

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

April 29, 2018

SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Grace Unleashed

PART

27

TITLE

Praying The Gospel Forward

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 6:18-24



© 2018 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Good morning to you Providence. Okay, let's try it again, good morning. All right, it's good to see you this morning, if you have your Bible, I want to encourage you to take it and open to Ephesians chapter six. So Ephesians chapter six. If you are a guest with us this morning, we are so grateful that you are here, if you are in one of the other venues, or on live stream, we say good morning to you as well.

If you don't have a Bible, maybe you're exploring Christianity, you have been invited by a friend, you've come, we are so excited you're here, but we want to give you a Bible, there should be one under the chair there in front of you. So if you don't have one, take that as a gift from us to you, and we'll be on page 979 in that Bible. So 979 in that Bible. You'll see some larger numbers and smaller numbers. Again, if you're new to this journey, if studying the Bible, the larger number six is the chapter, the smaller numbers are verses, and we're going to be in verse 18 today to the end of the book.

So praise God this morning for what he has done through this book. We have heard and seen how many of those who follow Christ have been strengthened and encouraged. We've seen how many have been stirred to walk in a manner worthy of the calling that God's placed on us. We've seen God save people from the preaching of this book, which is a miracle. We've seen marriages strengthen, we have seen parents and children strengthen in their relationships.

We've seen employees and employers shaped with the theology of vocation, and how they do work for the glory of God. We've seen many stirred to live on mission with intentionality, to share the gospel. And many be stirred to go on mission trips through this book. God has been so grateful to us, he's just graced us, and we're grateful to him for what he's done in this book, through this book.

As we come to this close, as Paul closes this letter, man Paul, the apostle, he reminds us of the war we are in, and he's going to exhort us to pray, and he's going to exhort us to stay together as a people. Last week, we really unpacked verses 10 to 17 with detail. Of the reality of spiritual warfare, that it's real and yet it's not recognized for its gravity in the West.

C.S. Lewis, who was a professor at Oxford University, came to Christ later, then wrote some profound things. He had a deep mind, and trying to bring things to the forefront to help folks just think through hard concepts, and with regards to warfare, he writes these letters, The Screwtape Letters, some 31 letters written that are from a senior demon named Screwtape, to his nephew, Wormwood, who was a younger, less experienced demon.

He charged this younger demon with trying to guide this specific man who was called the patient towards the enemy Satan, and yet, from Christ. So, C.S. enters into this world, and sort of how the demonic realm works, and how this older demon would then train this younger demon, and how this younger demon would influence the mind of this individual called the patient, away from God.

Lewis says this. He says Satan and his demons adapt themselves to whatever worldview prevails in a given society. They are equally at home with western materialists, and third world magicians. Satan has largely destroyed the spiritual effectiveness of the church without having to kill the individual believers in it. In fact, letting believers leave self centered, worldly lives, is more effective in keeping people from being attracted to the Christian faith than killing them.

Martyrs are respected for strength of character, and compromisers are despised. Then he says this, the best thing, where it is possible, is to keep the Christian from the serious intention of praying. Listen, Paul, after exhorting us to put on the armor of God, tells us to pray to the God of the armor. Listen, life ... I'm going to invite you into the process here, so I need a head nod, something with me on this one, right.

Life before you become a Christian is hard, can I just get a nod of somebody? Okay. Great. Life after you become a Christian is hard. And the difference is as a follower of Christ, we have access to God, we have access to resources, the armor of God. We have access because of what Christ has done, because of the life he lived, the death he died, taking God's wrath upon himself, on a cross. Being buried in a grave, coming back from the dead after three days in the resurrection, solidified the ultimate victory over sin and death.

So we, as followers of Christ right, we fight the spiritual war from a place of victory, in Christ, not to gain victory. I mean, think about what Peter would write, all the experiences Peter had in his life of coming to Christ, following him, denying him, standing up, preaching at Pentecost in Acts chapter two, where thousands came to faith in Christ. He writes in a letter, 1 Peter 5:8, he says be alert, and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Now think about that when you came to Christ, whoever led you to Christ, whoever kind of disciplined you, like that's probably not the first verse they shared with you, they probably didn't pull this picture up on the phone, right, over Starbucks coffee, and show you this, like that's what the enemy's going to do to you now. Right? That's just not where we necessarily start when we disciple a new believer. It's joy, and peace, and everlasting life, those things are true, but the reality is, that there's an enemy who hates those that follow Christ.

