

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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I Found Joy

PART

11

TITLE

I Found Joy In Peacemaking

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:1-3



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Well, it's great to see all of you this day. It's always, I guess just enjoyable. It's really just appealing to me to watch that video because you get to see so many different smiling faces from young and old and men and women, and I think it's so appealing because I know and we know that things are so broken. Every single week we see things in front of us, we see things in the mirror, we see things in our homes and our families. We see things in the world that lead us to simply say it's just not supposed to be like this. There's no alignment with the natural inclinations of our heart and our soul with the things that we see all around us. And so it leads us to feel a sense of where we lack peace. Some of you, it's happened this week.

Life can hit so hard, can't it? Sometimes it hits so hard that like a vase that's accidentally dropped or intentionally dropped it shatters, it simply breaks like you see here. And it's interesting, sometimes we can go through life and we can be dropped by something or someone and for whatever reason we have enough bandwidth so that when it falls that we may chip or crack just a little bit, but not everything falls apart. But then there's other times when perhaps the severity of the offense or just how frequent they seem to come in our life leads us to truly feel like we are shattered, can come with things like being rejected or feeling ashamed in public or the loss of a loved one. Death is something that we all know it's the reality of life and yet whenever it happens, sometimes we just have so little bandwidth to be able to absorb that depth of loss, and so we simply feel shattered.

Sometimes it's a loss of something less valuable than a person, but it still can be weighty. Like the loss of a job where our identity or security is wrapped up in that. We don't know what to do next and suddenly we're already paycheck to paycheck one month at a time and we lose that and it can shatter people. Some people, it's the loss of a friend. Maybe a friend that's so close and suddenly now that friendship is broken, it's fractured, and we don't know how recover from the loss that we've experienced. We see the pieces of our broken lives and our broken homes and our broken world all around and we agree that it's busted up and yet we tend not to be able to agree on how to reassemble all of those pieces.

You have one person said, it was this way, it's this program, it's this social program, it's this leader, it's this party, and then someone else over here says, "No, those are all wrong. It's this one over here." So what's interesting is that even our attempts to assemble the pieces, oddly enough, can create more broken pieces. But I want you to know it wasn't always like this and one day it won't be like this anymore. There's good news because of the Gospel. You see, the Bible says at the very beginning it says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and he created a world at peace. It was his design for you to know peace, experience peace, real peace, but the peace that he has for us is a stay close to home kind of peace.

It's the kind of piece that when a child feels risk, feels a threat, and knows that a parent or somebody that they can trust is near and so they instinctively reach up to try to feel a hand and once they feel an adult hand that cares for them, suddenly there's peace. This is the peace that's available. This is the piece that God intended to have, is that we would have our hand in his hand and we would know peace. But thinking we could do better, the Bible says that we sinned against God.

He's Holy and we're sinful and so there was a separation. Suddenly there was no more reaching for that hand because that hand was not there. Our hand, first of all, we never began to even think about reaching for that hand because we started reaching for everything else that might give us peace, but we separated from God and with our separation we brought upon ourselves a tidal wave of brokenness and that brokenness broke everything.

We try to fix it, but we can't. And so instead of crushing us, he was the offended party in all of this. He was the Holy one. He was the constant one. He was the righteous one. He was the loving one. He was the injured one. Instead of crushing us, he sent his son, Jesus Christ, supposed to be the mediator between God and man. Fully God, fully man, he reached his hand toward humanity and we put our sinful hand in his hand and he bore our sin. He took our sin and then he reached his other hand over to the Father and the wrath that was directed towards us, he absorbed in himself. And so Jesus Christ stood in between and he absorbed our sin and he absorbed God the Father's wrath towards our sin. He took it all upon himself and for everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ, he takes the hands and he brings them together. So there's peace again.

