

Ephesians 13-12-29b

This is Sunday, the 29th of December 2013, and we spent our first session this morning looking at our Scripture memory verse from Revelation 22, because it is important to get that right. It doesn't get enough attention, I think, from those who recognize that there's a lot more going on in Revelation 22 than the need to put down a proof text for evangelism. There is a call to the church to adorn herself with her pure white garments and be ready to serve God and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom that is to come.

The difficulty reminds me of the mighty gulf that God did span. The gulf that we have to span is looking at that glorified picture and then coming back to the life that we now live and the minutes and hours that we spend and say, okay, I get the picture, I see the great opportunity, I'm cool with all of that, but what difference does it make right now? How can I actually do something different than what I'm doing? I mean, look, I'm here, I'm in Bible class, I've got my Bible, I've taken my notes, I pray, I really do struggle to overcome my inner fallen nature. People talk about inner demons.

We don't have any inner demons, just so you know. No God-fearing Christian has inner demons. You don't have them.

They're not allowed in. Your soul is like the New Jerusalem. That which can lie and corrupt doesn't come in unless you invite it, unless you let it through the gates.

Our difficulty now is we don't have a perfect city. We've got a bunch of criminal activity going on inside the gates and we're not yet the New Jerusalem. We're more like the Old Jerusalem.

And if you've seen that, even by way of video, you know that you've got a long ways to go before it's going to be any kind of a capital city for anybody in terms of reflecting the righteousness of God. So how do we take these pictures and make them live and breathe fire in our souls? Well, happily, we've got the answer to that in our Ephesians passage. If you're back in Ephesians, we have come to the concluding portion of chapter 2. Big picture.

Chapter 1, if you're going to sum it up in two words, what would you say? Ephesians chapter 1, two words? In Him, in Christ, right? Chapter 2, what we have seen of it up to this point, we have this reconciliation. If I was going to sum it up in a single word, it would be reconciliation. Reconciliation of what? This is not accounting.

This is those who were near and those who were far have been brought together, reconciled, made one in Christ. It's an extension of what we saw in chapter 1. In Him, we have these privileges. In Him, we have redemption.

In Him, we have opportunity. In Him, we are called. In Him, all of these things.

We have a destiny. But specifically now, He's coming to where the rubber meets the road because He's talking to people who are rubbing elbows. Some of them are Jews and some of them are Gentiles.

He says, you know, one of the biggest issues you have is this easy dismissal of others. You've got a quick card you can play if you want to not like someone. Well, what do you expect? They're a Gentile.

Well, what do you expect? They're a Jew. Anytime there's a little bit of friction, anytime there's a little bit of tension, anytime there's a little bit of conflict or a difference of opinion, what's going to happen? And you see this happen. You know, celebrities are forever shooting themselves in the foot and commentators and whatnot.

You know, what's inside the fruit rind doesn't show until you squeeze it. And so you can have this exterior that is nice and beneficent and nobody's got any heartburn with it. Put it under pressure.

And if you've got bile and rot and foulness inside, the pressure will reveal it. You ever found like an orange or something in the refrigerator and the rind still looks okay? It's got some suspicious little inequalities. You know, it doesn't quite look like it's fresh.

But then when you slice it open, it's just horrible inside. This is the mystery of buying fruits and vegetables. You know, people go to the produce section and you see people doing all kinds of things.

They thump, they squeeze, they rattle, they, you know, they... I'm not sure, you know, I like to try to get something that's not on the top layer because people have been just handling this stuff, trying to figure out if it's good or not. I want to dig down and get one two or three layers deep that hasn't been examined by 16 people whose personal hygiene I know nothing about. I'd like to, you know, get underneath a little bit, try to find something so that I can manhandle it and squeeze it and rattle it and listen to it and decide if I want it or not.

But there's a superficiality and a shell where everybody is nice. This is what we have today in American culture. I've told you this many times that what my opinion is that as long as our just-in-time inventory and delivery and supply system continues to work, people will be reasonably civil.

They'll wait in line. They'll, you know, you can get down the aisle and out of their way before they, oh, excuse me, pardon me, you know, I wanted to get in that glass case and, you know, I can wait and they're kind of drumming their fingers, but they're superficially civil. Anything happens and people think this might not be here tomorrow.