Although life is hard, there is hope. There is hope, there are resources, by the grace of God. So let's pray before we read this word. Father thank you for today, thank you for this book. It has been a gift to us, you have graced us with it, and so as we sit in it today, as we read its final verses today, we move past this book, may this book always find a place in our hearts. May your spirit bring things to mind, and to our heart in the days ahead, that we've learned from this book, that we've memorized from this book.

As we conclude God, would you once again be merciful. God would you teach us and would you show us more of the wonders of your son? Christ the King, and we pray in his name, amen.

Well as we close this, and we close out a series called Grace Unleashed, I want to show you three truths of how God's grace right, in melting our hearts, chapters one, two, and three, all the spiritual blessings are found in Christ, as melting our hearts in chapters one, two, and three. Richly, theology, we were dead in our sin, but by the grace of God, he saved us, he's rich in mercy, right. By melting our hearts in chapters one, two, and three, I want to show you three truths of how he then moves our hearts and lives toward his purposes.

So number one is this. It's that God's grace moves us to pray for the gospel to reach all people. Now if the gospel right, this grace moves us to pray, it moves us to pray for the gospel to reach all people, if this gospel, as we learned last week even, is the armor in which we wear, then prayer is the air we breathe. It is deep communion with God, it is utter dependence on God, you want to do a little inventory check on your relationship with God, and your dependence on God, then track the minutes and hours in a week of how much you pray to God.

It's this incredible opportunity to commune with the creator of the universe, and Paul knew that prayer was not an option for the Christian, but rather fuel for the fight against the enemy, Satan. And notice this word in verses 18 and 19, that he uses this word all four times, notice the text, right. Four times he says praying at all times in the spirit, praying at all times in the spirit we learned in chapter five, how to be filled with the spirit, how to walk in the spirit, and in the flow of that, then leads us to a dependence right, upon God. A deep dependence upon God.

Psalm 55:16-17 says I call to God and the Lord will save me, evening, morning, and noon. And so there's a continual, watch this, God consciousness. There's a God centeredness that prayer moves us to, that moves us to prayer. And so he says praying at all times, he also says with all, here's the second one, with all prayer, and supplication. Now why these two words? Well, the first one, prayer, is more of your general prayer, it's more maybe broad in scope. Then supplication carries with it the idea it's a word that means really more specific details, right.

For the parents in the room, when a young child comes and asks for ... We want them to be able to ask anything, talk about anything, right, and so it is with God, as we come to him with prayers and supplication. Specific requests God desires. I remember trying to teach your kids how to pray, I probably started off not quite the best way, right, we would bring the globe to the kitchen table, they're like, maybe five, three, one, and newborn, and I'll bring the globe to the table, and we'd spin it, and then we'd identify a country, a people group.

I'd do a little research and try to figure out the lostness of this people group, right. That's a little overwhelming for the five, three, one, and newborn. Right, at first. So we moved to saying, okay, let's just think through school, as they got a little bit older, and want to pray for the nations, yes, but we also just want to pray for specific things in your heart, and desires, and certain things. So, last November, my wife calls me on the phone, and she says listen I need to talk to you, just hang on.

Sometimes when it starts like that, you're not sure what's going to come, right. And she goes, well, there's this particular family that has this particular animal, that's a dog, that they need a home for. Right. Now for years and years, I've said, just no animals in the house, I have allergies really bad, I got tested, I'm shocked I'm alive, I took three shots a week for seven years, right, just messed up.

So I'm like there's no animal coming in the house, right. Because I'd probably die. So, we started talking through it, and this dog was already trained, he's an Australian labra doodle, like what is that? And, then he's already had his shots, everything is just ... He just needs a home, this family's going to potentially move, they're in a situation where they can't handle. So it was like an adoption process, because they brought the dog over for us to meet, right. They let the dog see the house, and see the back yard.

Then they took the dog back home, we just met the dog, and Jules, as the dog's coming, and I'm entertaining maybe the idea, she goes where you at? I said I'm at 3%, on a scale of one to 11, right, I'm at three. So let the dog come, we'll check it out, but I'm at three. So then, they used words like he's hypo allergenic, I'm like really? A dog? With fur, okay, whatever.

So we're walking through it, we're talking through it, and then they come back and when you got three girls in the house, man it's over right. My heart just was drawn into my girls, and then drawn into the dog now, and his name is Roux, because they're from Louisiana, and that's something you put in a soup or something. So they named the dog Roux, so you come back, and one thing leads to another, and we end up with the dog in the house, right.

