



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

“Man's Chief End”

1 Corinthians

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Mark, and good morning. We are in 1 Corinthians, as Mark said. We are going through it chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and we're going to finish up chapter 10 this morning and finish up with the beginning of chapter 11. Sometimes the chapter divisions and even the verse divisions are not always the best. That's not inspired. But we will conclude the subject that we've been looking at for some time with verse 1 of chapter 11. We'll begin with 10:23, so follow along with me as I read.

“All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor. Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, 'This is meat sacrificed to idols,' do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who informed *you*, and for conscience' sake; I mean not your own conscience, but the other *man's*; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking

my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.” May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and our time in it together. Let’s bow together in prayer.

Father, we do seek Your blessing upon the reading of the text that we have just read. We pray Your blessing upon our time in which we consider it, consider its meaning and its application to us. We pray You would bless us. We have much to be thankful for. We thank You for life, for physical life. We thank You most particularly for spiritual life, for the new birth in which we have been made a new creation. And we thank You, Lord, that within us You have put the Holy Spirit. You’ve sealed our hearts. And I can’t mention that without thinking of what an unfathomable blessing that really is. So we’ve mentioned this so often when we come to You in prayer on a Sunday morning. But it is an amazing thing to think that the third person of the Trinity dwells within each one of us. We’re His temple. You through Him and Christ live in us.

And so we have the Spirit of God within us. We have one who can interpret the things that we’ve read. We can make the right applications to us. We pray for that. We know that it’s possible to quench the Spirit. It’s possible to be obstructive in ways to His ministry, and we pray that that will not happen, that You will open our hearts to receive the things that have been read and what will be said and that we will think deeply upon them, and that the Spirit of God will so direct our minds and we will see how these things apply to each one of us individually and how we live our life, that our lives would be lived ultimately as Paul has told us they must be, to Your glory.

So we ask you, Lord, to open our hearts to receive Your truth. Make us teachable and guide us in the things that we’ve read, and may this be a time of learning and worship, a time in which we are blessed greatly by You. This is an important time of the week. It’s a time when Your people come together, open the Scriptures, study, learn, sing hymns of praise, worship You. So bless it, Father, make it a rich time for us this morning.

We pray for other aspects of our needs. Lord, we have material needs. We have emotional needs. You know our needs better than we do. We could go down the list of prayer requests and pray for each individual and we wouldn’t really touch the problems because You know the problem of each individual listed there better than the individual him or herself knows. But we do pray that You’d bless, Lord. We pray that You’d bless beyond anything we could think because there are individuals here that have needs that haven’t been spoken, that are difficulties they’re going through that they haven’t made known. You know them. You know all of our concerns, Lord. So we pray somewhat generally.

We pray that You’d bless those who are in need of employment. Give them work. Encourage them in the meantime. Bless those who are weighed down by the cares of life at work or within the home, and help them to focus on You and to remember what we have in Christ and that You’re guiding our lives and You’re ensuring us that our lives will end triumphantly. And so encourage those who are discouraged and encourage the grieving with the hope that we all have in Christ. We have great responsibilities, and that’s to glorify You in this world. So to that end, teach us and build us up in the faith that we would go out from this place with a desire to live the brief lives that we have to Your glory, to bring honor to You and to do that by being a blessing to others. We commit our time to You now and we pray You would bless us. And we pray these things in Christ’s name, Amen.

It was in a poem that Tennyson described nature as “red in tooth and claw,” and anyone who has watched a nature show or has had a cat that brought a dead mouse in the house knows how right that is. The natural world is all about self-preservation. It lives by the law of the jungle: eat or be eaten. But that’s true not only of nature, but of mankind, as well. We live in a highly competitive world that lives by the rule: every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. The church doesn’t. It shouldn’t. Christians are different. We are a new creation. And what greater testimony can we give to that than making sacrifices for others? What more powerful proof can we give of a changed life, really of a supernatural life, than living a selfless life in a selfish world? Why after all are we here? Why are we in this world? Simply to survive?

Paul answers that question in 1 Corinthians 10. We are here to glorify God. And Paul tells us how to do that. It’s by self-sacrifice. That’s largely been the lesson since chapter 8, the subject has been Christian liberty and how to enjoy it. We have it. We should enjoy it. But never at the expense of people’s spiritual welfare. We’re to look out for one another, even waive our rights as Christians when the use of them might injure the conscience of a weaker brother. We’re to help, not harm. That’s really what Paul has been teaching, and that’s how he concludes his lesson now as he concludes chapter 10. And he does that by stating a general principle that governs Christian behavior. It’s not liberty, but love that rules the Christian life.