This is what is called the Gospel. Jesus came to be our peacemaker. He died, he rose again. And the Bible says, for those who will believe in Jesus Christ, for those who will repent of their self-righteousness, thinking they can save themselves, and who put their faith in Jesus Christ, they're restored. Just for encouragement to me and maybe to you, I want to ask you to do something. If you are here today and you know the peace because you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you have trusted in him and you are trusting in him right now, would you just raise your hand? Just really tell you know Christ and you know a measure of peace because of Jesus Christ. Isn't that encouraging? You are not alone. And I want you to know for those of you who maybe who were not able to raise your hand, in a few moments I'm going to be able to help you understand how you can trust Jesus Christ so that the next time something like that is ever asked that you too can know peace in your heart and say, "I know that piece because I know Jesus Christ."

Paul knew this piece and he had to tell other people, which means that he went to other cities that he'd never been to, and one of those cities was a place called Philippi, and he eventually wrote them a letter called Philippians. And in your Bible I would love for you to look with me there, we're up to the fourth chapter, the first verse of that fourth chapter. So if you don't have a Bible, there's Bibles in the seats near you, and if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. But Paul wanted the people in Philippi to know of Jesus Christ. And so he went there, he told them, and a decade later, Paul was just like one of the people that we just prayed about. He landed in a Roman prison because of his faith in Jesus Christ. The church in Philippi, they heard that he was there and so they took up a love offering, put it into the hands of one of their trusted members and said, "Go to Rome over 800 miles away and deliver this love offering to them."

Epaphroditus was his name. He takes it there, he gives it to him, and Paul was overwhelmed. He wants to write him a thank you letter and it's Philippians. But it's interesting, there from prison Paul was told by most likely Epaphroditus, that courier, of a fight within the church, that people who knew peace with God were not at peace with each other. So before we read his instructions, what I want to do is I want to pray very specifically right now for those in the room who are engaged and embroiled in controversy with another person or for those in the room who know of others who are, because there is something for each one of us in these three short verses about what it means to find greater joy in life by being a peacemaker just like Jesus. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven, I ask that you would give us grace, that you would help us to see within your words life and hope and joy that's available for us. I pray for those in the room right now who already feel a sense of angst and anger maybe towards someone else, maybe that haven't listened to a single word that I've said because they're so angry with somebody else. God, would you help them to see that you have a word specifically for them this morning? I pray for those of us who maybe not embroiled currently in controversy. We know what it's like to be in a fight, but we know of other people who are currently engaged in that struggle and I pray that you would help us to know how we are to respond for our joy and the joy of others. So we look to you in faith. We just speak through weakness. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Philippians chapter four verse one says, "Therefore my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also true companion, help these women who have labored side by side with me in the Gospel together with the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life." Attention. The book is all about joy, so let me tell you a few things that joy does in our lives. Okay? Joy motivates us to love people deeply. Joy motivates us to love people deeply. Now let's be clear about something, Paul knows. You've written a letter before. You know where you're going in you're writing, don't you? Like you start, you're like, "Okay, I'm going to say this sentence, but the next sentence is going to be this sentence."

He knew the second sentence and he has a sentence before that. See, he knows he's about to do a cannonball in the middle of a crowded hot tub. He's been warming up for it for three chapters. He said things like, "Listen to me. No matter what happens to me, walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel so that whether I see you or not, whether I'm present or absent, I will know within my own heart that you're standing firm in one spirit, one face, standing side by side for the faith of the Gospel." He's already said things like, look, if you have you personally, if you have any encouragement from being united in Christ, any participation with the Spirit, if you have any fellowship with him, any sympathy, any affection, then make my joy complete by being of the same mind, unity. Same love, being in full spirit, one accord. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others more important, more significant than yourselves, don't just consider your own interests. Consider the interest of others. He's already said, "Oh you know Jesus Christ and you needed to have his mind among yourself who being in very nature, God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped or stolen," but he humbled himself. He humbled himself to be a peacemaker with us.

He knows where he's been going and Paul had this unique ability, he wrote a bunch of the letters in the New Testament that we love to read so much and one of the things he did in all of them is there was always some correction, some challenge, some encouragement and anytime he was about to use pretty strong words or pretty harsh tone or like a rebuke, he would frequently remind the people that he was writing of their personal firsthand knowledge, their own memories, of how he treated them when he was in their presence. He would say things like, "You are witnesses" and God also, how Holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct towards you believers. He's saying "You know how I treated you when I was there. You know how I loved you, how I cared for you, how I taught you. You know this, you know this."

