray. Amen.

Welcome back. A few announcements before we begin. First announcement, Christmas Eve candlelight service is just. We're not going to do that this year. Between my health and expenses and stuff to do it, we've decided this year we're going to let everyone just enjoy their Christmas.

Second announcement. Christmas. I know it's still like two weeks out, but starting to make announcements. Christmas day is a Wednesday, so there will be no Bible study that day. Everybody stay home with your friends, your family, enjoy Christmas, celebrate.

And my third announcement, in the next week or two, our mobile app will finally be coming out again and it will be a real mobile app, not just the website. You'll be able to download it on Android or iPhone from their play stores. So it's taken a lot of work, but we're finally there.

Basically we just have to wait for Apple and Google and whatnot to work with us and approve stuff. So with that said, we're going to continue finish today our study through the book of Second Corinthians. Just quick reminder of this whole book in general. This book, this letter is Paul's defense of his ministry. And there's been some doctrine, there's been some advice, been some things that he's taught us along the way.

But it's been a defense of his ministry which he will finish up today. Last week, Paul said that he had feared that the church in Corinth would be deceived the same way that Eve was deceived in the garden. And we talked about the fact that such deception can and does happen today, and we need to be on guard with it. He also defended himself against the accusations that he was inferior or to these other apostles, the ones who would take advantage of you, and even warned, and this was important, verse 14. He said that even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, right?

So he warned us that we need to, we need to be on guard. Just because something looks good or tastes good or smells good, feels good, does not mean it is good, right? Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light as things that seem good. And so we need to have a spirit of discernment with that. And then he went through kind of, right, some boasting things that had happened to him to show and defend his apostleship.

So we're going to pick up and chapter 12 today. It's. We're gonna do 12 and 13 because they're quick and easy chapters. So if all goes the way that I have planned for it to go, we will finish this chap. This book today.

So we're gonna begin in chapter 12. We're gonna start here in verse one. Maybe we are. We're gonna start here in Verse 1. It says boasting is necessary.

It is not profitable. But I will move on to visions and Revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who was

caught up to the third heaven 14 years ago. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, I don't know. God knows.

I know this man, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know. God knows, was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words which a human being is not allowed to speak. I will boast about this person, but not about myself, except of my weakness.

Just going through here real quick. He says boasting is necessary. Why? In first. In the book of First Corinthians, throughout Second Corinthians, Paul has told us and warned us.

He says, don't boast. If you boast, boast in the Lord. Boasting comes from a point of pride. And now he says it is necessary. So why is it necessary?

Well, it's necessary because Paul will. Because Corinth will not listen to anyone unless they're boasting about themselves. All right, The. The church in Corinth, the situation is you have Paul the apostle here, right? The real apostle in this argument, fight.

And you have these other men who are boasting about themselves, and they are drawing deceiving current to them through their boastings. And Paul says, if boasting is what it takes to get you to return back to the gospel I preached you back to, back to God, then I will boast. And in that sense, he says it is necessary, but he also says it is not profitable, right? Boasting. If I.

If I spent this sermon telling you all the great deeds that I've done and how mighty I am and. And whatever accomplishments I have, what profit does that have to you guys? All it does is try to build me up in your presence. So he says, I will boast because of the situation, but it's not profitable. Boasting does nothing for the church.

And he moves on to some revelations in the Lord. Now, in verse two, he uses a weird structure of language because he's talking about himself. He says, I know a man in Christ. And then he says, I know that this man was caught up in the third heaven. And I will boast about this person, but not about myself.

And this is an interesting way of phrasing it, because Paul is talking about himself.

So he is. Paul is the man in Christ in verse two that was caught up to the third heaven. Now, we need to understand the concept of third heaven. This is very important to understand just in general, so that we know what in the world does Paul mean when he says third heaven. Well, but if you live in Utah, it's really important to know what he means by third heaven because there, there's a church here that speaks of multiple heavens or degrees or glories of heaven.

Heaven. So what does the third heaven mean? To know what it means, we have to go back not to biblical thought, but to Jewish thought. The because we have to understand that some references in the Bible are of things outside of the Bible, right? When he referenced, when you reference a time or a place or an event, you can reference events that take place outside of the Bible.