Paul writes in verse 23, “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.” Christians are free. We, in fact, are the freest

men and women in the world. But liberty has limits. We’re not free to sin. That really goes without saying. But also, and really, to Paul’s point here, we are not free to harm people. Or to put it positively, we are free only to edify people. So when the use of our rights, our liberties would tear down rather than build up, we’re not to make use of them. In other words, we are to make sacrifices for the good of others. Paul reinforces that in verse 24 with the warning, “Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor.” Meaning we’re not to seek our own interests above that of others. It’s not wrong to seek our own good. Paul is not saying that. We should, in fact, seek our good. But what Paul is teaching here is that we are to put the well being of others before our own desires. And, in fact, if we do that, that will be the greatest good for us. So in doing that, we do seek our good. But that’s how we’re to live and that is the law of love.

And in Corinth it had specific application to diet, specifically to the issue of whether a Christian could eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. That was the concern that prompted this whole discussion that began back in chapter 8. He’d been on this for quite some time. Paul has warned the Corinthians about going to feasts at temples and getting involved in pagan worship. He’s pointed out how we’re free to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol, but not to engage in the ritual that surrounds it. That not only gives a bad example to young believers as he has counseled earlier, but as he’s counseled very recently in the previous passage, that is harmful to the Christian who does it. As he pointed out, that’s dining with demons. We can’t do that. That’s harmful to the individual who engages in it, and it certainly presents a bad testimony and witness to those around. So Paul prohibits that altogether.

But what about eating meat from the local market? Some of the meat offered there had been butchered in a temple and had been offered to an idol. And that’s the question that Paul takes up now in verse 25. It was always difficult in the marketplace – sometimes it was impossible – to distinguish the idol meat from regular meat. So what were they to do? Was it okay to shop there? And Paul answers that very plainly that it was. He’s already ruled on this in chapter 8 when he told the Corinthians that an idol is nothing. But here he speaks even more plainly to the question of whether it is permissible to eat meat that has been offered to idols. He says straight out in verse 25, “Eat anything that is sold

in the meat market without asking questions for conscience’ sake;” They can eat everything. There are no restrictions on our diet. The law of Moses has been fulfilled. We’re not under those dietary rules.

And he gives the reason why we can do this, why we can eat freely, in verse 26. He says, “For the earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains.” That’s a quote from Psalm 24:1, a Psalm that praises God. He is good. He is gracious. He is generous. We need to have that understanding of who the Lord is. He’s not a stingy God. He’s not a God that is always examining us and ready to smite us at the slightest provocation. He is a good and generous God and you see that in the world around us. Look beyond this world for a contrast. Look at the solar system. Look at the universe as a whole. We can see things that Paul couldn’t see. We can get a perspective on this that none of the writers of Scripture had.

The solar system is filled with dead planets. Nothing grows on Venus or Mars. They’re all uninhabitable. They’re all inhospitable wastelands. But the earth is green. The earth is fruitful. It was created with abundance, abundance. Not just a world that supports life, but a world that gives life in abundance and gives joy to life. And it’s all that from God which we should enjoy. God has given us a world of abundance. Nothing can pollute or contaminate if it is used according to the design for which God has made it. And so it’s to be enjoyed. It is to be enjoyed to His glory. It’s to be used as it was intended to be used. God didn’t make anything that is bad. That can be abused, no doubt, but if it’s used as it was intended, according to its created design, then it is good.

In fact, in 1 Timothy 4, Paul speaks of this. He speaks of food. And he says that everything created by God is good and nothing has to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. The dedication of meat to an idol that is nothing by rituals that do nothing didn’t alter the fact that it is God’s creation. It’s good. And He has given all of it to us for our use and for our good. So Paul says, “Enjoy. Don’t trouble your conscience in the marketplace by worrying about meat. Buy it, and eat it, and thank God for it.” That’s Christian liberty.