So this is Roux, I want to introduce y'all to Roux, right, and my girl. The picture on the right, this is crazy. Sometimes he travels with us, right, which is crazy as well, because when you've got a big family and then you throw a dog in there, that's borderline insanity. So we're traveling, and we're at Starbucks, at the drive through, and I get a drink and the guy looks in, he sees the dog, and he says, does he want a puppy-ccino?

And I'm like a what? And he's like ... I'm like no, I'm not buying the dog a drink from Starbucks. And he's like no, no, no, we give it away, it's free, it's a cup of cool whip. And I'm like, for real? I said I'll take two of those, okay. One for myself, I love some cool whip. And the dog's just killing it right. So the dog's there, and things are going really well, but about a week or so after, I go to tuck one of my girls in, my youngest, 10 year old, Ray.

I'm tucking Ray in, and I see this piece of paper she's just stuck on the wall on her little memo board, and I'm like, Ray what is that? She's like, well that's a page I tore out of my prayer journal. And I'm like, what? And she kind of leaned into daddy, and she said, well dad I've been praying for a dog for about a year behind your back, and I'm like what? This is messed up girl. I said, well what'd you write on your journal? And she says this.

She says, well, I thank God for answering that prayer, and I wanted to put it up as a way of reminder that God does answer some, but if he doesn't answer some in the future, he's still faithful. Listen, specific, general, can answer when he wants. He wants us to be dependent on him, right? To be dependent upon him. The text says listen let's pray with all supplication, but also with all perseverance.

To keep alert, Paul encourages those in Ephesus to keep alert with all perseverance. This is what Christ would tell his disciples, his last hours on earth before being crucified. And this idea of keeping alert, it's the idea of as if we lived right, in the spiritual air traffic control tower, of constant awareness, alertness, if this is the way we pray, he says to pray, making supplication for all the sins.

So praying at all time, with all prayer, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, not just our church, not just the great churches in our city, but those that we may never know. Hebrews 13 says it like this, continue to remember those imprisoned as if you were together with them in prison, and those who mistreated as if you, yourselves were suffering.

Then Paul gets to this part of his writing, and he says notice in verse 19, and also, for me, now watch this. When I'm reading the text, there's an expectation that rises in me, that would think that the next words that would come in the text and also for me, remember, Paul is in prison in Rome, writing this letter, so I'm going to expect just because of the context of knowing where he is and writing from, that he says, and also from me that I could get out of prison, and be more effective in the work of God.

That's what I'm expecting the text to say, but if you read the text, he says, and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, second time. He asks for boldness to preach the gospel while he's in prison. Although he is in chains, the gospel's not chained. And, I mean, think certainly you want the cell door to open on the prison. No, he's asking for a different opening, he's asking for an opening of his mouth to proclaim the gospel.

When you find yourself in hard situations, right, most of the time, we pray for him to remove us from those situations. Paul, in this situation, is asking to be used while in that situation, to proclaim the gospel. Sometimes in the deepest, hardest moments of your life is the very opportunity you should share the gospel. In sharing that, it could pull your heart out of the situation, while maybe your feet are still in it. Right?

Oh, think about this for just a moment. Think about what happened. Now when you do some theology work, and look at some of these letters, of how they've been laid out, right, their datings are close, 61 AD, 60, 62, when you look at some of these prison epistles, they're called. So when you think of Colossians, and Ephesians, they have this same similar request from Paul, almost verbatim. Chapter four of Colossians versus two through six, that he's asking that he may proclaim the gospel boldly, winsomely, wisely, with clarity.

Similar language. But you get to Philippians, I'm wondering, this is speculation, if as he's sitting in prison, writing ... Did he write Ephesians, and then Colossians, asking for prayer in specific situations? God answers the prayer, and then he writes Philippians. Now let me show you why I lean that way, because in Philippians chapter one, this is what he writes.

He writes, I want you to know, brothers, that what's happened to me, what's happened to him? He's been in prison, he's been arrested, he's in prison, has really served to advance the gospel. He got arrested for sharing the gospel, and so he's in prison, and he says so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, right, this Roman empire, and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

Okay, so think about that for just a moment, they're taking them into the cell, he's not necessarily complaining, he's not ... This is unfair. No, it's become known in the whole empire, among the guards, why he's there, right. Well, so there's guards there, right, there's other Christians there that have been arrested, probably as well, and so Paul is just chained up, he's writing letters, so he writes Philippians, which is four chapters, right.