Like in the book of Luke, when it references a census that was taken, it's an external event. You can also. The Bible can also talk about other people or things that we know nothing else about unless we look in history. And this is a similar thing. In order to know what he means by the third heaven, we have to just look into Jewish culture and extra biblical writings to understand what the Jewish person thought of the heavens.

And in Jewish thought, there are three heavens. The first heaven is the sky, the literal sky of the earth, right? Where the birds fly, the clouds float, the rain falls. Out of the second heaven are the heavens, right? What we

call outer space is what they would call the second heaven.

That's where the earth itself and the moon and the sun and all the stars dwell is inside of the second heaven. And then the third heaven is the dwelling place of God. Right? The third heaven is that spiritual realm in which God himself exists. And that is the Jewish thought of heaven.

So we need to remember that Paul is a Jewish man using Jewish schools of thought when he uses this language. So when he says, I know a man in Christ who was caught up to the third heaven 14 years ago, he is saying that because remember, he's talking about himself. He himself was caught up into what we would call heaven, right? Because we call the sky the sky, not the first heaven we call outer space. Outer space we call heaven, where God is heaven.

So he says, I was caught up to heaven, right? In the way that we understand it. 14 years ago, approximately 40 AD, approximately 7 to 10 years after Paul himself was saved. So he had already been an apostle for 10 years at this point. He had already been going around and preaching the gospel.

He had already started churches. And then there's this three year period that he's caught up into heaven, he's with God. And here's what he says about this experience. He says, whether I was in the body or out of the body, I don't know. But God knows.

So to Paul, he knows spatially that he was in heaven. Spatially he was with God. What he does not know was his body left on earth somewhere out of danger and protected by God. Was his body in heaven? He says, I don't know God, but God knows.

But he says, I do know. I was caught up in paradise. And he heard inexpressible words. So what he's telling, telling us is the things that he had heard. He had been taught by God, he had seen God, he had heard things and things that he, he cannot talk about.

But why is he even talking about this? Why is he even bringing it up?

That it goes back to the last chapter. Remember in the last chapter he's defending himself against these so called, as he calls them. And he even uses quotations, super apostles. And part of defending himself against them, part of saying, hey, they are fake, they're, they're liars, they're schemers, they're trying to take your money. Here's what he says.

He says, look, if anyone dares to boast, Albo. Are those super apostles, Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.

Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. And then remember, he goes into more. He says, I received the 40 lashes minus one five different times. He says, I've received a stoning, I was shipwrecked three times, spend a night in open sea.

I faced dangers from rivers and robbers and even his own people, the Gentiles. In the city, in the wilderness, at sea, false brothers, toil and hardships, sleepless nights, imprisonment, time without food or clothing, and being cold. And he says not to mention other things. What he was showing there was the, the difference between him and them. And, and here where he begins, where he's saying boasting is necessary.

Basically what he is given is the super boast, right? The Slam Dunk, the no. 1 who is an imposter, an imposer, a schemer. No one can top this. For I was caught up into heaven with God and spent time with him 14 years ago, alright?

So if anything should validate my apostleship, he says that is it. And then he says that he will not boast about this person or himself, except of his weakness. So from this point on, he says, I will only boast in my weakness. That's an interesting thing to boast in, right? Because what is boasting?

Boasting. Boasting typically stems from pride. And boasting is basically a measuring contest. Well, I'm better than you because I've done This, and I've done this, and I've got this accomplishment and that accomplishment, what do you have? Right.

That's what boasting is. So you don't typically boast in your weakness. If I'm trying to prove I'm better than you, I'm not going to prove it by saying, well, you can lift 200 pounds and I can lift 20. What type of boast is that? But he says, if I boast, I'll boast of my weakness.

And there's a reason for that. Let's look at the next. The next passage we're going to pick up in verse six. He says, for if I want to boast, I wouldn't be a fool, because I would be telling the truth, but I will spare you so that no one can credit me with something beyond what he sees in me or hears from me, especially because of the extraordinary revelations. Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn of my flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan, to torment me, so that I would not exalt myself.

Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness. Therefore I will most gladly boast, and all the more about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

I have been a fool. You forced it on me. You ought to have commended me, since I am not in any way inferior to the those super apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of an apostle were performed with unflinching endurance among you, including signs and wonders and miracles. So in what way are you worse off than the other churches?

Except that I personally did not burden you. Forgive me for this wrong.

I have a film. I actually read more than I intended to read here for a minute, but that's okay.

So he says. He says this. If I want to boast, I wouldn't be a fool, because I'd be telling the truth, boasting, while it stems from pride, most of the time. What do you find in a boast? Do you find that it's exaggerated?

Right. If I. If I'm boasting and really want to compare myself to you and make myself seem better, my boast will typically include an exaggeration of my accomplishments or entitlements or credentials or whatever.

But even if it didn't include all of that Boasting stemming from pride is still sinful. He says that in this case, Romant wouldn't be foolish, for it would be the truth. But he will not boast anymore. And then he says this in verse seven. This is interesting.

Paul is the only person other than Christ who originated in heaven and came to earth and went back to heaven. Paul is the only person we know of who originated on earth, went to heaven and then came back to earth. Talk about a very unique circumstance and very unique person. That's not to say there aren't other people who've had that happen, but he's the only one we know of. And he calls us an extraordinary revelation.

Now, I would dare say if I got to go spend three years in heaven and then come back, that would be extraordinary. I dare say that I might want to boast about it. It, right? I would dare say that I would likely, if I got to spend three years in heaven and then come back, that would be nothing. I didn't talk about anything else, right?

Oh, you think you're the pastor, right? Well, I spent three years in God's sight. I spent three years being taught by, by God Almighty himself, right? So he says this because of this extraordinary revelation, to prevent myself, to prevent me from exalting myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me. So God knew that Paul is a person.

And like any other person who got this extraordinary, very unique treatment would want to boast and exalt himself about it. Gave him a thorn in his flesh to prevent it, gave him problems to remind him, like, hey, you are still a mortal, you are still a sinner, you are still fallible. So don't go and exalt yourself because of your experience. Now what's interesting is this thorn in the flesh, other than calling it a messenger of Satan to torment me, he doesn't tell us much more about it. Is this thorn in the flesh a sin that Paul keeps repeating over and over and over again?

Is it a sickness or an illness that he has that follows him throughout his life? Is it just torment of demons and spirits? Is the thorn in the flesh the fact that he keeps getting shipwrecked and snake bit and then beat and all these other things he doesn't tell us, Right, but there's a lot of, lot of possibilities and he doesn't tell us intentionally. He doesn't tell us because whatever this thing that bothers him is whether it's a sin that he has or a sickness that he has or anything else that he has that is this Thorn. He wants us to know the thorn is not the problem.

But the problem is what God said. He pleaded with the Lord. He says, pleaded. This word is begged. He begged God three times.

He says, take this thorn away from me. Whatever this thorn is, he says, I want it gone. And look what God said.

For most of you, this should be in red in your Bibles. My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in weakness. The reason that Paul did not tell us what the thorn in his flesh is is because he does not want that thing to be, to have greater weight in the way we read it or express it than what he just said here. My grace is sufficient for you.

And that is, I think of everything we've read today or even in the last few weeks is the single most relatable and relevant thing even to our time, that God's grace is sufficient for you, Right? And here's what I mean. And he means by all of your sins, whatever you've done, his grace is sufficient for you. He can forgive it and cover it. Whatever illness that you have going on in this life or hardship, his grace is sufficient.

He may not take your illness or your pain or your sorrow, but his grace is sufficient to cover it. His grace is sufficient to get you through it. Whatever family issues you have, whatever financial issues you have, whatever worldly issues you have, he says, my grace is sufficient to get you through it. And he says this because in your weakness, My power is perfected. When we are strong, and let me clarify, when we think that we're strong, God tends to be less effective.