You see, sometimes what happens is when people get all locked up in controversy, they don't trust very many people. They hear a knock on the door and they don't know who it is and so they may assume it's probably that person that makes me so mad, they probably came over here to injure me again. So what do they do? They lock the door. Add a few deadbolts and they lock a little bit more, a little bit more, a little bit more. Well, sometimes we need to get in that door to be able to help. How do we do that? In the physical world, we have firemen, they have tools just like this. There's the point of tension, there's a locked door, we have to get into that door. And so we have tools that are strong and that use leverage, and we have to ask the question "What is the tool?" What is the tool that Paul is going to use to enter into this door to be able to be a peacemaker within the church in Philippi? And you know what he uses? The strongest one of all: love.

It says "You know how I loved you. You can trust me." When you love people, they'll let you in. You love people, the doors may be locked up, they hear your voice and then they go, "Okay, I'll let you in." There's something about love, and so that's where he goes. He says, "Listen, brothers and sisters," that's actually the word. He actually says, "Listen, brothers," and it's the word for family, it means brothers and sisters, "those who were in the church, you know that I love you." It's interesting before calling out these two women, he reminds all of them of his love. He says, "I love you and I long for you. I miss you. I want to be with you. You are my joy." We've been talking several months now about joy, that joy is not found in anyone else but Jesus Christ, but here's the deal. Whenever somebody is in Jesus Christ, they become a channel of his joy to us.

That's why mountains can bring joy. It's because he created them. That's why the church, that's why people, that's why singing and worship and the Bible, all of these wonderful things, they bring joy because they bring us closer to Jesus. He says, "You do that to me. When I'm around you, I feel like I'm closer to Jesus and so I feel more joy. You're my joy," and then he says, "You're my crown." The Greek word is *stéphanos*. There's two different kinds of crowns. There's a crown that a King wore, and that's not the crown that he uses here. He's not saying, "You're my subjects. I'm your ruler. I'm your leader. Do what I say." That's not what he says. Where a *stéphanos* is the crown that a champion would receive, a wreath around the head, his reward. He says, "Don't you see? You're not my subjects. You're the prize. You're all the reward I need."

So let me encourage us first. Let's love God's people so that we can help God's people. When we see the worth of Jesus people, a people that were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, a people that the Bible actually says in Ephesians three is the display of God's wisdom on the earth, the most concentrated display it says of the manifold, the colorful, the various spectacularly colorful wisdom of God. He says, you want to see the greatest concentrations of the Lord's wisdom? He says, just look at a redeemed people like this who willingly raise their hand and says, "I found joy in Jesus." When you see the value of God's people and then you love two things always happen; we begin to care enough about her that we begin to care for her.

We become, if I can say it this way, owners instead of renters. You see, if you visit the coast and you stay in a hotel, or if you visit the coast and you stay in your home in the coast, you view the storms that come a little differently, don't you? You begin to care for the people of God. You'll begin to care for the people of God. The second thing that'll happen is you'll become trusted enough to mediate. People will say, "Oh, it's Paul, unlock the door." So let me encourage you to pray for the church, for your family, for people. That's an investment. That's a way for you to care for them. Pray for them. You begin praying for somebody, you begin for that person. Give, serve, teach. Some of you say "I just don't have a big thing for the kids of Providence. I want to do something else." Listen, if you're struggling with care for kids, start teaching them and suddenly you'll begin to care. You'll see them. You'll know them. You'll know their name, you'll know their face. I don't know where it is, but find a place to love God's people so that you can help God's people.

Second thing that joy does is it motivates us to pursue peace earnestly. You see, Philippi, it's interesting, was a military outpost, which means that the actual city was full of Roman citizens who were military families, and so the word stand firm was a military term. It meant stand your ground, don't budge, don't leave the wall. And so he uses it to begin and he says, "Listen, as a church, establish your feet. I know something is difficult. It's right in front of you. Y'all want to flee, you want to run, you want to retreat. You can't do that. Stand firm in the Lord." And then he jumps into the hot tub. He says, "I entreat." It's interesting. Both ladies get the same verb. It's not just "I entreat you and you." Not "Hey, she got a verb. I didn't get a verb." He goes, "Okay, you both get a verb. I entreat you. I entreat you."