That’s in our home dining with family. But what about dining out when invited to eat at someone else’s home? Well, Paul speaks to that in verse 27, and he gives the same

answer. “If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience’ sake.” Christians are free to eat wherever and whatever. Now this again shows the liberty that Christians had and Christians have. The Jews didn’t have this. They didn’t live this way. They didn’t eat with Gentiles. They didn’t enter the houses of Gentiles. They considered that unclean. You see this very clearly in Acts chapter 10 when Paul goes to visit Cornelius, and he says in explaining the situation to the Roman household of Cornelius in Acts 10:28, that it was unlawful for Jews to go into the house of a foreigner, into the house of a Gentile, yet that’s what he was doing. This was an unusual thing he was doing, as he explains to them.

But whatever rule separated Jews and Gentiles, they’re gone for Christians. We’re free to be social with pagans. Not free to engage in paganism or any of the idolatry associated with it, of course, but we’re free to have social contact with them. And, in fact, that’s an opportunity for us to witness to them. That was, in effect, what our Lord did when he ate with tax collectors and sinners. It was a means of evangelism. It showed that he loved them. He had come into this world for such people as they were. So Paul says to the Corinthians if they were invited into the home of an unbeliever that they should go and that they should feel free to eat whatever is set before them without concern for their conscience.

There’s an exception to that. Paul cites that in verse 28. It’s when a companion at the table is in danger of being offended by the dinner that is being served. Now this is actually a small digression in his explanation. In fact, the Revised Standard version indicates that by putting verses 28 and 29 in parentheses. Paul’s lesson in the passage is that we are free to eat. And in the last part of verse 29, he continues that theme, that subject, when he says, “For why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience?” Paul is telling the Corinthians that it’s all right to accept a neighbor’s invitation to dinner. He’s saying he would do it. “For why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience?” The weaker brother doesn’t sit in judgment on another man’s liberty or set the standard for right or wrong. The Bible does that. The Bible defines our freedom, our liberty, and it’s very clear we are free to eat whatever and wherever.

But in the middle of his instruction on our liberty, Paul gives this warning that even though we are free, nevertheless, we need to look out for the needs of others. And here in verse 28, he imagines someone at the table informing this Christian guest that the meal had meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. This is probably a weaker Christian. There is some debate as to who this person is. But it’s probably a weaker brother who has made some inquiries. He’s got scruples about eating meat that’s been offered to an idol. But he’s evidently gone to the kitchen and talked to the chef, and asked, “Where did you get that very nice cut of meat?” “Oh, I got that at the temple.” So he comes back to inform his Christian brother that we’ve got a problem here. The meat that’s being served was sacrificed at the temple of Aphrodite. So I just want you to know that. Put you on guard.

So he informs him of this what he perceives to be a problem. What should that older, mature Christian do in light of that? Ignore the warning of the weaker brother and insist on his right to eat whatever is put before him? He could do that. He’s got the freedom to eat it. Or does he defer to that weaker brother? Paul answers the question. “Do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who informed *you*, and for conscience’ sake;” Not your conscience, he’s saying, not the conscience of the mature Christian, but for that other man’s conscience. In other words, your right to eat meat is not as important as the welfare of that weaker Christian. So if going ahead and doing what he feels is wrong will harm him, then don’t do it. That is what Paul has been teaching all through this discussion on Christian liberty, that we put the welfare of others ahead of our own interests.

It was a test of Christian love. We face it today in different ways. We don’t deal with meat that’s been offered at a pagan temple, at least not in our culture, not in the western world. The most obvious application of this is probably in regard to alcohol when, say, wine is served at a meal. In my opinion, the Bible does not condemn having a glass of wine. It would be strange for the Lord to prohibit wine when the Lord’s first miracle was changing water to wine.

The Bible does condemn drunkenness. That is sin. But I think the Bible is clear that wine in moderation, food in moderation is permitted. But you might be in a social gathering with other Christians who have scruples, reservations about drinking wine. Maybe some have had a history where that was a problem in their life. Are you going to

partake at the risk of offending them? We may be at liberty to enjoy a glass of wine, but the Christian concern is not only with his or her freedom, but with the effect that our choices and our actions have on other people. And if our action might lead an immature Christian to take a glass when he or she felt that it was sin to do so, we would have a part in leading that person into the sin of violation his or her conscience. That’s what we must avoid because the principle that governs our lives is not liberty, but love. And there are times when we have to limit our liberty for the good of others.