And that's not because God is not effective or powerful or whatnot, but it's because we don't allow him to be effective. When we think that we are strong, we try and take control. We try to dictate the path or the road or the outcome or the solution or whatever to the problem, Right? We don't. When we think that we are strong, we put ourselves in the position where, whether we intend it or not, or know it or not or anything else, where we say, God, I don't need you.

But when we are weak and when we know that we are weak, that is when God is strong. Because that is when we come and we say, God, I need you right now. I need you to get me through this. I need you to help me. I'm relying upon you.

And then we get to see him show up. Then we get to see him do miracles and provide and do all the things that

he has promised to do. But we have to come from a position of I'm strong and don't need you to I'm weak and rely on you. And like I said, whether it's often not even intended or conscious, it's just when you think that you are strong, you put yourself in that position. You say, God, I don't need you.

So instead be weak and say, God, I rely on you. And that's why he says, therefore I will boast in my weaknesses and take pleasure in my weaknesses and insults and hardships and persecutions. He's says, instead of boasting and taking pleasure in all the things that I'm great at, I'm going to boast in the things that I am horrible at that I'm weak in. Because then if I can boast in what I'm weak in, I can boast in God.

And there is the boast right there. Remember when he said, he says if I boast about myself, it's in my weakness. And I said, well, what kind of boast is that? Well, the boast is in the fact that when he says I'm weak in this, he will say, but God is strong. When I could not provide for this problem, when I could not overcome this problem, when I could not work out a solution, God did.

And that puts the boast and the emphasis on God.

Then he says, I have been a fool. Since we already read that, we'll look at that here. He says I've been a fool and he forced it on me. So he says I've been a fool. And in that way we talked about this last week as well.

He's been a fool because he's been boasting. And he tells us that boasting is sinful and foolish. And he says, but you, you've forced it on me. If it weren't for the boasting, then they will not listen to him. And he says, you should have commended me because I'm not inferior to the super apostles.

And by command. Letters of recommendation in the first world century were very important. They held a lot of weight. And he says, you're recommending these imposters, these liars and thieves. You should be recommending me.

Because not only, he says, were the signs of the apostles performed with unfailing endurance and wonders and miracles. He asked a question and, and he gets sarcastic. Here, look at verse 13. I'm going to put it up big so that, that we can all see verse 13. So in what way are you worse off than the other churches?

Except that I personally did not Burden you forgive me for this wrong. Can you see the sarcasm in that?

He, he begins with the question, right? In chapter 11, last week, what we read, he says, I wrong the churches of Macedonia. And he explained what he meant by robbed them. They provided for his financial needs in Corinth. When he went to Corinth, the churches of Macedonia provided for his needs.

They financially took care of him. Corinth has never donated to him. He has never expected Corinth to donate. He's never charged the church in Corinth. And he has said over many times over in this letter that everything I have done for you, I have done for you for free.

He says, so how are you worse off than the other churches that paid me and supported me, aided me, did all these things? He's like, please forgive me for this and the sarcasm and that, right? Forgive me for this wrong is these so called super apostles and these liars and thieves they are, they're telling them that they have to pay them, they have to support them, they have to give them food and money and clothing and all these things. And Paul is saying, and you're flocking to them all the way back to chapter 11, right? The very first paragraph, verse three in chapter 11, he says, I fear that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds will be seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

So we're going all the way back to that. He's saying, look, I fear, right? I have never wronged you. And you're turning and flocking to these people who have. And this is not unique to Corinth.

We have the same problem today. I mentioned last week a very specific pastor or so called Pastor Joel Osteen, right? Five to seven thousand people a week who attend his church, and he doesn't preach Christ. In fact, when he was asked, who here knows? I the Larry King Live show, to my knowledge, it's not aired in a long time.

But Joel Osteen was asked on the Larry King Live show, can you say that Jesus is the only way to God? And his answer was, no, no, I cannot. So that is not a guy who preaches Christ. And yet through cunning, right, through being charismatic, people flock to him. And that's the issue here.

And Paul was like, forgive me for wronging you in that way. I mean, forgive me for not charging you money. Forgive me for not asking for your belongings. Forgive me for not being charismatic. And this is all sarcastic.

