

Philippians 10-06-25a

This is Friday the 25th of June, 2010. We continue our study in the book of Philippians chapter 2. We'll be resuming at verse 19. We'll take a moment as we begin to focus our concentration and express our gratitude to God by going before Him in prayer.

Father, it is such a privilege to reach the end of a week and look back over it to see the many ways that you have provided for us and blessed us and orchestrated the circumstances of life for our benefit, whether they are challenges or opportunities or blessings or the undergirding that you place beneath us even when we fail. We see your guiding hand and your watch care and your love as a father for us. We thank you for that.

We thank you for our fellowship and the ties that bind us together in Christ. We thank you for Him and for His work on our behalf, His intercession at your right hand and the imminent time of His return to unite us with Himself. We thank you that in this time that remains to us, we have the opportunity to be nurtured and fed and edified through the fellowship that we enjoy in your word.

We ask your blessing on us tonight as we look at this portion of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. May each of us find in it the truth and the guidance and the insight that will transform our minds and renew our motivation and our hope and our perception of opportunities that you give us so that we can live our lives in a way that reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus. We pray it in His name.

Amen. Well, this quite interesting letter is about to take another turn. We've seen Paul review his own circumstances, which I'm sure to the ears of the Philippians when they first heard that Paul had been imprisoned and was no longer able to move about freely and preach as he had done in their town, caused them great consternation and sorrow and concern.

And he writes back to them and lets them know that in his view, all of this is working out to the good. He chooses to see the glass as half full rather than half empty. And he encourages them and points out that God is at work even in this seemingly negative circumstance to further the cause of Christ, to stimulate the spread of the gospel and the preaching of Christ and to provide actually an occasion for rejoicing and for celebration.

Paul reflects about the fact that his life is somewhat on the line. It's possible that he could be executed. He doesn't know at this time if he will be released or be executed or be held for an indeterminate amount of time.

But he says, essentially, as he points out in another passage, in whatever state he finds himself, he will therewith be content. This is a great mark of growth in our faith and our spiritual walk that whatever comes our way, it isn't necessarily going to be a joyous time. Sometimes our challenges can be of the endurance sort, but we have peace.

And one of the sources of that encouragement is fellowship. And Paul points out that the Philippian believers have been part and partners with him in the gospel from the beginning. And he points out their koinonia fellowship.

And then in that next section that we saw in the first portion of chapter two, he has talked about the nature of that interpersonal attitude and approach. And we can talk about fellowship, and it also becomes an abstraction. But it is the conversations.

It is the concerns. It is the knowledge of one another and the common cause and the common love for the Lord Jesus and for God the Father that unites us in a unique and special way as family. And he says, we should therefore look out for each other's interests, not just for our own interests.

And our first reaction, because we have a spiritual identity, because there is a dynamic and a supernatural power within us, that can change our innate, knee-jerk, instinctive reaction to be critical, to be bitter, to be complaining, to see the negative, to see the half-empty glass. And he says, let's do everything without grumbling and without complaining, without fault-finding. Look at the attitude that Christ Jesus Himself reflected.

He wasn't looking at us and saying, you know, that is such a pack of rascally, unfaithful, unstable, demotivated, apathetic, constantly failing. Why should I go to the cross for these people? I hope they appreciate what I'm doing for them. And when I get back from the cross, I'm going to have a thing or two to say about these people that have had so much criticism and so much naysaying and so much little nitpicking.

And, you know, it is so contrary and so out of keeping with anything that you see in the Lord Jesus. And Paul says, that's the kind of attitude, that's the kind of thinking that God, the Holy Spirit, and the presence of God's word can create in us. We do not have the power to change.

I always think about that Nicorette commercial, whatever it was, you know, the power to calm, the power to, you know, do whatever, the power to quit. And then they had to change it because it doesn't really give you the power to quit. They had to change it to, it gives you the power to help you quit.

But people said, hey, I'm going to sue you if you say it has the power to quit because I've been taking it for a year and I haven't quit yet. There is nothing on this earth that can really give us the power to quit our bad behavior on our own. Fellowship itself has been tried.

This is your support groups. This is your, let's all get together. This is your mentoring and so on.

Fellowship is great. Association is great. There's nothing wrong per se with people getting together to discuss something that they have in common by way of a problem.

As long as everyone is clear that there is not power to solve the problem or to cope with the problem just in the group, you can sublimate, you can shift your attention, but you haven't really tapped into the power of God, which is the only actual transforming power until the word of God and the spirit of God are active inside us. That is transforming power. You don't get transforming power from a group.