We can apply this to non-believers, as well. They might have felt that some of those Christians were compromising their beliefs by eating meat that had been offered to an idol, and people today may judge us to be inconsistent if we do certain things that we’re actually free to do. We need to be careful and live life circumspectly. I think that’s really the principle that we have set here. He’s not saying, giving us a set rule on whether to eat or drink. He’s saying there are principles that govern our lives and we need to make decisions according to those principles in which the weaker brother is chiefly in our mind and our testimony is before us, and we need to use our wisdom. We have wisdom by knowing the Word of God. And we have the Spirit of God within us to lead us as we walk by him. We need to be sensitive to His leading and applying the Word of God wisely. We need to be cautious for the sake of our testimony, live wise lives.

Even so, we are still free of dietary laws and have the liberty to eat wherever and whatever. That’s Paul’s point, the point of the question that he says, that he gives, “why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience?” It shouldn’t be. Paul told the Galatians, “It was for freedom that Christ set you free. Therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery,” Galatians 5:1.

He asks a similar question in verse 30. “If I partake with thanksgiving, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?” After all, as the Psalms said, the earth is the Lord’s and all it contains. It’s all good and it’s all God’s gift to us to be used properly – not improperly, but to be used according to its design and according to its purpose. And we’re to enjoy it. We have a right to do that. And we’re to do it. We’re to enjoy it to God’s glory, to be thankful, to use it in the right way at the right time. The



person who gives thanks for his food understands that and is grateful to God for His grace and His goodness, His abundance.

And that’s the way we should all live. We should voluntarily limit our liberty for the sake of others to help the weak. But their scruples, their reservations about things don’t set the standard for our freedom. Our behavior is not to be guided by some form of legalistic pressure. The Scriptures determine our freedoms. The Scriptures are our standard. Wisdom and love determine how we use those freedoms. We may waive our rights on one occasion. We may exercise them on another. As I say, wisdom guides us in that. And as we know the Word of God, as we walk with Him, we will have that wisdom and know how to apply these rules, these standards. But whatever we do, we should always have God’s interest before us. The interest of the weaker brother before our own interest, but before all of that, we have God’s interest before us. That is the ultimate standard that guides our behavior, not our rights, not even the concerns of the weaker brother, but God’s glory.

And that’s the principle that Paul cites in verse 31 that really sums up his instruction on all of these matters in this whole subject of Christian liberty. “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” That is the end of all things. That is man’s chief end. That’s what the shorter catechism teaches in its first question and answer. What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. I don't know there’s a greater theological statement that’s been made in the history of the church outside of the Word of God than that statement. And that’s not just the opinion of some 17th century theologians or Westminster Divines, it is the plain teaching of Scripture.

At the end of Romans 11, where Paul concludes his instruction on that great section on the book of Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11, where he unfolds the great doctrine of predestination and divine election and the future of the Jewish people, he gives a doxology. He wrote in Romans 11:36, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.” Everything comes from Him. Everything is to Him. Everything is by Him. It’s all His work and it’s all ultimately for His glory. That’s the grand design of all things. God’s glory. We see it in creation. We see it in the

majesty of a mountain range and the splendor of a starry night. We see it in so many ways in just the world around us. The glory of God, the wisdom, the power, the magnificence of God and the handiwork of His creation.

But God’s glory should also be reflected in us, not only in our being, but in our behavior. In fact, we of all things in creation are to show forth God’s glory as His redeemed people, as His new creation. That’s what we are. And that’s to be seen in every aspect of our lives. Paul indicates that here by saying that we are to show forth God’s glory in the most mundane things like eating and drinking. I think that’s a little surprising. We can understand a life lived in some big way being to God’s glory. You can think of some individual giving up a very lucrative job to become a missionary on a foreign field, or dying a martyr’s death and giving a glorious testimony as the flames rise, and we have examples of that in church history. That’s glory. That’s glorifying God in one’s life.

But Paul’s not referring to that. He’s speaking of eating and drinking, the most ordinary, routine kinds of things. Even those are venues for sharing and showing forth God’s glory. It’s a way of saying that the Lord is to be seen in the whole of our lives, from the smallest things to the greatest things, from the routine to the rare. In everything, everything, we are to show forth the glory of God. We’re to reflect Him in our lives. And all of us can do that. Oh, we don’t all have opportunities to give up a lucrative job and go to the foreign mission field, and fortunately we’re not all dragged before a court and put on a scaffold for our faith. But we all eat and we all drink. And we do that every day. And so all of us have an opportunity to glorify God and we should glorify Him in everything we do, publicly and privately.