Storm is coming. Icing conditions. Heaven forbid, you know, the coasts have an impending hurricane or whatever.

Snap cards suddenly have an unlimited limit. Watch out. It is dog eat dog.

It is, you know, rats fighting over the scraps, you know, elbows, people injured and hospitalized. It's like yelling fire in a crowded theater, you know, every man for himself because there's no, I say no, I'm exaggerating. There is so little left of morality and the reflection of Christian values that used to permeate our culture.

There's the crust. There's the rind. There's the external.

And as long as you don't put any pressure on it, as long as you don't disturb it, you know, find an old Easter egg in your lawn some July afternoon. July. Is it still painted? Does it still look like an egg? Just don't crack it.

So in him, chapter one, so many blessings and benefits. In him, these two things have been reconciled. And because of this truth, you can no longer look at each other in the old paradigms.

You can no longer bring up the old grudges. You can no longer play the old cards of Gentile versus Jew, of master versus slave, or slave versus master, or male versus female, or any of these sort of false discriminators, false identifiers, where people claim, because I am in this group, I have an inherent superiority. You don't have superiority because of membership in some class or group.

You just don't. Every individual stands on their own. You can't denigrate all of anybody that's in a particular... You don't know why you say, well, look, they're a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Of course, they're evil. Not so fast. What if you are the son of an abusive father who's a Ku Klux Klan member, and he says, you're going to come to the meeting, or I'm going to beat the living daylights out of you from now until you die.

And you can have unwilling people that are pressurized and forced to go to places and participate in things that they don't want to. You can't make blanket judgments based on membership in a class. You can't.

And we don't. We shouldn't. And this is one of the truths that comes out of this, particularly in the household of faith.

If someone is voluntarily of their own free will and out of their own heart's desire coming and assembling with fellow believers, be very, very wary and cautious and careful about imputing any evil or wrongness to them, regardless of what you think, regardless of what you suspect, regardless of what you heard or thought you heard or saw or thought you saw. Because, remember Elisha, someone who represents God, if you start mocking them and calling them names, God is going to take that personally. If someone starts taking offense at you, just stay calm, stay cool.

There's a reason the Bible says vengeance is mine, because God takes it personally. You may even be in the wrong. Maybe you failed.

Maybe something bad came out of your mouth. Maybe you omitted. Maybe you fell short.

How many people have a guilty conscience? This is the hazard of the whole Christmas tradition, the unbiblical Christmas tradition, the exchanging of gifts. You know, the most horrible thing in the world is if you're on a budget, you're trying to get something for everybody. And so you say, all right, well, I've got this much left.

I think they're really like this. I get them that, you get them. And in return, you get a thing that's worth like six times as much as you spent on the other person.

You think, oh my gosh, they're going to think I don't, you know, here's a reflection of their esteem for me and mine doesn't matter. They, you know, I hope they know that. It's just, it's seedbed of mental attitude testing on both sides.

Pez dispenser, what? This is what you think of me? This was your intense shopping. You scoured the earth to get me a present and you got me a Pez dispenser. I don't even eat candy.

I'm diabetic, you know. So there's, and this is where our corrupt nature on both sides of any transaction like this starts to fester. There's a little bit of pressure there.

What comes out? What comes out? I don't know the circumstances. I don't know the pressures. I don't know the financial situation.

I may think I do, but I probably don't. I don't know the, the, I don't know the situation. I'm not God and I am not in a position to draw conclusions or to judge my fellow believer in Christ.

And if I do, God will take it personally, just like Elisha. What do these kids say? Go up old hair clipping, go up old bald head. And you got your whole bear scenario.

By the way, we have not even exhausted the bear thing. I gave you as much as I could, I ran long Friday night and I didn't even give you everything. I'll give you a couple of hints though that you'll, because we're going to move on if and when I ever am here again on a Friday.

Count the, you know, the whole thing about the menorah and it gives the construction of it and you get bowls and knops and flowers and all that total up your bowls and knops and flowers, see how many there are in a menorah. Go back to Solomon when he organized the workers for the temple, find out how many total workers he employed and how many overseers there were. And then figure out how many people did each overseer oversee.