Now we don't use entreat very much. It means plea or beg or appeal. It's to get on your knee and say, "Please, please agree in the Lord." Now the setting of this makes it all the richer. You see, you brought your own Bible or your phone or if you don't have one, we have lots of Bibles you got want in your hand if you want one in your hand, and everybody's all happy because you got your copy. But you know when he wrote this, there was one copy. So think of how this plays out, okay? So the church is over here in Philippi and they hear Paul is in prison. So they take a love offering, they put it in the hands of someone that has to take it 800 miles away to Rome, which takes a long time. The courier knows about the fight.

So the fight's going all this time, finally gets there and Epaphroditus gets sick. So he's laid up, we don't know how long he's there, he almost dies. Paul writes the letter and he goes, "Man, I need somebody to bring it back." He gets better. And he goes, "Hey, you're going to bring it back." So he takes it all the way back.

They get all the way back to Philippi and he goes, “Everybody come together. We’re going to read the letter that Paul wrote to us.” And they’re all gathered, right? Syntyche’s over on one side. Here’s Euodia on the other side. She happens to be on the second row, she’s on the fourth row and so she’s angry about that. And they have their little sides, all the little tensions, and suddenly he pulls it out. For three chapters, he’s all vague. He’s talking in generalities to everybody, he’s not calling anybody out, and suddenly he gets there.

Just imagine you’re the person reading and you know it. Everyone knows it. That’s why it was written in a public letter, “And I urge Euodia,” everybody’s like, “Ooh, she’s over there in the corner, her and Syntyche,” and she’s like “Uh oh, what’s going to happen now?” “You guys need to agree.” What a thing to write. So what do we know about these two women? First of all, we know they’re Christians because Paul says that their names are written in the book of life. We also know that they were ministry leaders because it says that these two women worked side by side with me when I was in Philippi, means he knew these women. They were there a decade ago. He may have led them to Christ, I don’t know. But they worked with me and others for the ministry and we’re told that they’re fighting and we don’t know what they were fighting about. Maybe one of them insulted another’s potato salad and she retaliated on her blog and went back and forth over the years, and they totally forgot about the potato salad. They have no idea how the thing started. This is how most tensions, they begin. We don’t remember the initial insult, we remember the insults that escalate upon insults that escalate upon insults.

Silence of the issue likely means to Paul that it was not of doctrine or moral significance because he tended to call those things out. But their fight was public enough for Paul to name them in a letter to be read by all and that was eventually immortalized forever. Now, this is supposed to be a warning to you and me. I mean, one day they’re in heaven. Their names are in the book of life. They’re there now. One day you may run into Syntyche. “Hey, what’s your name?” Oh, Syntyche,” “Are you...” “Yeah. Yeah, that’s me. Yeah. But he’s redeemed me. Good news! You know?” It’s serious. That’s why Jesus said in Matthew five “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, first go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.”

We need to be very careful this morning when we take the Lord’s supper because to hold it in our hand is to say that we treasure it and we also treasure the application of it in the rest of our life. And if that’s not true, he would say, you may want to think about taking it this morning. That’s why Paul says, “If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.” And he uses the word, it’s interesting, his rebuke also includes the solution. He says, “Agree in the Lord. Agree in the Lord.” What he’s saying is view your issue with Christ in view. And so this is what I mean by this. Okay, let’s just say that this is in the backdrop of your life and then somebody offends you. Okay? And so let’s just say this is the person in the offense and I’m having to be right here. What oftentimes happens is we view our situation, our tension points, the insult, our response, and we totally forget about this.