But this has a specific context and Paul is making a specific point. His instruction here is for the strong and the weak. The weak glorify God by growing up, by becoming strong, by learning, by getting some understanding of their freedom and learning to be thankful to God for what they have, for all of the good gifts that He gives us. God does not permit the immature to remain immature. They’re to grow up. That’s how they glorify God. One way, at least. And the strong, of course, glorify God in their eating and drinking by sacrificing for the good of the weak, by not eating and drinking certain things

in order to help the immature become mature in the faith so that they can live and enjoy their freedom to God’s glory.

But Paul goes beyond that. He wants us to have a concern for one another. He wants us to be a blessing for those within the church. But he wants Christians to have a concern for everyone, for those not only in the church, but those outside the church. And that’s what he urges in verse 32. “Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;” We are to look out for the welfare of everyone, and so live the kind of life that doesn’t prevent people from believing the gospel, living a kind of life that would be an obstruction to the unbeliever, and we’re not to, of course, live a kind of life that might hinder the progress of a young believer. We are to be concerned about everyone.

Paul puts the same point positively in verse 33, where he gives his own policy toward men. He tries to “please all men” he said, so that he might win some to the faith. He doesn’t mean, of course, when he speaks of pleasing all men that he’s a man-pleaser in the sense that he would compromise the truth in order to make people happy, to make people like him, that he’d compromise the truth to get people on his side or to avoid a difficulty. Paul never did that. The gospel is naturally offensive. We don’t have to try to offend people. The gospel presented clearly is an offense in itself. People don’t want to hear that they fall short of God’s perfection and that they must surrender to Christ, that they’re lost and they need a savior and that God the Son or Jesus Christ is God’s Son, and He is the savior. They don’t want to hear that. In fact, Paul describes that as the scandal of the cross that we need a savior. Paul never shied away from declaring that. And he suffered for doing it. He offended men with the gospel, but it was not a deliberate or a careless act of offense on his part.

In fact, he worked very diligently at not being difficult, at being a help to people. He pleased them by putting them first, by making sacrifices, by not seeking his own profit, but their profit. And I could imagine the kind of business Paul conducted in Corinth. You remember he comes there and he, along with Aquila, worked as tent makers. They supported themselves in the ministry. And I can imagine that those customers in Corinth were always satisfied with the product that Paul produced, and that if there was a problem, if there was some kind of complaint, whether it was justified or not, Paul made it right at

his own expense. I’m not thinking of any particular passage, but I know Paul and I know that that’s the kind of man he was. The unbelievers in Corinth would have known that Paul was a fair businessman, and not only that, he was a generous man. We’ll never go wrong being generous. We’ll never go wrong putting people first. That’s the kind of life Paul lived and that’s what he gives us the counsel to do here.

He ends the passage where chapter 11 begins, with verse 1 of the chapter, and he tells the Corinthians here to imitate him as he imitates Christ. IN other words, where he imitates Christ, they are to imitate him. Paul did what Christ did. Now what did Christ do? Well, you know what Christ did by turning over to Philippians 2:7, where he tells us that Christ “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant.” What an amazing passage that is. That is a theological passage and we could spend the rest of the short time we have, we could spend a whole hour on that particular idea, emptied Himself. What it simply means is the eternal Son of God humbled Himself, became a man, became a servant – not just a man, but a servant – in order to die for us.

That’s our standard. Our standard is sacrifice. That’s not the way of nature. Nature’s way is survival. It is literally a dog-eat-dog world. Sacrifice is something that sets man apart from the animals, yet rarely do people do that. Rarely do people disadvantage themselves in order to advantage others. That’s not the way of the world. But it is the way of the church. We are different from the world. We are not like the old creation. We are a new creation. We have a different perspective on life. We have eyes that see. The world does not. We live for God’s glory and for the good of God’s people. We live for God’s glory by living for God’s people, living for the church.

And the world will see that, and the world will take notice. It saw Christ. You read that in the gospels, the scribes and the Pharisees followed Him and watched Him. In fact, Luke writes of that in Luke 14:1, and he says that they watched Him closely. They kept their eyes on everything that He did, and they will do that with us. They will watch us. They will see us. So the question we have to ask ourselves is what will they see? Well, I don't know what they’ll see. They’ll see different things at different times, but I know what they should see. When they look at us, they should see courteous, kind, selfless people. You never know when people are looking at you. You never know when

they’re watching. You never know who is where you are. We might be surprised. We need to know the world is watching us, and what they see can be a great witness to a selfish world.

