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SPEAKER

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People Of The Kingdom

PART

10

TITLE

Wise In Relationships

SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15



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Well, good morning, Providence. So good to see all of you this morning. My name is Daniel Savage. I'm one of the pastors here and it's a joy to be able to open the word together this morning. It's a privilege that we have weekend and week out to study God's word together. If you have a Bible, turn to first Thessalonians chapter five. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one in the seats around you. And if you don't own a Bible, you can keep that one as a gift from us. But we're continuing this morning in a series called People of the Kingdom. People of the Kingdom and so it raises the question, well, what kingdom are we talking about? And the Bible uses this language of kingdoms. It talks about the kingdom of the world being a place of brokenness and darkness.

And then it talks about the kingdom of God being a place of light and righteousness and goodness. And so the earth was shrouded in darkness. This kingdom of darkness had overtaken everything as sin and death was raining. And then Jesus came into the darkness as this ray of hope array of light. And He talks about bringing this kingdom with Him. The kingdom of God. You can read Matthew chapter 13 and several different parables that Jesus teaches as He's teaching the people about what this kingdom is all about. But one of the parables that He uses is a parable of a mustard seed, where He talks about this tiny seed. He says the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that's planted and is the smallest of seeds. And yet it becomes this large plant, one of the largest plants in the garden.

The idea is that as this kingdom was planted into the world, as Jesus came into the world and shared this good news and died on the cross and was raised from the dead, something happened, something started, a kingdom was initiated and that kingdom was going to spread and grow as that good news was spreading. And so now we sit here as a church family, people of this kingdom, a redeemed people, people who have believed in have been saved by this gospel and the Book of Thessalonians, like so much of the New Testament, is about how we as these people of the kingdom are supposed to live. How are we supposed to be different? The people of the kingdom are assigned to the world around us. Ephesians chapter three calls us a display of the manifold wisdom of God. We are supposed to be different, but how are we supposed to be different? And so Paul is writing to Thessalonians, the church in Thessaloniki. He's commending them on all these things that they're doing well, and he's instructing them as people of the kingdom how should they be living in the world. And so that's what we're thinking about as we move through this letter together and this morning we're talking about how people of the kingdom should stand out as being wise in relationships. People of the kingdom should stand out as being wise in relationships. In other words, we should relate to one another and relate to the people around us and people in the world differently than everyone else. And I'll warn you up front, that what we are called to in these verses is impossible, that we are called to forget ourselves and to serve others and always do them good, never return evil for evil. These are things that in our own strength and power we could never do.

But as a people who are grounded and rooted in the gospel, it is something that we are equipped to do because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus served us. Jesus was here for us, laid down His life for us, giving us all that we need to serve and love one another. As people of the kingdom in this environment of a world filled

with broken relationships, we have the opportunity to love one another in such a way that it would stand out like a bright light in deep darkness. And as we see brokenness all around us and as we see relationships crumble, we have the opportunity to live differently and be a display of God's wisdom in the world. So we're going to read Paul's instruction, but let me say a prayer first and ask God to help us as we read His word. Heavenly Father, would you be with us now as we open your word and read it? God, pray that you would instruct us, God, that you would encourage us, that you would convict us, God, that you would reveal yourself. We do not come to your word and presume to be able to understand it, that we need your help. And so God, will you help us? We stand together humbled before you, asking you to speak to us. God, would you do that through your word? Praying Jesus name, amen.

First Thessalonians chapter five, starting in verse 12 this is what it says. It says, we ask you brothers to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. So just a few short verses here with lots of instruction for us.

The first instruction that Paul gives in these verses is regarding how the church should relate to its leaders. So if you're taking notes, the first point this morning is People of the Kingdom respect their leaders instead of opposing them. People of the Kingdom respect their leaders instead of opposing them. He says it like this. We ask you brothers to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. He uses three phrases here to describe their leaders. He calls them those who labor among them. Those that are over them in the Lord and those who admonish them. Then these three phrases give us a good reminder of what pastors and elders in the church are supposed to be doing and what they're supposed to be like. These phrases remind me of what Peter says in first Peter chapter five when he is talking to elders. He's giving instruction as an elder to elders.