This is all Paul was saying, just walk to the other side so that you can view this person and the tension with Christ in the backdrop. Or you can remember that he was the hero of heaven and he came, and he humbled himself and he went to a cross. If you can think about his potential glory, that when you become reconciled with somebody else and someone asks us, “Hey, how did that happen?” You can point and you say “It’s because of Jesus.” He says you have to keep Christ in view of your life. So two applications here, first is let’s confess quickly if we have sinned. If we have sinned. If you know that you’ve sinned against somebody and that’s the reason for the tension or a partial reason for the tension, the Bible would say you need to go and confess your sin. Not to root out their behavior, but to zero out yours.

You see, our sinful responses may be entirely explainable because of the stimulus that was brought to us, but if it’s sin, it is never excusable. It may be explainable but never excusable. We can get so locked up on what ignited us that we become totally blind to what came out of us. And so if you sin, confess. Proverbs 28:13, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” See, oftentimes our humility in going to say “I was wrong, would you forgive me?” It begets theirs, but not always. You may go confess and they say, “Well, I’m not going to forgive you,” but at least you have done as far as depends upon you what you need to live peaceably from this day forward. So continue to love and continue to be faithful, and wait.

The second is let’s pursue peace if we have been sinned against. So the first one is what happens if you know you’ve sinned? The second is what happens if you don’t know that you’ve sinned, but you are certain that somebody sinned against you? Now let me tell you that the severity of the offense is going to change the response, and so I’m begging of you in particular if there’s a serious offense that somebody has done to you, like this passage, it may color in some of your response, but it may not be all that you need, and so seek clarity on this. Their fight is one that we believe is not of moral or doctrinal significance. It wasn’t of abuse, and so it was similar to the 99% of all of our tensions that really boil down to “You insulted my potato salad.”

When those kinds of things are what precipitate our tension, and this is really pertinent to us, we need to think about Jesus and Peter in John 21. Peter did all the sinning and yet Jesus did all the pursuing. Peter had seen Jesus resurrected from the dead twice after denying that he knew him three times and yet Peter could never bring himself to say “You know that I did that, you said I was going to do it. I did it. I’m so sorry, I was wrong.” For whatever reason he couldn’t bring himself to say it. So it’s interesting, Jesus acted. Jesus took the first step. Jesus was the one that says “You know what? Let me ask you something Peter, do you love me?” “You know that I love you.” “Okay, let me put something of value to me in your hand. Now feed my sheep.”

He asked him again, “Do you love me?” He goes “You know that I love you.” “Feed my lambs. Peter, do you love me?” “You know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep.” And so I would encourage you just to be thinking about this, is that if you’re waiting for the other to repent, maybe consider going to them. As I said, again, the severity of the offense.



If this is things like abuse, I would never counsel you to go and do that, just go to your abuser. And so seek counsel as to how in particular, if the offense is serious, but if you know that it's safe in doing so, then I encourage you to go. Go and say "You know what? I feel a tension, I feel angry. You may feel angry as well. I may have contributed, but I want to be at peace." Doing so may not restore everything. It may not restore trust. It may not eliminate consequences. Our efforts may actually add injury to the through their unrepentance.

You may come and say "You know, you really hurt me" and they may say "You know what? I don't care." And now you're even angrier than you were before. But as far as it depended upon you, you pursued peace and Jesus sees. He sees your effort to pursue peace, and so guard your heart from bitterness, forgive in your heart, and then wait for God to move. So joy motivates to love people and to pursue peace. Then third, joy motivates us to help others pursue peace. Paul was doing in his letter exactly what he's asking his true companion to do. Now, we don't know if this was an actual person. The word [susagus] could have been somebody's name. It's translated companion or true companion, and so we have people like John Erwin or Brian Nelson, or we have pastors and people who help mediate situations, he may have been calling somebody out by name and saying, "Hey you, help these people. You know they're arguing, you know they're fighting. They cannot find a place, and so I need you to get involved."

We don't know if it was a direct person, I believe that it was, but he asked his true companion to do something in his stead. Most of us would rather drive a nail through our hand than mediate someone else's tension, right? First of all, we know that we're imperfect and then second is we're all pleasers of some kind. We don't want people to be mad at us. And then third, that we even have a Proverb, Proverbs 26:17. It says, "Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears," which means don't, don't do that, is what it means. It's going to bite you. So if your purpose is to meddle, it's to poke the bear, it's to add fuel to the fire, then don't.