You don't get transforming power from a friend. You don't get transforming power from just talking it out and sobbing on someone's shoulder. Many times people say, well, I feel so much better having unburdened myself.

And what has actually happened is what you've done is shifted attention away from the problem and now you've gotten gratification from self-centeredness. And I have made myself the focus of a bunch of other people's attention and that made me feel better. Well, this is playing to our arrogance.

This is stroking our ego. That's not a good solution to life's actual challenges and problems. To play to our natural comfort in being doted on and made the center of attention.

And this is often the palliative or the pain reliever that the world turns to. It is an entirely different thing in the realm of Christ, in the body of Christ, in the family of God, because instead of the pale echoes and the shallow similarities that the world gets from its form of fellowship and its form of conversation, there is the supernaturally energized and charged power of God. Motivated, guided, directed by God the Holy Spirit, informed and directed by God's word.

And that actually makes a difference. And not only does it genuinely meet our needs and comfort us, but the fact of that comfort, the fact of that encouragement, the fact of that strengthening and the fact that we have functioned in the power of God creates something eternal. It lays up an eternal weight of glory.

It eternally reflects the power and the glory of God. That's something nothing on this earth that is of human invention or human origin can do. This is what Paul is talking about in Philippians chapter two.

And in that context, and I want to try to lay that ground very carefully and to remind all of us of that frame of reference, because as we get to verse 19, Paul is going to talk about sending Timothy to Philippi. Paul is still in prison. Paul can't go himself.

He's going to send Timothy. Why? Isn't there communication between Philippi and wherever Paul is imprisoned? Can you flip that switch? I think that power switch is off. There you go.

Can't he just find out by message? Can't they exchange correspondence? Why does Paul want to send someone face-to-face to the Philippian church, i.e. Timothy? Well, there is something about personal presence and you might wonder if perhaps that is largely disappearing in our texting and

messaging and blogging and emailing and internetting culture, but there is in fact something unique about personal contact. And Paul is not content to send letters back and forth and get information back and forth between himself and Philippi. He says, I am going to send to you Timothy.

Why? Well, not to say that our electronic communications are not a good thing, that they're not helpful. We have many that attend with us via a computer and that's great, but forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. And it is not enough in terms of Christian fellowship.

There needs to be contact. Why? Well, part of it is contained in the one another passages that we have in the New Testament. We talk about this all the time.

We say, well, you know, 60 some odd times it says in the New Testament, one another. Well, we're going to take a look at some of those one another passages tonight because Paul says, I hope in Christ to send to you Timothy. I think in your New King James, it says, I trust to send Timothy to you.

And the word there is not trust. It is elpis, elpizo. Trust is pistis, pisteo, P-I-S-T-E-U-O, pistuo.

That's not the word here. It is elpizo, E-L-P-I-Z-O. And elpizo means hope.

What is the triad of Christian virtues? What's the big three? Faith, hope, and love. End of 1 Corinthians 13. When all is said and done and all the temporary stuff goes away, these three remain faith, pistis, hope, elpis, and love, agape.

And the greatest of these is love. And I would submit to you that while it is possible to give expressions of love and to do a limited amount of loving conversation via message, nothing takes the place of actual contact. We have so many more channels of communication than just words.

There was a professor from Southwestern Seminary on the radio, must have been yesterday because I heard him while I was out. And he is getting his PhD. He's one of those ABD doctors.

They call him doctor, but he's Dr. ABD, which means all but dissertation. And if you ever see that after somebody's name, that's what it means. I got all my work done, but it's taken me three years to get my dissertation done.

So he's Dr. ABD, so-and-so, and he's over at Southwestern. But he's already a professor over there and teaching and so on, and it's all great. But his specialty is rhetoric.

His area of expertise and what he was talking about for the hour was rhetoric. What is rhetoric? We say, well, that's a bunch of throwing verbiage at people. Not really.

Rhetoric, the actual definition of it is your communication via words. You are hearing rhetoric as I

speak. Any argument, any proposition that is put to you is couched in some form of rhetoric.

Somebody says, well, I'm not gonna give you a bunch of fancy talk. I'm just gonna give you the truth. That's rhetoric.

That's an argument. I am espousing a certain persona when I talk to you and say, and I'm just a plain speaking guy. I'm Jack Webb on Dragnet, just the facts, ma'am.