What do you do? You take workers divided by supervisors, do the math, etc. There's a lot going on in the word of God. But here in Ephesians chapter three, Paul is reminding the church, people

that have come from all different places, have all different characteristics and backgrounds, some of which they can control, others that they cannot.

And he says, you are in Christ. Look here in beginning in verse 19, now therefore, after everything we've seen, everything I've just reviewed superficially perhaps in the first chapter and a half, Paul says, alright, here's where the rubber meets the road. Here's the answer to the question, so what? I mean, yes, I appreciate being redeemed, I appreciate having a calling, I appreciate all these things that are in Christ.

I know I'm a believer, I've got my Bible in my notebook, I'm going to heaven, etc. So what? I've got to leave here and go live life. Now therefore introduces the answer to that question.

What difference should this make in our thinking as we interact with one another, as we seek to fulfill those excess of five dozen one another commands in the New Testament? Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners. Paul is speaking here as a member of the Jewish collection of people. And he says, you people that aren't in my collection are no longer strangers and foreigners to my group.

You Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners to the Jews. You are sanctified and members of the household of God. Circle, those of you that are not squeamish about it, household.

This is a derivative of the word oikos, O-I-K-O-S. Now, some memory aids are better than others, but the way I always remembered oikos was the story of the three pigs. Figure it out.

Oikos, having been built, circle built. This is another form of the word oikos. On the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, circle it, oikos, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple.

This is naos, N-A-O-S, a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built, circle it, oikos, together for a dwelling place. Circle it, form of oikos, of God, in the Spirit. Now, do we detect any kind of a theme here? This is a house, a household.

Oikos, with its various prefixes, suffixes, and forms, is where the family lives. A house is just a building. It's a home.

It's a dwelling. It is a household when there is a family there. So the idea is family.

Blood is thicker than water. These are my parents. These are my children.

These are my brothers and sisters. So, in Christ, you have this household of faith, literally. It is a household.

It is a family that is related and built together by faith. Now, the other thing you'll notice, when you

look at these verbs, how many of these verbs are active? How many of these show people in the church building something? Are these verbs active or passive? Having been built, is that active or passive? It's passive. In whom the whole building, being fitted together, active or passive, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together, active or passive? It's passive, for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

So, let's go out and build the kingdom. Let's build up the church. Who does the building? Who enables and empowers and makes these things happen? From beginning to end, who chose the cornerstone? Who chose where the foundation would be located? Who determined that this house would grow into a temple? That's your architect, right? That's your designer.

That's the one who is building and establishing the purpose for which a thing is being built. There's a purpose for this household. It's not just a dwelling place.

It is supposed to become, to grow into, a naos, a temple. It is designed. It is purposed.

It is built. It is founded. It is raised.

It is perpetuated. It is enabled and empowered, all by something other than the people in it. We don't build the church.

God builds the church. We don't found churches. God founds them.

We don't design them. God designs them. We don't decide their purpose.

God decides the purpose. You cannot escape the conclusion. And it is powerful and it is repetitive in this passage.

And Paul says, any of you Greeks who think you're going to kind of take charge of the group and start squeezing out the Jews because you know what this church is for and you know what it ought to be and how it ought to look and what ways it ought to speak and what direction it ought to take, look at these passives. You Jews who want to get up on your high horse of tradition and longevity and, well, we've always been here and we had the scriptures before you and we were the people of God before you, you're not building. You're not dictating.

You're not deciding. You're not judging. God is doing these things.

It is in Christ and it is done by God. So, remember we started this whole little section here with now, therefore, as a marker for what we should do, how we should live. So how should we look at each other? Do I need to have the attitude that, well, there's somebody that needs correction, there's somebody that needs to be distanced away or needs to be drawn close based on my idea of who should be in and who should be out? We have to really be conditioned by humility, don't we? What do we have that we did not receive? We are the recipients.

It's a passive voice. We receive. We are built.

We wouldn't be here if God had not picked us up as a stone and placed us into the building. We wouldn't be a member of the family if God had not, in grace, picked us up and placed us in. So what right do we have to look at somebody else and start picking and start feeling grudgy and sour and judgmental? Well, we don't.