He. He's trying to point out their foolishness. Let's look at the Next passage. Here he says, look, I am ready to come to you for a third time. I will not burden you, since I am not seeking what is yours but you for children not save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less. Now, granted, I did not burden you. Yet, sly as I am, I took you in by deceit. Did I take advantage of you by any of those I sent you?

I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus didn't take advantage of you, did he? Didn't we walk in the same spirit and the same footsteps? Have you been thinking all along that we are defending ourselves to you? No.

In the sight of God, we are speaking in Christ. And everything, dear friends, is for building you up. For I fear that perhaps when I come I will not find you to be what I want. And you may not find me to be what you want. Perhaps there will be quarreling, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

I fear that when I come, my God will again humiliate me in your presence. And I will grieve for many who sinned before and have not repented of the moral impurity, sexual immorality and sensuality that they practiced.

All right. So he ends this chapter here. And for the sake of getting through, we still have another chapter. I'm going to be quick here, he says. He says this, when I'm coming to you, which I'm coming a third time, I will not burden you.

He again says, I will not charge you or take anything from you, because he isn't. He doesn't go to them and pastor them or apostle for them for money. He does it because he loves them. He says, I don't want your belongings. I want you.

But he says that I fear when I get there, I will find that you are not what I want. What he means by that is he fears when he gets there that this will be a church, has fully departed from Christ, fully walked away from Christ, has been deceived by the cunning and evil spirits. And then he gets. He gets sarcastic again. He says.

He says, granted, I did not burden you, yet I took you by deceit. Right? This is a sarcastic thing that he's saying again to point out their foolishness and not seeing the spirit of Christ in him, and yet turning to these cunning and deceitful people.

Let's jump into chapter 13 real quick.

So he says here, this is the third time I am Coming to you, every matter must be established by testimony of

two or three witnesses. I gave a warning when I was present the second time and now I give a warning while I am absent to those who send me for and to all the rest, if I come again, I will not be lenient since you seek proof of Christ speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but powerful among you. For he was crucified in weakness. But he lives by the power of God, for we are also weak in him.

But in dealing with you, we live with him by God's power.

Just stopping right here for a minute. So he's coming at a third time. An Old Testament, right, Jewish law. We need to remember Jewish line of thought here. Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

So here he is saying, the testimony of, or this matter of how I've dealt with you. And the sin going on is being established by a witness. When I was there, I warned you. He says, now I'm sending this letter to you. So that's a second witness, he says, and then I'm coming again.

And he gives this warning. He says, he says to them, I am warning you when if I come again, I will not be lenient, right? He has come and he's been very lenient with them. Even though his letters have sometimes had harsh statements. He's been lenient and very forgiving and very compassionate, right?

Very fatherly or parent like with them. But he says, look, you, you, you don't, for some reason you don't see Christ in me and you are seeking for me to prove that he's in me. So to prove it, when I come back, I will not be lenient with you, right? Those sinners will be called out, they will be expelled from the church. He says, I will be harsh if I have to be harsh, he says, because Christ is not weak when dealing with you, but powerful.

And the same is true with us. Guys, Christ has given us time, he's given us this life to, to know him, to repent, to come to, to him, to receive Him. And he is not going to be weak when dealing with us. He is not going to be like that parent who out of fear of upsetting their child takes a step back and says, well, I'm just not going to deal with this or I'm just not going to punish you or I'm just not going to say anything. Christ is not going to be weak when dealing with us.

And he is not weak with us. He's already powerful with us. We know that because we who have sinned, we are convicted of our sin. I know many people through my years of preaching who have come to me and said that sermon. It was like you looked into me and knew what I was doing and picked it for me.

I've heard that a lot. That's not me. That's the spirit of God. It's him being powerful in you. It's him dealing with you and saying, you need to change.

You need to get rid of this. And it says that. And this is important because I want to point back to Christ tonight before we end. It says, he was crucified in weakness, but lives in the power of God. He came humbled, right?

This is Christmas season. We're in. So what a great time to point this out. He came in in humility, in the likeness of man. He came in weakness, right?