I'm not gonna give you any ornamentation. That in itself is a rhetorical form. It's the plain speaking man.

So anytime we communicate via words, that's rhetoric. However, if you've ever watched a Hitchcock movie, you know that there's an awful lot that can be said without a word ever being spoken, right? There is a lot of nonverbal communication. God himself in scripture engages in a lot of nonverbal communication, doesn't he? Did God have to make Mount Sinai smoke and cover it with a cloud and lightnings and thunderings? Did there have to be the sounds of trumpets coming off of that thing? Did God have to park the Jordan? Did he have to park the Yom Suf? Could God not just have people just suddenly find themselves where they need to be? Ken and I were talking earlier about Ezekiel getting snatched up by the hair of the head.

Why did God snatch him by the hair of the head and transport him like a plastic sack of groceries from the river Kabar back to the temple? That's nonverbal communication, isn't it? Grabbed him by the hair of the head and took him over. That action speaks of something. Ezekiel is put for the people of Judah.

And God, you know, there are times when to get your child's attention, you grab him by the arm and you bring him into the room and you say, did I not tell you three times to clean this room? Couldn't you calmly just speak to them in an academic tone and say, I believe this is now the fourth time that I have spoken to you regarding this room. But there's something about grabbing them by the stack and swivel and planting them in front of the thing and pointing their head at it and saying, you see this? Well, this is nonverbal communication. Well, I just say that to say that a lot more goes on in human interaction than mere words.

Not only that, but if you have engaged in very much communication by text, by email, even by letter in the good old days of stamps and postman and so on, you can be misunderstood because there's kind of a narrow bandwidth when it's spoken only. I have been wildly misunderstood sending emails or posting messages to people that I thought was crystal clear and somebody took it the opposite or read something into it that I never intended or in review, I look back and say, boy, I should have thrown in a couple of adjectives or a couple of extra sentences here to make this explicitly clear. I had an episode just this last couple of weeks where somebody just ran completely amok and created all kinds of consternation for 80 or 90 people because something I said was taken in a faulty context and misunderstood.

And somebody just ran amok thinking that they had been told something that they weren't told. So I say all of that to say this. When Paul says, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly.

Why is that? Because there is much fuller perception when someone is on the scene. Why do the news stations send Bernie over to Baghdad to report on the incoming missiles in Desert Storm? Bernie, what's his name? And Wolf Blitzer and Dan Rather and all these other guys. They put them on the scene and they're in their coats or their flak jackets and they're ducking down behind a wall and they're reporting.

Why? Why do we like that? We feel like because they're on the scene, they can tell us their impressions, what's really happening. It's much fuller perception. Well, think about Christian fellowship.

God did not design us to run on text. And you can write that down. God did not design believers to run on text.

You cannot function as a healthy growing believer just reading your Bible and living in a germ-free bubble somewhere. We require Christian fellowship. We must contact other believers personally, individually.

Assembly is not via text. I'm sorry, it's just not. And I'm not telling anybody, Sam says, go and change your way of life.

I am telling you what the text says. Look at what Paul is saying here in Philippians chapter four. He knows these people intimately.

He has been there. He lived with them. You remember Lydia, the seller of purple, the wee passage in Acts and Luke was there and apparently Luke stayed behind and Paul went on.

And he knows these people very well. And you'd say, well, can't he kind of read between the lines and get it? He wants to send Timothy back there. Why? I hope and scribble out trust.

I don't know why they translated trust. It's a bad translation. It's not trust, it's hope.

I hope, I confidently expect. I am looking forward to with anticipation. In the Lord Jesus, why is that phrase in there? Because this is a part of Paul's apostolic function.

It is in the realm of spiritual things. He doesn't say I hope personally. I would just really like to get a firsthand account, kind of like somebody going and taking pictures and bringing them back.

I just want Timothy to come back and really give me the low down personally. He says, I hope in the Lord Jesus. And there are lots of different combinations of names for the second person of the Trinity that you can use.

But when he says, kurios yesu, it's actually kuriu here, but kurios yesu, this is a more intimate address for Jesus. That's his personal name and his authority. It's the authority of the Lord and it's his personal name.

Christ isn't here. And I'm not over blowing the distinction here. But if he was saying yesu Christu, this gets back into the messiahship, kingship, expectation of messianic rule and larger context.

This is more on a personal level in the Lord Jesus. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly so that, hina, in order that, for the purpose that, I may be encouraged. And this is a combination of the word for soul, which is suke with the word for good.