We have no grounds whatsoever. They're a stone and we're a stone. God picked them.

God picked us. And there is no difference. We are all victims of grace.

We are all recipients of God's mercy, and it is God who is at work to will and to do. And anytime we start feeling like we've got a little box we can stand on and we've got a little bit of elevation where we can look in a downward angle at someone else, we need to get down on our face. We need to get off the box.

We need to get on our face and look at the Lord Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and seated Himself at the right hand of the Father, active or passive, is seated. God raised Him up. God placed Him at His right hand.

Jesus didn't put Himself there. God did that. Who is going to determine the least and the greatest in the kingdom? Are we going to sort of get together and say, well, after you, you be first, I'll be last? God will sort it all out, right? Be careful the judgment that you impose, because any judgment that we put on one another is going to be imposed on us.

Scripture says so. The judgment with which you judge, the measure with which you measure, will be measured out to you. So you know what? I want to throw my measuring cups out.

I figure if I haven't got any measuring cups, then God won't have anything to measure judgment out to me at the judgment. So my goal, you want a New Year's resolution? Throw out the measuring cups of judgment. I don't want to have a bad thought about anybody, hoping that when I reach the judgment seat, God will not have a bad thought against me.

I would love, I would be so humbled and so thrilled to have my name right down there at the very tail end of the list of people in the Lamb's book, maybe in an addendum. Oh, there was a couple of last minute additions, Sam Hall. But to do that, we have got to let go of pettiness.

We have to let go of feeling cross. We have to let go of short temperedness, impatience. I can't believe they did that.

Especially, I can't believe they did that to me. Where is mine? Why didn't you treat me with what I deserve? To the extent that we hang on to those things, it is a rope dragging us out of the New Jerusalem. It is a rope dragging us away from the light and the glory and the Lamb, away from the trees with their fruit, away from the crystal clear waters of life, out into the nations.

Out where we still need to learn. Out where we need to chew leaves instead of fruit. Out where we need a poultice made of leaves, instead of working and serving and reflecting the glory of God, so much so that the Apostle John would have difficulty distinguishing us from God himself.

That's how faithful that angel messenger was. Wouldn't it be great if we as messengers, in the witness of our lives, so reflected the glory of Christ, that people could barely tell the difference. You know, the old campfire song, they will know we are Christians by our love, is not far from the mark.

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another. And this isn't just any kind of love, this is household love. How patient and forgiving are we in our own household? How faithful and patient and loving should we be in our own household? You know, there can be squabbles and things under the roof, but let an incursion come from the outside, suddenly there is great unity.

You know, ask the Robertson family, how they felt when old Phil got picked on. There is nothing like adversity that draws families together. You find family coalescing, and this ought to be our standard.

And that's what the words mean here. The whole building being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. What's the purpose and function of the temple? Why did Israel have a temple? What happened as soon as it got built? What inhabited it, occupied it, and set it apart from any other temple anywhere in the world, past or future? The Shekinah, right? So if we rightly divide the Word of Truth, lay a straight course of bricks in the Word of Truth, is what that word literally means.

If we don't move and don't fall from where we are placed in that building, if we are faithful, we hold our shape, we do our job, we support whatever it is we're supposed to support, we block whatever it is we're supposed to block. Walls do a lot of things, don't they? Buildings have a lot of functions. Inside the walls you've got plumbing and you've got wiring, you've got air conditioning, you have structural walls that support things that are above them.

You have other walls that are there for separation and not for support. They keep the stuff in one room from going over into another room. It's not their function to support the main weight of the building.

They have a different function. It's a wall, looks like a lot of other walls, but it's got a different function. Some walls have plumbing in, some don't.

Some have air conditioning ducts in, some don't. Some are very beautiful and covered in paneling and look very nice. Others are very plain.

You don't typically put fine wood paneling in your laundry room, and there's a reason. You don't

typically put carpeting in some rooms that you really want tile. You don't typically put fine furniture where there's a lot of water.

There are different functions. There are different parts of the building. Sometimes you need a door.

Sometimes you need a window. A window is not a door. A door is not a window.

They can partake of each other's functions, but there's a difference. And the window can't say to the door, we don't need any doors. All we need is windows.