And he says, starting in verse two, Shepherd the flock of God, that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. The labor of an elder is to serve as a shepherd. The word pastor comes from the word shepherd. Leaders in the church are supposed to watch over the people of God, not domineering over people, but serving as examples, loving them, laying their lives down for them. Leaders in the church are given authority as teachers and leaders, but they're not supposed to use that authority like people in the world use it. They're supposed to use it to serve the people they are leading. I think this is a really timely word for us as a church in the midst of a culture with a growing suspicion of leaders. There's a growing suspicion in the culture of those who have any sort of authority.

There's all this talk about leaders who abuse that authority. And there's plenty of examples of that in the world. Jesus spoke about this. He talked about how leaders of the world lured it over those that they're ruling,

but He said it's not supposed to be that way in the church. In Matthew chapter 22, his disciples come to Jesus and say, "Will you give us authority in this new kingdom that's coming? Will you give us a seat of authority, a seat of power and prominence?" They said, "Will you let us sit at your right and your left hand?" And Jesus says, "It's not for me to determine that." But the other 10 disciples heard what the two had asked for. And it says that they were indignant.

And this is how Jesus responds. He gathers all 12 of them together. And He says, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lured it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you, must be your slave. Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

The authority and leadership in the church is supposed to look different. Jesus is the ultimate example of this. He had the ultimate authority. He was God in the flesh. He was the creator of everything and everyone that He was around. And yet, He did not use that authority to push everyone down. Instead, He used that authority to serve everyone around Him. He gave Himself up. This is how leaders in the church are supposed to act. Yes, we have a God-given authority, but we're supposed to use that authority to serve and build up God's people.

Paul gives this description of the leaders and then he gives the Thessalonians two clear instructions on how they're supposed to relate to these leaders. They are supposed to respect them and esteem them highly in love. This respect or esteem is connected to the work that the leaders are doing. He says because of their work. Again, the work that they're doing is caring for and serving the people. The Thessalonians are supposed to see and appreciate the work of their leaders, which is supposed to produce in them this love and respect. So then he finally ends this section talking about relating to leaders by saying, "Be at peace among yourselves." In other words, if leaders are serving and laboring with humility and the church is respecting and esteeming them in love, it will produce the fruit of peace.

And this should be the marker for the people of God, that the people and the leaders are living at peace together because the leaders are humbly serving and the people are esteeming and respecting. And they're both seeking to build one another up. This presents, I think, a powerful apologetic to an outside world that has a very different relationship with its leaders, but this kind of relationship only works when we're operating like people of the kingdom. People of the kingdom are people who have been humbled by what Christ has done for them. People of the kingdom are eager to serve others because they recognize that Christ has served them. They lay down their lives because Christ laid down His life for us. This is why churches are uniquely equipped to be places filled with humble leaders and respectful people.

And we are uniquely equipped, but that doesn't mean we always get it right. In other words, we have everything that we need to create this environment among us, but churches fail at this all the time because we

also have everything we need in us to be selfish people. But if we will be a people grounded in the gospel, we have everything we need to live together in peace. The dynamics between leaders and followers should be different here because we are people that have been ransomed by Christ. Now Providence, I have to say that you are to be commended in this. Now, I've been a pastor here for almost coming up on four years now. And it is obvious to me that you are people who esteem and love your leaders. You're easy to lead. As long as we are preaching to you from the Bible, you are eager to follow the directions that we set before you. You're encouraging. You're respectful.

I would encourage you as a church family to excel still more. As we think about this instruction, I was thinking about what this reveals to us about God because anytime we're reading the Bible, it's a revelation of who God is. So there's all kinds of instruction about how we relate to one another and there can be instruction about how we live in the world, but ultimately, it's all about God. And so what is this instruction revealing to us about God? Well, in Ephesians chapter four, Paul tells us that leaders in the church are meant to be a gift to the church. The church is not a gift to leaders, but leaders are a gift to the church, which is inverted from the way that we normally think about people in authority and power. God has provided leaders for the church. He's gifted certain people and given them the abilities to lead. And some of those are men that he's gifted to be pastors and elders. And he calls them gifts because their job is to serve the people.

