

Philippians 10-07-02b

Let's pick up our study now in Philippians. We're beginning chapter 3 at this point. Paul having commended two individuals to the Philippian church, both men whom they know, and yet he still points out their service and some things that maybe the people in Philippi don't know about their faithfulness in ministry, their like-mindedness with Paul, and their perseverance under great pressure, and having pointed these things out, the last phrase in chapter 2, it says that Epaphroditus was not regarding his life to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Well, I like to begin when there's something kind of strange-looking in English by going back to the Greek, and this says that he came near to death having risked his soul, literally. When it says not regarding his life, this is *para bolusaminas te suce*, and *para bolusaminas* is a big long word, but you recognize the *para* part, that means alongside, and there's a little bit of a text issue. There's two possible roots here.

It could be *b-o-u-l* or *b-o-l*, but it's *b-o-l*, and this is the word from *balo*, which means to throw. So this is basically to throw alongside. Now what it's referring to is casting dice.

This is a gambling term. *Para balo*, that's you're rolling the dice, and this is the word *hazard* in English, originally meant to not a danger so much as to play a game of chance, and that meaning survives when you say, well, does anyone care to hazard a guess? You don't think this is some sort of a dangerous guess that's going to bring down some big scimitar and lop your head off if you're wrong. You say, you know, would anyone hazard a guess as to why I'm bringing this up? Well, to risk or to make a calculated gamble, does anyone want to kind of put themselves out here and you know, make a guess? So *para balo*, and so what it means here is that Epaphroditus has through the work, and this is *dia ta ergon*, through doing this work of ministry on Paul's behalf, *mecri thanatu*, and this is the second time death has come up.

First, he almost died because of his weakness, his illness, and here it says because through *dia*, the work, *mecri thanatu*, and *mecri* means until, or unto. He came near until death. You've got the verb there in *Gizo*, to come near to a thing.

Having hazarded the soul, or having, and it isn't so much risked here as having put his soul on the line. I think that's probably a good colloquial translation that catches the meaning. He put his soul on the line, and in doing so came close to death.

What would this mean? You remember how when the Lord Jesus was arrested and all the disciples forsook him? You get the idea that when Paul was arrested, Epaphroditus stood right there and could easily have been killed in the arrest process or in the subsequent imprisonment and trial and so on. He stood with Paul. He was willing to put his soul on the line, soul in the sense of physical life here.

Once again, *suce*, flexible term. Look at the context. Is it your immortal soul? Is it your mortal

existence? And here it speaks of mortal existence.

But he put his life on the line is what is a good connotation, good connotative translation. In order that he might ana plero, ana means up and plero means to fill, that he might fill up. The of you lack, the toward me service.

That's how it literally goes in Greek, that he might fill up the of you lack, the toward me service. The toward me service here is laetourgia, once again, ministry. The meaning here really turns on Husterema, H-U-S-T-E-R-E-M-A, and it is lexically translated, the dictionary definition in a Greek dictionary is deficiency, something that is lacking.

But our closest cousin passage to determine the meaning of the term here is 1st Corinthians 16 7. Keep your finger in Philippians and flip back to 1st Corinthians 16 17, and then not 7, 17. Paul is in the wrap-up phase of the 1st Corinthian letter. He says in verse 15, I urge you brethren, you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the firstfruits of Achaia, they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints, and this is a different word for ministry.

This is diakonia rather than laetourgia. But they have dedicated themselves, that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labor. Different kind of a church.

1st Corinthians is written to a church that is full of immature believers. They have wars and divisions and schisms. Paul can't get into very much advanced teaching with them, and so he points out people to whom they should be in subjection, to whom they need to render obedience.

He doesn't tell that to the Philippians. He doesn't say when Epaphroditus gets there, you be sure and obey him and put yourself in subjection to him. He says receive him and hold him in esteem, hold him in honor.

But there's no thought that he needs to go in there and set the house in order, because they're a much more mature congregation. But he says here be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. Now look at verse 17.

I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. It's almost identical phrase to what we have in Philippians. The idea here is that your absence they have made up for.