The door can't say to the window. Have you ever seen it walk the dog, go up and down neighborhoods? Some home designs, you look at the front of the house, it's solid brick all the way up. There's not a window in the place.

And I think, what kind of hermitage? Why would you build a house and purposely, some people had windows and they're bricked up. And I think, it's not the garage. No windows? What's the matter with you? You need windows.

Where does the light come from? Are you going to live and bulbage your whole life? There's a reason to have windows. Now, I was in a house the day before yesterday, where it's real close to the property line. And somebody else has built right next to the property line.

And across from the kitchen window, there's a bank of big floor-to-ceiling windows. There's like four or five of them. Because that's the way the house was designed, they didn't really look at the lot.

They just said, oh wow, great house. Let's build it here. Well, as the thing falls onto the property, these four windows stare right into this neighbor's kitchen window.

So the guy that owns the house with the kitchen window now has got to buy curtains to cover his kitchen window. Because there's like a gallery. There's like a room around this window, and it's all focused on his kitchen window.

And it's just like, well, you can't even put something in the microwave without being observed. And it's like there's a big theater. Why don't you just put curtains on and charge admission and say, let's wait until he shows up.

See what he does in his kitchen. You know, there is design. There is purpose.

There is function. And don't second-guess God. We are members together of the body.

We are being built together by God into a house that will contain and reflect and from which should emanate His glory. That's the purpose. You don't build a building so that the walls can fight with each other.

You don't build a building so that different parts of the house can, well, I'm the hot water tank. I think I'll drop my bottom out and just drown everything below me. I'm on the second floor.

I'll just ruin the ceiling. And I had a house that did that several times. I replaced the ceiling.

And those of you that visited us at Fieldcrest, you remember the downstairs bathroom. I put three different ceilings in that because it was right below the hot water tank. And any time the drainage didn't work right, no, it wasn't the hot water tank.

I think it was the air conditioner, the condensation from the air conditioner overflowed because the little microscopic dime-sized drain pipe, algae would grow in there. No more drainage. Water overflows.

Some hapless villager goes into the bathroom and down comes the ceiling. And there's wet ceiling material. Anyway, the building should not fight against itself.

What sense does it make to be a part of this building that should house the glory of God? And instead of paying attention to letting the glory shine out of the windows and out of the doors and to be the place that is notorious for the presence of God, instead, well, look, you know, there's cracks and the foundation is wobbly and this thing is about to fall apart. I saw another building up in Clarksville that was made out of brick. But the walls, I don't know, you know, foundation instability or whatever it was, but the brick walls had started to bulge.

And, you know, when you've got a multi-story house and your downstairs walls made of brick begin to bulge, what's going to happen? I mean, it's physics, right? And so what did they do? They took big iron bars and put nuts on the end and, you know, try to hold the thing together. So now you've got kind of a warpy, you know, just hope those bars can bear the strain. What do you do with a house like that? That is not the kind of house that reflects the glory of God.

You and I should not be fighting with one another. We have a higher purpose. We are being built together for a purpose.

Now, chapter 3, Ephesians chapter 3, For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for you Gentiles, M'. There's N' and M'. This is a great big long M'.

M' is longer than an N' in the same way that M is a wider letter than N. It's like an editing term. But you see that big dash right after Gentiles? There's a reason for it. There is another M' that they left out in verse 14.

Right at the beginning where it says, For this reason, there needs to be another M' there. They just left it out. Now, the thing about, this is a little free no charge English syntax observation for you.

The beauty of M' is they are sort of like parentheses. In the sense that when you put in a parenthetical element, you should be able to take that parenthetical element out of the sentence and it still makes sense. So, M', M', everything in between is an aside or an inclusion that can be removed and the sentence still makes sense.

Well, this is one of your longer inclusions. It's like 13 verses long. But Paul is going to say, For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for you Gentiles, bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the sentence. Everything in between verse 1 and verse 14 is aside. Because as he says, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, this brings to his mind, maybe you don't quite understand what I mean when I say prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles.

So, I'm going to fill out and elaborate that concept, then I'll come back to what I started to say. But he starts the sentence in verse 1, he picks it up in verse 14. Everything in between is directed at a single concept.