When you get to chapter four, this ... Sometimes we skip over how books end, but watch how this book ends in chapter four. He says, greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. So what's happening? He's writing the letter, and the brothers that Philippians says, that because he's been in prison, they've become more courageous in a sense, to speak about Christ. So I see them leaning through the cell maybe, saying hey Paul, who are you writing to? Our brothers and sisters in Philippi.

Tell them we said hey. Then as he writes and concludes the letter, all the saints greet you, Christians in Philippi. Especially those of Caesar's household. What just happened? Here's what happened. That guard, that had that six hour shift to watch Paul, you get six hours with a brother named Paul, something's going to happen. And those guards started coming to Christ one by one.

Those guards, as they're there, looking down, leaning, maybe leaning over, Paul, what you writing? I'm writing a letter, encouraging all the brothers in Christ, and sisters in Christ in Philippi, and the guard. His boss is down the hallway, not a believer, maybe the guard's looking, and he leans in, he tells Paul, tell them I said hey. Right.

Paul, tell them I said hey. See whenever the enemy tried to stop the gospel, and stomp it out, it actually spread. Oh, listen, Acts 28 ends proclaiming, the is Paul, he's proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, as he arrived in Rome. With all boldness and without hindrance, Matthew chapter 16, the Lord Jesus himself says I'll build my church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. So we pray the gospel forward because Jesus promises it will go forward. And hell can't stop it.

One of our brothers, right, on our team, our mission leader, Pastor [Digfield 00:26:18], he's in Thailand right now preaching this week, there's some 60,000 in one area with two Christians, there's some that have never even heard the story of the Bible, or heard of Christ. Some are considering Christ, and wanting to follow Christ. Let's pray the gospel forward. Let's pray yes, to God for another another, but also let's pray for the gospel to advance to all people.

You say how in the world, it's such a big task, how would and could we be a part of that, and I want to encourage you with this website, [opendoorsusa.com](http://opendoorsusa.com), to go to the website, and the front page, there's requests from our brothers and sisters that are in hard places, that are being persecuted, that have doors. They're praying not for God to remove them from those hard places, but while they're in those hard places, that God would open their mouth and they'd be bold to proclaim the gospel.

You could use that maybe as family devotion prayer time, or your individual prayer time. I keep a book with me that this particular ministry has listed the top 50 countries where it's the most persecuted, persecution comes to those who follow Christ, to be able to pray for those brothers and sisters. Number two, God's grace, right. It moves us to pray, but it also moves us to participate, it moves us to participate in this mission.

Notice Paul brings to our attention this brother who has participated in the mission of God. In verse 21 he says now, that you also may know how I'm doing, and what I'm doing, Ticus, the beloved brother and faithful ministry in the Lord will tell you everything. So this brother, Ticus is coming, he's a beloved brother, he's loved by Paul, and others, and he's faithful. He's faithful in ministry.

We hear, first about him, we don't know a ton about him from the Bible, we know in Acts 20, that he's from Asia, and that he joined Paul on these trips of these missionary journeys. He was a teammate, he was a faithful minister to support and encourage. We may know who Moses, and David, and some of these other names in the Bible, but when it comes to these names like this, we don't know that much about them, and the question asked is why would Paul put this guy's name at the end of such a profound letter full of grace?

I believe this is why. I believe he wanted to remind all people that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. He uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Right. Michael Jordan won six NBA championships, but there were four other guys on the court that probably any of us could probably not even list, there were many on the list that supported, and practiced, there were coaches, there was a staff around.

Paul had many around him, that we don't know hardly anything about, but it encouraged him to be faithful in ministry. When you think about one of the greatest books written in the New Testament, with rich in theology, deep in theology, it's been used in the history of the world to shape the church and reformations even. Right, the book of Romans, it's just heavy, it's loaded, it's good, it's rich. When you come to chapter 16, you would think how does Paul close such a rich, theologically saturated book? He closes it by listing some 30 names, that I can't even pronounce half of them.



As a way of showing, listen, God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Listen, embers on a fire burn brighter when they are stirred up against one another, and when a larger piece of wood, right, is laid on those embers, the only way that's going to light if these are stirred with one another and create the flame. So Paul's the larger right, piece of wood in this particular case and book.