You can't be here, but they are here. They are here in your stead. So they're... I would love to see you, but I don't see you.

We're not co-located. There is the absence of you and these men fill up that absence. You get the idea? It reminds me of that very succinct review that was given to a book one time.

This book fills a much-needed void. You just let that sink in. This book fills a much-needed void.

Well, there's a void and something fills it. Maybe that void needs to be there, and you don't want anything filling it. Ken had a pipe that was supposed to have a void, but something filled it.

Now your drain doesn't work. Sometimes you need the absence of something in a place. But here he says they have supplied an absence on your part.

They have filled up the lack of you. A horrible example of that was Stephen Stills singing, you know, if you can't be with the one you love, then love the one you're with. You know, that would be a negative example of this idea.

But look at verse 18. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

It's a very similar idea and a very similar language. So when you come back now to Philippians, and he says he has laid his soul on the line to fill up the absence of you. The idea here is that the Philippian church can't be there.

They sent Epaphroditus, and Epaphroditus has basically nearly killed himself being there to fill the absence of all of the Philippians who would love to have been there. The whole church couldn't be there, so Epaphroditus is there, and he's essentially trying to be the whole church for Paul. He's just spent himself in a worthy cause, literally, and it isn't that that there's a deficiency in the service of the Philippian church.

It's their absence, and Epaphroditus is essentially standing in for the whole church. You see that there's a huge difference, and the English just misses it entirely. He's not filling up what is lacking in their service.

He's filling the void left by their absence or their inability to be there, and you can tell he just spread himself thin trying to do what all the people in the church would have done could they have been there. He's their proxy, so that's the deficiency. It's an absence of presence.

It's kosher, but I'll say it anyway. So, you know, what a great commendation of Epaphroditus. He absolutely embodies that idea of of spending yourself for a worthy cause, the cause of Christ, the fulfilling of that mission, of ministering to the needs of Paul at whatever cost.

It embodies and exemplifies everything Paul has been talking about in this letter, and he sort of puts him at the at the climax of the letter, because look at what happens now in chapter 3, and remember there were no chapters and verses in the letter. This was just a letter. It came on a few sheets of parchment or papyrus or something.

He says, finally my brethren, and in Greek there is no finally. This is taloipon, and it literally means the rest. That's it, what's left, and it's a it's a figure of speech.

And it basically is a short way of saying not so much finally as here's the rest of what I wanted to

say, and Paul ends many letters with this phrase. Although I think in one of the Thessalonian letters he puts this in, and you think the letters can end, and he goes on for two more chapters, but that's kind of an exception. First Thessalonians 4.1. He says, finally then brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, and so typically this will introduce the application section of the letter.

He's given you a lot of things and perhaps a few exhortations here and there, but he's really going to kind of summarize. So in summary would be another way to translate this, or in conclusion, or the only thing I have left to say is this. That's probably the best.

Here's what I have left to say. Taloipon. My brethren, rejoice in the Lord, and that really kind of sums up his whole, and I mentioned at the beginning of the first session, or somewhere in the early part of the first session, that the problem in the Philippian Church, which is sort of deduced by implication from what Paul exhorts them about, is that there were some complaints, and some shortness of patience, and some lack of that real sacrificial love toward one another, and that's really the body of the letter, is to get hold of this attitude that Christ Jesus exemplifies, that Paul exemplifies, that Timothy and Epaphroditus exemplify, and he's encouraging the Philippians to get hold of that, and really live it out, and so you say, well, how does that happen? You can't necessarily just say, oh, be more sacrificial, be more loving, be more interested in the affairs of others.

Oh sure, no problem. I'm glad you mentioned that, and then just here we go, and we're all more interested in the well-being of others. What is it that makes that happen? What is the key ingredient that we've seen in this letter so far? What is Paul's constant refrain? Rejoice.

Rejoice. Rejoice. Look at the glass half-full, not half-empty.