But if your purpose is to seek to bring peace for the glory of Jesus, then engage slowly. Begin praying for them. If they're at a party and they're arguing with one another, try to step in calmly and try to deescalate the situation maybe through humor where "Hey, it's okay." Maybe it means to mediate. I don't know what it means. Before you do anything though, I encourage you to check your heart because Jesus told us to remove the log in our own eye before we seek to remove the speck in another. And don't take that too far. Some people say we should never help remove. No, that's not what he says. He goes, he says, "You remove the log so you can remove the speck," but even as you do, I would encourage you to be careful because hurting people hurt people. They may say things to you as a mediator that really hurts you.

But Matthew 5:9 says, Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God." The word sons there, it's not the same word, but the same idea of daughters. Meaning he's not talking about children. There's a different word for that. He's talking about sons and daughters, people who have the authority on the basis of their relationship to speak in another person's stead. "You can trust me because I'm his son."

I'm going to speak, do what he's done" and he says, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they speak for the Father in that living room and in that kitchen on that day." So let's treasure unity and pursue peace. We do it because Jesus pursued peace within us.

I know some of you in the room right now, you don't feel peace. Maybe that's why you're even here today. You thought "Well, maybe I'll try church, maybe that's where I'll find peace." I want you to know that peace only comes to those who are close to him, and to be close to him, you have to be reconciled to him. And yet I know many of us in the room right now are running far from him. People run in one of two ways. They're religious, which means they're trying to do it on their own, or they're irreligious, which means that they're very reckless in their behavior, but both are entirely sinful, because both are a rejection of the one way to draw near and that is to trust somebody else's effort and someone else's accomplishment, and that's Jesus Christ.

See, when Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to die on the cross for us, he looked at the city when he was able to see it and it says that he began to weep for the city because he knew the peril that the people were in. And then it says that he began to speak something with his mouth and you know what he said? He said, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things," same word terms, "that make for peace, the terms of peace." There's hostility and there's terms of peace. The terms of peace to know Christ, the Savior and Lord, is to lay down your arms of self-righteousness. It's to admit that you can't save yourself. That's what repentance means, that conversion. It's saying "I cannot trust in myself anymore," which leads us to place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone and confess him as Lord of our life and he begins to change and heal us all the way to our core. He gives us peace.

This week I read about a practice is called Kintsugi, I believe it's how you say it. It's Japanese and the word "kint" means gold and "sugi" means repair. And so you see one here, what happens is that they've found a way to take clay vessels, vases that have fallen and had been smashed, and they take them and they put them back together and the element that they use to connect them together is gold. So you can still see all the cracks, and yet something of greater value has brought it together to even give the instrument greater value than before. And isn't it such a metaphor of the gospel that we who are all broken in sin and yet Jesus is the gold that can make each one of us whole? Do you know Christ? Would you accept his terms of peace today? For those who would, I would love to invite you to do that now. So would you pray with me? If you want to trust Christ as your Savior, would you pray something like this to him?

Father in heaven, I know that I'm a sinner and I come to you in faith, confessing to you my need. I can't save myself, but I trust Jesus Christ. Would you save me? I trusted he died for me. I trusted he rose. I confess you Lord of my life. And I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen. Now if you prayed, then we welcome you to the table. Those of us that are going to be serving if you want to go ahead and stand up and head to the back. This table, it's called the Lord's Supper, there's two symbols, the bread and the cup are symbolic of his body and his blood. Jesus said you'd take this, those of you who know me, you take this and you do this for a very specific reason, it's to examine your hearts, to remember what I've done, it's to proclaim.

So if you can't proclaim that Jesus is your Lord, we encourage you to do what the Bible says, and that is to let it pass. But if you know Christ, we welcome you to the table. So let me pray for us as we prepare. Father in heaven, would you use this moment, would you use these minutes to encourage and instruct our hearts, that we would be able to have peace within our hearts? We thank you for what you're going to do during this time, and we pray all of this in Jesus' name.



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