All of these embers are needed to light that log, and ignite that flame. And when you're in isolation, right, you take an ember out from that, it's going to cool down, it will never flame up alone. I mean, think with me of what this brother, Ticitus, what was he thinking even when you think about what God did? Because history will tell us, and the books will tell us that he's there in Rome, with Paul, and Paul gives him this letter, probably Colossians as well, maybe one other to bring back.

So you think about that for a minute, and let me show you where he took this from, from Rome, right, to Ephesus. Well, direct flight, like if you take Air Rome back in the day, it's 834 miles, direct line. There's no Air Rome back in the day. If you drove it, go down, take a ferry, drive up by Philippi, cross over into Northern modern day Turkey, and drive down, it's 1,241 miles. And yet this brother probably walked the majority of it.

So think with me for a minute, just imagine right, this brother. He has, in his hands, letters that you and I read in coffee shops, and preach through, and study. He has in his hands, this isn't a one day trip, this takes a long time. I mean, does he sleep under trees at night, and lay them on the side? Does he bathe in streams of water and come back, and then, put these in a travel bag.

Does this faithful minister of the gospel that we know hardly anything about realize that in 1,958 years later, in North Carolina, we'd be reading the letters that he carried to the people of God? I mean, he's the gospel mailman in a sense, how he uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. He used a college student in the 1970's, in California, in med school, to sit across from a brother, from Amman, Jordan, and share the gospel with.

As he shared the gospel with a man named Ahmad Shahada, Ahmad Shahada repented and believed, and trusted Christ in that moment, his life was radically changed, his future trajectory for his life was radically changed. He did not go to med school, he went to seminary and then went on to get a PhD in theology. He moved back to the Middle East in Amman, Jordan, and planted a church and then planted a seminary that is now training pastors to plant churches in 27 Arab speaking countries.

We as a church support, and partner with him. Did the college student realize what God was going to do through that moment? Participating in the mission of God, well this college student went on to be a medical doctor for 50 years, and now, today, as a dear friend of Ahmad, serves on the board for the seminary in Amman, Jordan. Listen, Matthew 28 says to make disciples of all nations. To participate in the mission of God, the mission that God has given us is his mission, we just worded it like this to glorify God, right, by introducing all people to Jesus and grow them up to love and worship him.

This is what we're about here at Providence, and so how are you participating in the mission of God? And listen, just think about how God takes the ordinary and does the extraordinary, D.L. Moody, an evangelist from the 1800's, was selling shoes, and a man ... His Sunday school teacher ends up leading him to Christ. And D.L. Moody would say this, who shared the gospel in settings with probably close to 100 million people. He says if this world's going to be reached, I'm convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent.

I mean, think about this Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimbal, who helped lead Moody to Christ, and then this man named Wilbur Chapman, who came to Christ while D.L. Moody was having a gospel conversation with him, and then this man Billy Sunday came to Christ as Wilbur Chapman had a gathering. And then Mordecai Hamm came to Christ, as Billy Sunday was having a gathering of gospel conversations, and Billy Graham came to faith at a meeting where Mordecai Hamm was having a gathering, and talking about the gospel.

Oh to participate in the mission of God, talking with a friend of the family, the Graham family recently. The week of the funeral, 10,000 people called in and trusted Christ that week. Edward Kimbal, a Sunday school teacher in Chicago. Oh listen, let's look and long to participate in the mission of God, and let's leverage our life for the mission of God. When I say leverage your life, I mean specifically the place you find yourself in hobbies, in workplace, in vocation, in school, wherever it is, those things are never an end of themselves, they're a means to a greater end, to make Jesus known in those places.

Yes, be an employee who does things with excellence, but let that be a means to tell about the excellent one. Be a boss who serves well and empowers people, and leads well, and loves well, because you have been led and loved well by the savior. Leverage your life, and then last is this, it's God's grace moves us. Right. It moves us to pray, it moves us to participate, but it also moves us to provide encouragement for one another, and to love Christ.

Notice what Paul says the reason he sends Titicus to them ultimately in verse 22, is that I've sent him that you may know how we're doing, and then how he could encourage your hearts. Listen, life is hard, but a good word brings hope, Proverbs 12:25 says, anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

The Christian community is a community on mission, this is why our life groups exist, this is why our smaller settings exist, called life groups here at Providence. It's a smaller group where we care for one another, where we encourage one another, where we share the gospel throughout the week, and then we come back, and we share how that went, and a sense of encouragement, how gospel sharings are cultivated in our life groups.