If you're going to be able to look outward, if you're going to be able to look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others, if you're going to have this mind in you that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, took on the form of a servant, came in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient. What do we know from other passages? What was his motivation? What was the motivation of the Lord Jesus in doing all these things? Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of God? The joy that was set before him. You can't wait for joy to happen.

You have to aim at joy. This is why we have so many exhortations here, commands to rejoice. He doesn't say, you know, if you'll just think about this doctrinal point I made, you're just going to have joy busting out of every seam in your soul.

If you just meditate on this verse, joy will flood your soul, like the old song says. What does he say? You make it a point to rejoice. I'm going to send you Epaphroditus, so that you can rejoice, even as you hold him in esteem.

I'm going to give you an occasion for rejoicing. I look at my circumstances, and I rejoice, because Christ is preached. Rejoice, rejoice.

The rest of what I have to say to you, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. This is not a result. This is the means.

You don't have to command a result. You command the means, and the results take place. Kairate in Curio.

Then he says a really peculiar thing. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is safety to you. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

What? What same things? What? What? I've just... Immediately my mental train just goes right off the tracks, and I don't know where I am and what I'm thinking about. For me to write the same things, what are the same things? Well, it's either what he has just said, or what he's about to say, because he says I'm writing the same things. So he's writing them here.

So either what he just said, or what he is about to say. Well, what did he just say? Well, I don't think he has previously said the Epaphroditus is coming. This seems to be a fresh piece of news.

So what is it? It could be rejoice in the Lord, which he has alluded to previously, but this seems like a plural. It wouldn't be, if it was the same thing, you could say, okay, the rejoice idea, but the same things. This sounds like he's referring to a body of some substance.

And he says, I don't mind doing this. It's not tedious. It's not troublesome, and the word is kind of a strange one.

It's acneros, okay, n-e-r-o-s. And its first occurrence is in Matthew 25 26, where Jesus is telling a parable. And you remember the parable of the talents.

Master, you gave me five. Here's five more. Master, you gave me three.

Here's three more. What about you, buddy? Well, you know, I knew that you reap where you don't sow and you gather where you haven't scattered any seed. So I didn't do anything with your money.

I wrapped it in a sweat rag and stuck it in my pocket. And here it is. And the Master answers and says to him in 25 26, you wicked lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.

So why didn't you go and, you know, put this thing in account? But it's translated, the wicked and lazy, the word lazy is acneros. So it means idle or not not given to effort. In Romans 12 11, Paul says not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit serving the Lord, not lazy in diligence, not

apathetic and idle and indifferent in diligence, fervent in spirit serving the Lord.

And so you get the idea here that it is Paul says for me to write the same thing is indeed not what not lazy is not idle, not a waste of time. And as we do in the in the Psalms and in the Proverbs, sometimes when you're not real sure what a word means, look at the next line where you have a contrast. It's not this but this or it is like this and like this and you find a simil assimile or and so what do we have here? It's not oikneron, but to you asphales and asphales means secure or unshakable.

So this would be for you it is security. For me, it's not idle, but for you it is security. And you get the idea that that idleness and lack of activity is is a tedium or is a is a in other words Paul's not saying I for me to to say again some things that I have written to you before isn't laziness on my part.

I'm not out of ideas. I I I I I I I I I I I I I I that for me, I could never do that. I would want just for my own amusement and benefit and enjoyment and learning to prepare a new thing each time.

If you've got the opportunity to stand up and teach, learn something new, get excited about it and present that. Not just say, well, that was a real wowser in Schenectady, so I'm gonna try it here in Walla Walla and try it out the same old thing. You know, there's fresh unbroken snow to be tracked up, messed up, so go there.

Well, Paul says, look, the fact that you're hearing some things that you've heard me write before, it's not laziness on my part, it's security for you. I'm writing this because you need to hear it. And most of us, when we repeat, like to think that it's a needed repetition.

It's security. You know, how many times do you tell somebody as they're leaving, drive carefully? Well, what do you imply? They're not a careful driver. If you didn't say that, they'd just go hear him, scare him off.