Men are weakness. Our mortal bodies are weak. We're limited. And he was crucified in that weakness, right in that moment. Though he was God and could have taken himself off the cross as the mockers mocked him to do, he in weakness remained on that cross, powerless to die.

But he does live, right? He rose again and he lives in the power of God. He is God. He's still God. He lives and has the power of God.

And in the same way, he says we are weak, right? We are weak. But we, we can live in God's power. We, we



seen earlier today in our weakness.

God is perfected. His power is perfected. Let's look at the next passage real quick. Verse 5. He says, Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith.

Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you unless you fail the test? And I hope you all recognize that we ourselves do not fail the test. But we pray to God that you do nothing wrong. Not that we may appear to pass the test, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear to fail.

For we can't do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray that you become fully mature. This is why I am right in these things while absent. So that when I am there, I may not have to deal harshly with them.

You in keeping with the authority the Lord gave me for building up and not tearing down. All right, couple of things in here. First he says, test yourself. This is not the first passage we've read where either Paul or particularly Paul, but we've even seen Christ and others say Examine yourself. I'm going to tell you right now, I'm not going to examine you.

I am not going to look into your heart. I cannot look into your heart and examine if Jesus is really in you, if you really are a believer, if you really are doing what God has asked you to do or told you to do, examine yourselves. He's writing this to Christians. So don't take this as if he or I are indicating that you are not saved, but that there should be a persistent examination of ourselves to ensure we're saved. Not that we are saved by our works, but this persistent examination gives us the ability to look and say, have I really put my faith in Christ?

Is the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit in my life, life? We're not examining a checklist. Have I been baptized yet? Have I paid my tithing yet? Have I gone to church yet?

But we're examining, is God's Spirit in me?

And he says to examine yourself so that you don't fail. And then he says this. He says, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed. He says, as your apostles, as apostles, as Christians, says, I hope you recognize that we haven't failed. And then something important here.

His prayer is not that they do nothing wrong. And I'm going to relate this to us. My prayer is that you do not do anything wrong, but that you do what is right.

Even if doing what is right gives the appearance of failure, that's critical. You've heard the sayings, doing the right thing for the wrong reason or doing the wrong thing for the right reason. Well, there is no such thing as the wrong thing for the right reason. Paul says the scripture says so. God says to always do the right thing, regardless of appearance.

There are people who say, if I do this, even though it's right, it will make me look weak, or it will make me look like I failed, or it will make me look foolish. And so they do not do it. And Paul says, even if it gives the appearance to anyone else a failure, if it is what is right in the eyes of God, do it.

And we, in today's world, especially in the world of social media, where everything is available at our fingertips, our lives are available at other people's fingertips. There, I think, within the church and within people today, more so than ever, is that hesitancy to say, well, I don't want to look foolish, right? Because it's not just my small town of 2,000 people who will think I'm foolish. It's the whole world. Because everyone can see it.

So I'm not going to do this, or I don't want to be seen. Seen as stupid or I don't want to be seen as a failure. So Paul prays and so I will pray and encourage you, right, to do that. What is right, even with the. If it brings with it the appearance of filth.

Over the last month, I have said in every single message over the last month, so I'll say it again today. Success is not measured. We do not measure our success based on how many people have you shared the gospel with, how many people have you baptized? How many churches have you started? We don't measure success in that way.

We measure success in have you done what God told you to do? If you have done what God has said to do and you have been obedient, then you are successful. The results, right? The outcome of that is out of our hands. That's in God's hands.

What is in our hands is to obey, to walk in that obedience and do what he has said. And that is the measure of success. And he says. He says, I am right and right now. So that when I come right, remember, this is the final chapter.

So remember all the way at the start of this, this letter, he told them the same thing. He says, I'm right in this. So that when I come back to you that there won't be issues amongst us, that there won't be grief or sadness, but that they can enjoy each other. So he reminds them again, right here at the very end of the letter, he says, this is why I've written this whole letter, so that when I come to you, I do not have to deal harshly with you. He wants to come and love on them, tell stories about what's happened here, what's happened there.

Joke around, right? Just. Just have fun, be with them, encourage them. So let's finish this off. There's just a couple more verses.