You know how you have Angelos and Angelo talking about a message. Angelos is a messenger, Angelo and Angelio and so on. This is transmitting information.

What's the word for gospel in Greek? Euangelion, the good message, that especially good message. Paul says, I wanna send Timothy in order that I myself, and it's very emphatic. This is kago, kai ego, I myself, in order that I myself may be, and this is eu suko, that I may be good-souled, that my soul may be made good, may be refreshed, restored, encouraged, benefited, just good, when I know your state.

And this is, there's not really a word for state. It's ta peri homone, that concerning you, the stuff concerning you, your circumstances would be a good colloquial translation. So why is Timothy going? Can't they just write him about their circumstances? Well, writing is always something of a filter.

You have to take into account the perspective of the author, what he is and isn't saying, whether or not you can confidently read between the lines. Which side of the various, if there are different parties and different sides and different emphases in a thing, who's talking, do you have to get everybody in the church to write a letter so that you can get a full account? Well, Timothy will go, Timothy will see, Timothy will come back. And why can Timothy do this instead of maybe just, well, send me another man from Philippi over so I can tell how you're doing.

Look at verse 20. For I myself have, echo, no one like-minded. This is isosucon, isosucon.

This is actually an Omicron, so it's isosucon. What does iso mean? Isosceles triangle. What do you know about isosceles? Same, same on the two long sides.

Isometric exercises, you put the same force, you stick your palms together and push, that's an isometric. If it wasn't isometric, you'd push yourself in a circle. That's what happens when I try to swim across a lake.

I'm trying not to drown. I can't really see where I'm going. And I generally, being right-handed, I swim in a big arc and I end up hitting shore instead of the little buoy I'm swimming for.

If I don't stop and dog paddle and so on. Isosucon, there's nobody same-souled. Timothy going is just like Paul going.

Timothy is so a son of Paul in spiritual things. They are just in sync. They have that deep communion.

And you know what this is like. All of us have friends, our spouse, our kids, our parents, good, good friends, that you just have a really deep, full same-souledness when it comes to the things of the spirit. And you can relax, you can be yourself, you can share what's on your mind without fear of being sneered at or snubbed or wounded in some way.

Same-souled, we're comfortable, we're confident. We are loved. We love and we are loved.

And it's another part of that one another. You can't get that via text. You can share somewhat.

Everybody writes letters home. I was gone for a year in Okinawa and I've sent letters and received letters and it was wonderful. But really those were more reminders of the people I knew.

It wasn't the same as being home or being with my parents or my siblings or whoever. I'm going to send Timothy, I hope in the Lord, so that I can be good soul, so that my soul will be lifted up and encouraged because I don't have anybody like him that his soul is just like my soul. And he will sincerely care for your state.

And once again, you have that same ta perihumon thing. But this sincerely care for is a combination of two words. One is merimnao, which is a word that has the connotation of... It's not far from the word for memory.

And it has to do with the... When you revisit your memories, typically nobody wants to go back and it's like Barbara sings, when it's too painful to remember, you forget it. When you go back down memory lane, they used to have Lawrence Welk and Time Life and others, they had a set of records called Down Memory Lane. Well, these are happy songs.

These are bringing back the fond memories of the past. You don't go back and revisit, unless there's something wrong with you. You don't want to go back and revisit nightmarishly horrible and tragic.

Yeah, we want to, let's let bygones, let's let that travel on down the old river and let's think of something pleasant. I mean, who in their right mind would just want to drag up, although there are some perverse forms of therapy where they want to revert you back and say, well, we've got to uncover these deep traumas and I don't even want to go down that road, even theoretically. So this is what Paul wants to do.

He wants to send Timothy. Now, human contact. This is another part, there's a common theme.

You can see it going all through this part of Philippians. One another, one another, fellowship with one another, human contact. Timothy will be in contact with you.

Timothy will come and share your state with me. I don't want to just send a piece of parchment or a ostrakon with a couple of hand scratches on it. Timothy will be there with you.

He will become intimately acquainted with how things are going with you, what's on your hearts and what challenges you face. He will come back and share that with me. Now think about it.

There is an analogy between Paul, who is separate from this group of believers that he loves and cares for, and God in heaven and believers down on earth that he loves and cares for. And there is an intermediary who partakes of both. Timothy has been in Philippi.

Timothy knows these people just like Paul does. Timothy is the go-between. Timothy can take the news from Philippi back to Paul.