We repeat it, not because we can't think of anything better to say, although maybe that's the case, but we think, you know, it can't hurt to remind my child as they go out, you know, remember most accidents happen within three miles of home. You know, I may have heard that forever, but it's true. Sometimes it's helpful to remember you can't just take for granted the street is so familiar, surroundings are so usual that you're just really not paying attention.

Here comes somebody around the corner and now you've had an accident. Be alert, be diligent. And repetition isn't necessarily a bad thing if it's contributing to your security, your safety, your preservation from harm.

So that's great on why Paul is writing the same things, but what are the same things? Well, there's one of these big scholarly debates that people typically don't know about. Did Paul write a previous letter to the Philippians? Is this second Philippians or fifth Philippians? And he's referring

to previous letter or letters in which he said some of these things. And he says, rejoice in the Lord.

You know, you've heard me say this and some of the other stuff up here before, but I'm repeating it for your benefit, for your safety. And the answer is, if he wrote previous letters, which he almost certainly did, they weren't inspired. God did not choose to include them in the canon.

But there are hints here and in some of Paul's other letters, 1 Corinthians. You can make a strong case out of something Paul says in 1 Corinthians that 1 Corinthians is not 1 Corinthians, it's at least 2 Corinthians. And 2 Corinthians is probably 3 Corinthians or more.

Paul traveled extensively. He wrote extensively. Most of his letters have perished.

God chose to preserve certain letters. God inspired certain letters and put them into our New Testament canon. But this is by no means the totality of Paul's correspondence.

So it's highly likely that he's referring to a previous letter. By most estimates, Paul has been away from Philippi now for nine or 10 years. Would he not have ever written a letter back there? Highly unlikely, probably a couple, three or four letters a year.

Would he have repeated some of these same themes? Very possibly. There are others who say, well, if God's inspired this letter and he's talking about something that is the same, then it's gotta be somewhere where we can find it. And so they will make a case that it is the theme of rejoicing that he is returning to.

And I think it could probably be both and. Maybe he has talked about rejoicing and focusing on the positive and looking out for the interests of others in previous letters. And he says, it's not tedious to remind you of it.

Here's the point. There is a time to reinforce and reiterate and refresh. Brian had a good question on the break about fundamentals.

And from time to time, we go back and revisit things that are basic truths, the necessity for confession of sin, the role of the Holy Spirit, the importance of the word of God, the objective of the Christian life. Some of us have known these things for years, probably decades, but for our security, for our safety, there is a time to go back and review and reiterate and refresh our foundational understandings and the warnings and the exhortations of scripture. And that's what Paul is doing here.

I personally think that what he is referring to here, which he has probably mentioned to the Philippians in the past, is this next section, verses two and following. The repetition here is beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation, for we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. You remember when he first came to Philippi, Paul was being dogged by Jews who had converted to

Christ, but thought you still had to keep the law and that you had to be circumcised, that you had to keep the feasts and you had to be observant, kind of a thin veneer of Christianity overlaid onto fundamental Judaism.

And Paul said, no, no circumcision. Christ has fulfilled the law, we are free. We are not under law, we're under grace.

Well, how many times do you think he has had to reiterate that? And he says, look, I'm gonna say this again, for your safety, beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation. These are three areas of external attack. He has spent the first two chapters talking about internal relationships, believer to believer within the church, one another approach, right? Now he says, for the rest, what I'm gonna tell you now, it's what I've told you before.

I never get tired of telling you. It's not tedious, it's not idle. It's not just laziness on my part.

I'm telling you this for your safety. Watch out in these areas. Beware of dogs, K-U-N-A-S, kunas is the word in Greek.

And this is not gonna be a reference to believers in the church. This is a threefold description. Remember how he gave a threefold description of Epaphroditus? He is a brother, he's a coworker, and he's a fellow soldier.

Well, that's the good guy on the inside. Here are the bad guys on the outside. They are shameless dogs, workers of evil, and mutilators of the flesh.

This is a threefold description of the attack from the outside. And mutilators of the flesh tells us exactly who we're talking about. These are the Judaizers, the ones who wanna drag Gentile Christians under the law.