And he says, finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice, become mature, be encouraged, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and all the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. So he ends, right, what he's concluded that this.

So what has he said? Few things for us. Rejoice. This whole letter has been a letter of correction, of rebuke, but rejoice, right? Being rebuked and chastised is something to rejoice at.

In the book of Galatians or sorry, not Galatians, Hebrews, it says that God chastises those whom he loves. So rejoice. Even though chastisement is not fun, right? And being punished is not fun, rejoice in the fact that it means God loves you. You know, God loves you because he's.

He's showing you he loves you. Rejoice in the great things and blessings that God has done and rejoice in the salvation of the Lord. Further, he says, become mature, right? Don't just become a Christian. Christian.

Don't just get saved. Receive Christ into your life and say, all right, well, I have done it. I've reached the peak, the end, and now I will coast it out. But become mature.

That's a lifelong thing. Becoming mature, but become mature. Don't stop at I'm saved, I'm good. But allow God to mold you into his image. Be encouraged.

Right back to the same reasons of rejoice. And just because this seems weird to us, greet one another with a holy kiss. Alright, so next time that you see someone, I expect that you greet them with a kiss to the cheek, right?

I will not be kissing anybody on the cheek, just saying. But this was the custom of the Romans at the time.

What he is telling us though, is to greet each other respectfully, right? Mindfully of each other in, in a way that is acceptable today, right? Today, a handshake, right? Greet each other with a handshake, a whole handshake, or a hug, or for those who are germaphobes, a fist bump. But be respectful to each other.

As we end this letter tonight, I hope that there have been things in it that you have found relevant from, from this book, from this letter, and applicable to our lives today. But most importantly, and the most relevant thing that we've read in the last few weeks and that I want to point out as we end and depart today is verse nine, back in chapter 12, he says, My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in your weakness. And I just want to remind you, whatever sin, especially to anyone who will hear this and who is not saved, who does not know the peace of the Gospel, who does not know Christ, he says, my grace is sufficient for you, and that includes the mountain of wrong that you have done, all the things that you know you have done and that you feel horrible about, horrible about doing, his grace is sufficient for you. It says that he died in weakness on the cross, but lives in the power of God.

Just shy of two weeks from now, ten. What's today? The 15th? I don't have. Yeah, the 15th.

So ten days from now, just shy of ten day of two weeks from now, we celebrate the fact that Jesus came and did that for you because his grace is sufficient for you.

So please don't leave here with that shame and that guilt and that burden on your shoulders.

Because his grace is sufficient for you. And if you want that relief, he said, he tells us that we can have it and it's a free gift from Him. Him. And he tells us that the way we get it is by confessing him as Lord. Paul says, if you would believe in your heart that Jesus was raised from the dead and confess him as Lord with your mouth that you would be saved.

And if you can do that today, if you can admit, yeah, I'm a sinner, I have done wrong. I'm helpless without God, right? And I'm weak. And I need you, God. And you can believe that the same God who created all of this stuff came in the likeness of man and not only died, but rose again and confess him as your Lord, your God and King.

He says that he will give those things to you and his grace is sufficient for you. In our closing prayer, I will invite you to verbalize that with me to God to tell me, believe those things, to ask him for you to receive him, to ask him into your heart. I will see everybody else on Wednesday at 6:30 for our Bible study. As we continue in Luke and immediately after service we will partake of the Lord's Supper. So I hope to see those of you who will be partaking of that with us here after service.

Let's pray. Father, I admit that I am a sinner. And I admit that my ways are wrong and my deeds are wrong and what I have done is wrong. And I believe, Lord Jesus, that you are the Creator God Almighty, that you did come in the likeness of man, that you did die and that you did raise again. And I confess you as my Lord Christ.

I receive you. I accept and confess who you are and ask you into my heart. And I ask for these things that you promised that you would give me. Father, I pray as we leave here tonight that you will be glorified in us. I pray, Father, that you'll be glorified in our weakness.

I pray that you will, that you will help us to allow ourselves to be weak so that you can be strong. Strong. And that your grace and your strength and glory can be perfected in us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.