We don't guilt you into sharing the gospel, we grace you into sharing the gospel through our life groups. This is last quarter, you guys amazing, 28 mission projects were done, 421 spiritual conversations have taken place in our city, and God saved 16 people. It's a miracle of what he's doing in you and through you. Many of you have been in life groups for years, so we encourage you to excel still more, and those that aren't considered.

Consider the joy, and the encouragement to your soul to get plugged in. See listen, if the strength of those who survived battle, and survived longevity is always greater when it's with others. I mean, fish swim in schools for the protection against predators, and birds fly in flock to endure great distances. You think about that. The animal kingdom knows the significance of running together. How much more do the people of God, should we run together?

Birds fly like this, where it's fascinating, where the lead takes most of the wind to himself, and when he's tired, he moves back, and another one comes in. The reason they do that is that they don't have to use as much energy, all of them. And so it's more efficient so they can make the distance, when they're migrating.

Oh listen, we want you to make the distance. We want you to finish this race that God's called us to. Continuing to believe the gospel, continuing to believe as you are ushered in on your last day to the presence of God. Oh listen, grace moves us to encourage each other. Hebrews says, let's exhort one another every day, as long as it's called today, that none may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. You want to know how to keep your heart from being hardened by the deceitful lies of sin, it's exhorting each other daily.

It's encouraging one another. Thank God for the friends in this church. Hebrews 10:25 says don't give up, don't give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another, encourage one another. Listen, grace moves us to encourage each other, but it moves us to love Christ. Listen to these last words. Listen to these last words, in verse 24.

In verse 24 he says, grace be with you all. Grace, grace be with you all, who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible. A love incorruptible, how will you and I love the savior with a love that's never subject to decay? How? It's grace, grace be with you, it's remembering that the reason that you want to love God with an incorruptible love is because you have been loved by a holy God. He has loved you with an incorruptible love, in crushing his son on a cross, burying him, and then raising him on the third day, victoriously over sin and death.

This is why the last word and the last sentence is, grace be with you. To those who love the Lord Jesus, listen. There's a warning in this book as we end, there's a quick warning in this book, because these people at Ephesus, the Ephesian church, they're mentioned again in the Bible, they're mentioned in Revelation two, as when the king comes and evaluates the church, he says look I see you do a lot of things really well, you do a lot of things really well, but this I have against you. I have this against you, that you've lost your first love, that you've lost your first love.

So the warning for us, Providence, listen, listen to me. As grace is unleashed to us and through us, listen. The temptation of our heart, the temptation of my heart, the temptation of our leaders hearts, the temptation will always be to love the great things that God's doing more than God. The temptation in your heart is to love the gift of a spouse more than God. The gift of a child more than God, the gift of a job more than God, the gift of unity more than God, the gift of a new building to meet in more than God.

He says, please, please. Don't love the things of God more than God. He says to love the Lord Jesus with a love that's incorruptible. And so, Providence, let's labor, let's labor to encourage one another to look and love Jesus. If you're not a believer this morning, our exhortation to you this morning is to look and love Christ for what he's done. If you're a believer this morning, our exhortation to you is to look and love Christ for what he has done.

Oh listen, love the savior. John Newton says it this way. He says to look unto Christ, to look unto him. 10,000 times, 10,000 times. And compare your sins with his blood, and your wants with his fullness, and your unbelief with his faithfulness, and your weakness with his strength, and your faithlessness with his everlasting love. Oh, may that be so of Providence. May it be so of you, may it be so of I. That we would run this race with endurance, fixing our eyes on the Lord Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy sat down before him, he endured the cross.

Praise be to God for the savior of the world, Christ himself. Let's pray together. Father, we love you, thank you for this book, thank you for how it has ministered to our hearts God, and I pray Father that you'd help us to continue to love you with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength. That God, we would be a people who are humbled by your gifts, that we'd be a people marked by generosity and gratitude.

God help us to cultivate a great sense of gratitude for all that you have done, but God help us, protect us, please oh God, to not love those things more than you yourself. And so God, we're just in awe that you have preserved this book, we're in awe that you have preserved our life. And you have given and granted salvation to us through the blood of Christ, through his sacrifice on the cross.

God we're forever grateful and so we say thank you God. Seal these truths, solidify these in our heart God, we pray in Jesus name, amen.



© 2018 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)  
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors. Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.