Drag any, any Christians back under the law of Moses. They do not understand what God has done in the church age. So beware of these.

Dogs has the idea of shamelessness. You know, dogs, look at some of their habits. What they do with their face when they're around each other, what they do with their face when they're engaged in personal hygiene.

And they're oblivious. They're shameless. They don't know how shocking their behavior can be to others.

They're just oblivious. And these are those who are probably Christians on the outside, but they are doing shameful things and they're not even aware of it. And Paul talks about this extensively when he's writing to the Galatian church.

Beware of dogs, beware of workers of evil. And this is literally bad workers. Kakos, K-A-K-O-S is

a word that is used for a lot of negative things.

There are about 50 uses of this word in the New Testament and half of them are Paul. He talks about in Romans chapter two, verse nine, there will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does Kakos of the Jew first and also of the Greek. And you know what's going on in the end of chapter one.

And as he goes into chapter two, talking about all of those things that people are turned over to, well, that's Kakos. So these who are workers, he's talked about the good workers. He says, you are my fellow workers in the gospel.

Timothy's a fellow worker. Paphroditus is a fellow worker. That's good work.

That's the work, work of ministry, work of service, work that produces blessing in the fellowship of believers. These are bad workers, workers of badness. What they work is a blight and a scourge and a snare and a deleterious negative to everybody around them.

And he literally says, beware is from bleppo. Bleppo means to see, perceive, take note of. This is not a word that says, be cautious.

It's a word that says, observe it, perceive it, see it. Blepitemus kakos ergitas, blepitemus katatomen. Blepitemus kunas, which is the first one.

He says, blepitemus, blepitemus, blepitemus, watch, look at, observe, see the dogs, see the workers of badness, see the cutters, those who cut down. They translate this as mutilate, but this is katatomen. This means to cut away, to cut down, to cut off, to cut apart, for we are the peritome.

Peri means around, and this is a direct reference to circumcision, ones who in spirit serve. This is la truo, who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus. Notice, who rejoice in Christ Jesus.

This fulfills the law. When you are rejoicing in Christ, you're fulfilling the first great commandment, love the Lord your God. You're fulfilling the second great commandment, love your neighbor as yourself.

When you are rejoicing in Christ, you are worshiping God in the spirit. Jesus told the woman at the well, they who worship God, the day is coming, when it's not gonna be a mountain, it's not gonna be a ritual, it's not gonna be a law. Those who worship God will worship him in spirit and in truth, and those who worship God in spirit and who rejoice in Christ are the circumcision.

They have fulfilled the letter of the law, the spirit of the law. The ultimate fulfillment of the law is to be like-minded with the Lord Jesus Christ and have no confidence in the flesh. And this is persuasion in the flesh, who aren't persuaded that the flesh is the way.

It's not so much confidence. In fact, the word for rejoicing in Christ isn't kairate, like you'd expect, it's another use of kaukema or kaukaomai. And that's the boasting word that we talked about, where Paul said that I may boast in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain, that I may celebrate, and this is to celebrate Christ, which of course implies rejoicing, and have no persuasion in the flesh.

This is a perfect active participle, meaning that the reason they're acting this way is that they were persuaded in the past that the way to righteousness is to follow the rules, to do the observances, and that's the easy way out. It's easy to have a works-based righteousness. Well, if I witness to two people a week, I'm righteous.

If I go to church twice on Sunday and once on Wednesday, I'm righteous. If I put money in the plate, I'm righteous. It's easy, that's the lazy man's righteousness.

You let yourself off the hook, I'll just punch the ticket and I'm done. I'll listen to a Bible class, I'm done. I'll hear a tape, I'll read a chapter, I'll do my daily Bible reading, now I'm righteous.