Timothy can bring greetings and encouragements and an amplification of this rather short message to the people in Philippi. Isn't this what the Lord Jesus does? He has come and communicated the things of the Father to us. He now sits at the right hand of the Father and as the Holy Spirit brings our prayers before the Father, He intercedes.

He mediates. He is our advocate before the Father, establishing our qualification and our righteousness in Him, our peace and our sanctification in Him. And in a way, the Lord Jesus is our Timothy.

God the Father did not come down and walk among us. God the Son did that. Timothy is gonna go walk among the Philippians and he's gonna bring word back.

And this is going to encourage and hearten Paul. And Paul is gonna be drawn closer to those that he cannot go see. But this is all done through contact.

Well, as I've said, we've often talked about these 50, 60 odd times that one another occurs in the New Testament. And I thought I would just briefly review some of those passages. We don't have time to study all of them or review all of them in depth.

But if you can just get some of the references down, I'll just make a few remarks on these. Many of them are directly related to the exhortations for agape, love one another. And this is in the same way that Philippians has the theme of rejoice and joy and encouragement.

The one another idea is almost always linked in some fashion with love, kind of goes together. If one another are next to each other, then there ought to be this love. So John 13, 34, where Jesus says, this is kind of the capstone of the whole thing.

A new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you, like I have

loved you, that you also love one another. So distillation of the thing that Paul said, let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus. Look out for the interests of others.

As I have loved you, a new commandment I give to you. Notice it is a new commandment. John 13, 34, Judas has left.

It's a new commandment. The Old Testament law era is in the rear view mirror, looking forward through the windshield to the church age in this very short time before the cross and before the burial and the resurrection and the ascension and the session of the Lord Jesus. This is a new commandment.

Isn't it an old commandment, love one another, love the Lord your God with all your heart, love your neighbor as yourself. Why is this a new commandment? Why is it new? What is in John 13, 34 that's not in love your neighbor as yourself? What's lacking in the Old Testament version of that command to love one another that is present in John 13, 34? What had the Old Testament Israelites never seen? The Lord Jesus Christ. As I have loved you.

He was here and demonstrated. God demonstrates his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The example of the Lord Jesus Christ is put before us. And as I have mentioned before, this is one of the things that really profoundly changed my entire view of the Lord Jesus. When I was able to get past the *posi non peccary*, non *posi peccary* theological construct that isn't in scripture, that said that Jesus Christ was able not to sin and not able to sin.

And that he was the copper wire of humanity welded to the iron pipe of deity. And it was impossible for him to sin. The devil could try to bend that bar, but because his humanity was welded to the deity, because he was deity, he couldn't sin.

And that kind of translated to everything Jesus did. Well, of course he was perfect. Of course he could love his enemies.

Of course he could fulfill the law completely because he's that, I'm just the soft wire. I don't have that iron bar keeping me straight. And so I lacked appreciation for the example of the Lord Jesus because I thought, well, yeah, make me God and I wouldn't sin either.

I mean, seriously. I went through a lot of years thinking, I appreciated the Lord Jesus. I appreciate everything, but it was just distant.

I didn't, when he kept saying, Jesus is our example. I thought, well, example of what? I'm not welded to the iron bar. That's a very limited, I can listen to what he said.

And he certainly is an ideal example. But it's like when your geometry book talks about a perfect

circle. How wide is the line in a perfect circle? How wide's the line? In a geometric circle, what's the width of the circle itself? It's zero.

There is no width to a circle. It's a radius and a diameter and the circle itself has no width. If it had a width, then you'd have two diameters, wouldn't you? You'd have two radii.

But so can I draw a perfect circle? As soon as I put pencil on paper, as soon as I stick my compass in, I can't do a perfect circle. And I kind of had that disconnect until through studying and looking at what the Bible has to say, it dawned on me that the Lord Jesus Christ had exactly the same provision that you and I have. He didn't obey the Father and live a sinless life because he was God.

He obeyed the Father and lived a sinless life and completely fulfilled the plan and purpose of God because he lived in the power of the Spirit and in the light of the Word of God. That's what gave him the strength. I've got those things.

If Jesus was standing on that ground, the Spirit and the Word, he has given those things to us. And that's an example we can follow. That is, as I like to say in the write-ups for medals, this is an example worthy of emulation.

We can shoot for that. We're obviously not going to achieve his level for other reasons, but it isn't because we're not God. And to the extent that we commit ourselves to the Word of God and the Spirit of God, we can follow that same road.