We're going to skip that concept for just a moment. I've only got a minute left here. And what I want to point out is the sentence.

So, we're going to read starting in verse 1. We're going to skip 2 through 13. We're going to pick up in 14. What did Paul originally start to say? For this reason.

For what reason? Because in him you have all things. Because in him you are united. In him you are reconciled.

In him you are built up into a holy temple of God. For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, is this a new concept in this letter? What did he say starting back in chapter 1, verse 15? I heard of your faith and your love.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. And here's what I pray in this threefold prayer, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of glory, will give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation and full knowledge of Him, eyes of your understanding being lightened, so that you may come to know three things. What is the hope of His calling? What is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? And what is the surpassing greatness of His power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, seated Him on high, and put all things under His feet, gave Him to be, verse 22, chapter 1, head over all things to the church, which is His body.

Paul says, I pray that you will come to know riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, these are the components of the body of the building, the surpassing greatness of His power, when He raised Christ from the dead, this was giving life to a dead body, right? That's what

resurrection means. It's all about the body. It's all about that body having been raised, glorified, ascending from the Mount of Olives, Acts 1.11, the same Jesus will come again in like manner as you have seen Him go.

Jesus told the disciples in the upper room, I go away, but I will send you another comforter. While I'm gone, He will stand in for me. Where does He dwell? What does it tell you in chapter 2, verse 22? Dwelling place of God by means of the Spirit.

We are the body. You don't want the body, worst thing that can happen to a body starts with C, cancer. What is that? The body's own cells going off the program, being corrupted, over-multiplying, and attacking the healthy body.

It's the body attacking itself. That's cancer. It's one of the most horrific things that can happen to a body.

When you think I'm going to be impatient, when you think I'm going to be cross, when you think I'm going to hold a grudge, when you think I'm going to be, I'm going to put that person out because they have offended me in some way, think cancer. This is a body and we can't afford it. If you want to be in the city, if you want to reflect the glory of Christ, get over it.

The strength is there in God. The strength is there in Christ. Get over it.

Who are we to not be over it? What do you have that you did not receive? All of these are passive. We are being built. We are being blessed.

We are being formed. We are becoming through God's power, through the power that raised Christ from the dead. How much did the body of Christ do to be raised from the dead? God the Father did it all.

It's the power of God. Paul says, I pray that you will come to know this power that brings life in the midst of death. You and I are dead in trespasses and sins apart from God, apart from Christ, apart from this power.

We've got to let that power do its work. If we've got deadness in us that corrupts us, that causes division, that causes us to sin against one another, we've got to let the power of God that Paul prays about here, we've got to let it do its work. Eradicate, expunge judgment, grudges, issues.

I've got an issue with you. No, you don't. God's got an issue with me.

And I've got my hands full making sure that I get those issues resolved so that God can build me and you, all of us together into a temple for His glory. Where is the room for pettiness? Where is the room for interpersonal silliness? When you look at that city, when you look at that Shekinah, when you look at the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, who was willing to be born in the humblest of circumstances, willing to be treated in the worst of ways, what arrogance is mine that I think I've

got the right to pick bones with people in the household? It's not there. It can't be there if we're going to fulfill the will and purpose of God.

So, is there an application? Now, therefore. That's the application. We'll pick up here and take a look at some of this intervening material in chapter 3 and this great sentence that Paul interrupts to make his point about being a prisoner.

And you can already see how this might tie into that theme. He is a prisoner of Christ on behalf of the Gentiles. Is he upset about that? He counts it a privilege.

No fun being a prisoner in the Roman Empire. But Paul says, I think this is great. Well, how do we get to that attitude? We'll see that when we get into chapter 3. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus and the unimaginably great grace that You expressed toward us, the mercy that You extended to us, the compassion that You have shown toward us in sending Him and reconciling us to Yourself through Him and reconciling us to each other in Him. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make us ever mindful and aware of these truths and that we will see clearly where the power lies to overcome the corruption and the fallenness in our own nature so that we can, in truth, be built into a temple where Your glory resides, where Your Spirit resides, and where the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified. We pray these things in His name.

Amen.