You let yourself off the hook, what are you gonna do the other 23.85 hours of the day? It is in spirit and in truth. It is the worship of God, the celebrating in Christ, and not being persuaded that your works are going to satisfy God by themselves. Paul says, though I also might have persuasion in the flesh, I could convince myself that I'm good to go, if anyone else thinks he can be persuaded in the flesh, I more so circumcise the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, concerning the law of Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Paul says, these guys that are trying to drag you off into the law, look, I've been there and done that. I could put them all in the shade on that score. And he says, I'm here to tell you you're going down the wrong road.

What things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. And this is one of the great words in the Bible. I actually have an email address with this.

What things were gained to me, I consider Zemian, and Zemian means disadvantage. What seemed to be advantages are disadvantages. You'd be better off being a Gentile than coming in with this baggage.

And many times there are people who come to faith in Christ as adults and didn't grow up in church and didn't get all of the legalistic training. And sometimes you're better off not having to unlearn before you can learn the grace of God in Christ. So what things seem to be gains, these I have considered, and in Greek it's great because he says, these I have considered because of Christ, loss.

I have considered because of Christ, loss. Loss is the last word in the sentence, Zemian. But on

the contrary, I count all things as loss, all things to be loss, because of the excelling knowledge of Christ, Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

And notice, this is not at the point of salvation righteousness. He says, I have left behind the circumcision, the eighth day birth, the Hebrews, the Pharisaical trappings, the zeal of persecuting those that didn't seem to be righteous enough, and following all of these rules down to the nth degree, tithing the spices in my cabinet. These things that at one time seemed to be such advantages are disadvantages.

I have left them behind. I have dropped them, and I have suffered the loss of all things, the right to a home and stability and a wife and a family and all of the normalcies of life. I count them that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness.

This is not a point of, he doesn't say on the Damascus road, I accepted Christ as my savior, and now all this is living righteousness. This is daily righteousness by faith. It is from God by faith.

So that, verse 10, I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. And you'll notice there are two references to resurrection here. When Paul is reaching and stretching to the ultimate, and he says all of this bad stuff, this kakos, this rubbish, this loss, that I tried and found wanting, I have left it behind, I count all things lost for Christ.

And what I want is to be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, but righteousness from God by faith, so that I may know Him and. What a great thing to actually know Christ and the power of His resurrection. What is that? The power of His resurrection, fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

And then in verse 11, he comes back to that same thing. If by any means I may attain to, reach up to, get to the pinnacle where the resurrection from the dead can be laid hold of. Does this mean that he thinks if he doesn't do all these things, he won't be resurrected? What is the power of resurrection? What is attaining to the resurrection from the dead? Well, this is gonna be the focus of our study next time.

Because after everything Paul has said in this letter, and he says, look, I've given you all this stuff, and I'm gonna tell you now, don't fall for the attacks. Don't let this stuff get under your skin that you're not righteous, that you're not doing it right, that you're out of the will of God. These Judaizers coming in, these mutilators of the flesh, these dogs, these workers of badness, he says, look, let me tell you where we're going as we adopt the mind of Christ and as we exercise love toward one another, as we move in the direction of fulfilling all the plan and purpose of God.

What are we after? This is it. This is the joy that is set before us. And it's the resurrection of the dead.

And you say, well, it should be nice to wake up, you know, and go to glory. Well, what exactly is he talking about? If by any means, you would think if anybody had any means of attaining to whatever it is needs to be attained to, Paul could do it. And yet he sounds like, if by any means I can attain, he's the apostle Paul.

And he's saying, I'm hoping I can attain. What is he talking about? Well, it's a really fascinating subject and you'll be surprised, I think, at what is contained in this concept of the resurrection from the dead. So that's, we're gonna spend our time on that next week.

But we'll close here for tonight. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the gift of these letters from the apostle Paul, which contain your divinely inspired truth that enables us and empowers us, that guides us, that encourages us, motivates us.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts, help us to see clearly the great opportunity that is ours because of the Lord Jesus. And because you have given us all these potentials and all of these provisions for the time that remains to us in this life. We pray that we can be alert to and sensitive to the opportunities to apply the concepts of brotherly love and care and concern for one another so that our lives, both individually and collectively, will be a reflection of your glory in the midst of an increasingly dark time and dark generation.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.