He has come down from heaven and become man and he has lived, he has literally walked in our shoes. He has been tested in all points like as we are. He understands what it is to suffer.

He learned obedience through the things that he suffered. So do we. So now this is a Lord Jesus that is same-souled, isosuke, with God and with us.

And that's one of the reasons that there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. It doesn't say the God Christ Jesus. It's the man.

Jesus in his humanity mediates. So this one another is important. And John 13, 34 is the pinnacle.

If you only had one another verse that you could remember, that's it. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. That's the new part.

You've seen how it's done. This is not, well, I will restore your ox that was lost because of a failure on my part because that's what the law says. I am going to look out for your interests because that's what the example of the Lord Jesus is.

The mind that was in Christ Jesus illuminates and compels and motivates me to look at you as I

would, I will do for you as I would do for him. If you had done it for the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me. The Old Testament folks never had that opportunity.

Did they? Did anybody in the Old Testament say, well, you know, if you feed a widow or an orphan, that's the same as if you've fed God. If you clothe a widow or an orphan, it's the same as if you clothed God. They just didn't have that.

As I have loved you, you love one another. That's the new part. That's the great opportunity we have.

No Old Testament saint, Moses longed to see our day. The Old Testament saints, Solomon and Elijah, and some of the ones that kind of got up to the glass ceiling of the Old Testament age would almost literally have killed to get into this age that we just so take for granted. Love one another.

What is the sphere of operation of this great opportunity? It's each other. Love each other. Makes it a little more personal.

Love each other the way Jesus loved us. Love each other. John 13, 34.

In 1335, he goes on to say, by this all will know that you are my disciples. You want to be worthy of the name Christian? Do you want to be worthy of the name of Christ? Do you want to receive that well done, good and faithful servant? Enter thou into the joy of your Lord. By this all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

That love as I have loved you. Two chapters after that in John 15, 12 and 13, this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. See, it's still got that new piece in it.

This is my commandment. Love one another as I have loved you. 15, 12.

Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life for his friends. And then in verse 17 of John 15, these things I command you in order that you love one another. You go to Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians 3, 12.

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all just as we do to you. And Paul often uses himself as an example. And he says, follow my example.

Look at my pattern of life. Remember how we walked among you. And as you saw me do.

Boy, that's a strong example he must have said. I would never tell you all, just watch me and do exactly what I do. You all know me too well.

But the apostle Paul could say, as we have manifested love toward you, you all walk. It was an apostolic gift. I don't think anybody but an apostle would dare say, look at me and follow my

example.

Don't hold your breath until I say it. 1 Thessalonians 3, 12. May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all.

Notice one another is different than the all that are outside. Just as we do to you. 4, 9. Concerning brotherly love, you have no need that I should write to you for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

This is part of what the Holy Spirit imparts to us, to love one another. So think about it. We wouldn't have that New Testament command, love as I have loved you, if Jesus had not been down here in contact with us, would we? That's the example.

Paul would not have been able to say, love each other the way you have seen us love you, unless he had been in their midst. And of course, we're getting this all by text, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, with his illumination, we have that first person contact with the Lord Jesus. If you have my words and keep them, Jesus said, I and my father will come to you and make our home with you.

We will abide with you. That's our contact with the Lord Jesus. That's our first person witness to his love.

And we are not together by accident. You are not here listening to the sound of my voice by accident. There is a reason that we are privileged to be in fellowship with one another.

It's an opportunity, whether it's family, friends, just fellow church members, other believers in our periphery, that is opportunity. And we need to recognize how important it is. It is no small thing that over four dozen times, scripture says, love one another, love one another, love one another, love one another.

But we think it's an amazing thing when God repeats something twice or three times in scripture. How about 50 times? It's like a Jubilee of love one another's. So is it important? How many evangelize the worlds are there compared to love one another's? How many knock on doors, communicate, share the gospel? How many of those are there? And there are, you can make a case for some, but how many are there compared to the one another's? When we master this challenge and fulfill this opportunity, there is no greater witness to Christ than someone who has the love of Christ shining forth on a daily basis.

That's what shines the light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Well, we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, I wanna point out a few more of these before we go forward and learn a little bit about Timothy.

Who is Timothy? Why is he such a same soul guy? You'd be surprised how much information we

have about young Timothy. We don't typically do more than remember that his name's on a couple of books, but we'll get a little biographical sketch of him when we come back from the break.