Now that’s not just my characterization of mankind. Some might think, “Gee, you’re awful hard on us. Selfish? Calling us selfish people? Saying that’s sort of characteristic of the world? I see some good things out there.” Well, there are some good things, by the common grace of God. That’s true. But the heart of man, the natural man, is a selfish heart, and mankind is selfish, and that’s not just my opinion, and that’s not just the teaching of Scripture. Some of the scientific luminaries of our age are saying the same thing, that self-survival is in the very warp and woof of our being.

The atheist, Richard Dawkins, wrote a book 35 years ago titled *The Selfish Gene*, in which he says that the quality that makes a gene successful is, in his words, “ruthless selfishness.” Now he wasn’t trying to make a moral point. He says he wasn’t. He says, “That’s just the way things are. That’s just the reality. That’s nature. That’s the way life is. That’s the way it progresses.” And yet, if nature is all we have, if that’s the only book that we can read, if that’s the only standard that’s set for us, then that is going to be a moral statement and a moral standard. It’s how people will behave. It’s how they do behave. So evolutionists have adopted Tennyson’s expression describing nature as “red in tooth and claw” to summarize their doctrine of survival of the fittest.

However you look at things in nature, from animals to humans, the world is selfish. According to some scientists, it’s in our genes. That’s how we survive. That’s how we advance. That’s how we succeed. What a great witness it is to the world to show what the grace of God can do, make us into a new creation of selfless people who sacrifice for others and show Christ to the world. He is the great example of selfless service and self-sacrifice. He emptied Himself for us. He became a servant. Think of that. The Son of God, the One who created everything, the One who carries it all along, the One who holds it all together, He became a servant to his creatures in order to die for them, to die in our place and save us from our sins, to save us from ourselves, from our selfish selves.

It is a good witness. It’s a good witness to live for others. But we don’t live selfless lives to be a witness. It’s a good thing to do that, but that’s not our great

motivation. We live that way because Christ died to make us selfless people who sacrifice for others because we love Him. It’s what God made us to be. And because He did make us that way, we can live that way. We can live selfless, sacrificial lives by His grace. And so we must ask Him daily to give us the grace to do that. He’s given us a new heart and new nature. He’s put the Spirit of God within us that enables us to do what is humanly impossible.

As I say again what I said earlier, we live a supernatural life as we walk by the Spirit, as we live by faith. God’s hand is directing us, and guiding us, and enabling us to live a life that is sacrificial and selfless, that glorifies Him. And that, again, is our chief end, to glorify God. Well, if any of your are here who have not believed in Him, we confess that we don’t always live up to that standard ourselves. We’re sorry for that and we’re sorry if that has been a hindrance. And I know down through the ages there have been bad testimonies from Christians, inconsistencies that have given unbelievers reasons, according to themselves, not to believe.

But then don’t look at us. We do fail. Look at Christ because He never failed. He lived up to the standard perfectly, and He is the savior. Look to Him, consider Him, and know that He can make your life different, He will cleanse you from sin and guilt. He’ll make you whole. He’ll gain for your forgiveness and eternal life and you have that at the moment of faith. It’s not through any work that you do. It is by simply receiving Him as your savior, receiving His person and work. He obtained all of that on the cross. Trust in Him and receive it all through faith. That’s all one must do, simply believe in Him. And then live to His glory. Live a life for others. Live a life of sacrifice for your brothers and sisters. May God help all of us to do that. Let’s pray.

Father, we do thank You for your goodness to us, and we thank You for making us a new creation. It’s all of your grace. It’s all of your work. We can only receive it. But we’re certainly responsible to live it, to make sacrifices for others, to live for their good, to edify, to build up, not to tear down. And yet, we must confess we don’t do that. We fail so often. The standard is there before us. We confess our failure and we pray, God, give us the strength. Give us the perspective. Give us the desire to live a life that pleases You,

that’s a blessing to others, and in so doing, by doing that, live to Your glory. May we do that by Your grace.

We thank You for the salvation we have in Your Son, for all that He’s done for us. Give us a sense of gratitude that we would live for Him. We pray these things in Christ’s name, Amen.