In other words, God loves you so much that he has called out certain people and given them a desire and the ability to lead you, to teach you, to care for you. And he's done this because he's a good and gracious father. He sees our needs and moves to meet them. So as we think about applying this, let's continue to pursue peace together in humility. Let's continue to pursue peace together in humility. As leaders, we must renew our commitment to lead you with patience and love and humility. And as a church body, you must strive to respect and esteem your leaders with love all the more. Paul's next concern as we look through these verses is how we would care for those who need help. So the next point, if you're taking notes is that people of the kingdom care for those who need help, instead of discarding them. People of the kingdom care for those who need help instead of discarding them. Look at verse 14. He says, "And we urge you brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak be patient with them all."

Now, as I'm reading this, it struck me that it would've been easy for him to lump these categories together and give some general encouragement that we ought to help those who are in need, but instead, he gives these specific examples and these different kinds of people and encourages a unique response to each one of them. So if someone is idle, then admonish them. And so Paul's talking about someone who's not working or pulling their weight. And he says, "Admonish them. They don't need to be comforted. They need to be confronted. They need to be told the truth in love. Someone needs to speak the truth to them. They're creating a burden on the rest of the community and someone needs to confront them in love."

And if someone's fainthearted, then encourage them. They don't need to be admonished. They need to be built up. They need to be supported like a swimmer that's going underwater. They don't need to be told that

they're sinking. They need someone to pull them up. When someone in our community is struggling with their faith, we lend them whatever faith we have, that we are to lovingly remind them of what is true and encourage them in their discouragement. If someone is weak, then help them. We lend strength to those that don't have it. Different needs call for different responses. This creates a picture of a family of believers who are paying attention to one another.

He doesn't give out this general diagnosis and prescription to everyone that seems to be struggling. I have to be paying attention to your needs to know if you need admonishment or encouragement or help. The reality is that everyone in every church will need all of these things at some point, but we will need them at different times. And Paul encourages the Thessalonians to pay attention to one another and care for one another in a way that would be intentional and thoughtful. And finally he says, "Be patient with them all."

And I have loved this all week as I was studying it, this blanket command that we should be patient with them all. So whether someone needs admonishment or encouragement or help, we should always be patient. And with some of these people, it's easier to be patient, right? If we perceive that someone is weak and needing our help, it's easier to be patient. But what about those that need admonishing? What about the idol? Are we patient with them? Or what about the fainthearted when they haven't been fainthearted for an hour and it's easy to encourage them, maybe they've been fainthearted for weeks or, or years, are we patient with them? We can lose our perspective, but we're called to be patient. We're called to live this way together. We're called to care for one another in these ways. So point of encouragement and application. Let's care for one another with compassion and intentionality. Intentionality meaning that we're paying attention to each other so that we know how to help. Compassion meaning that we're caring for one another with patient endurance. We're called to admonish those who need to be admonished. If we see someone doing something that's harmful to themselves or to others, we're called to admonish them, which means to lovingly warn them and plead with them to stop. We're called to encourage those who need to be encouraged. So if we see someone struggling in their faith or they're weary and doing good, we're called to encourage them, which means reminding them of what is true. It might mean reminding them of their identity in Christ or the hope that we have in the gospel or pointing them to Christ as their only hope for satisfaction and joy in this life. We're called to help the weak. If we see someone struggling to carry the load of a certain circumstance or crisis or relationship, we're called to come beside them and help them carry it. And we're called to help them carry it until they're able to carry it again. This might mean taking meals to a new mom who's exhausted or calling a friend on the anniversary of their spouse's death or just sitting with someone in a time of need. It would require us to look around and ask, is someone carrying a load that's too much for them? And if so, how could I help them carry it? Really, all of this requires us to pay attention to one another and to be looking for ways that we could care for each other. It requires us to maintain our patience to be long suffering with people. Now, how do we do that? How do we maintain the sort of patience that is required to do this?

Again, it is found in the gospel. When you feel your patience wearing thin or your inner voice begins to say things like enough is enough. I've done all that I could be expected to do. Someone else can help this person

now. I just can't help them anymore. They've cost me too much. I've got to look out for myself. When those thoughts begin to roll through our minds, it's an invitation for us to stop and consider the patients that God has shown us. Remember how patient God has been with you. Consider the number of times you've forsaken him and yet he remains merciful towards you. He continues to patiently pursue you. He continues to give you strength in your weakness. He continues to restore your soul every time you've gone to him and needed it. His patience never wear thin and never wears out. And if we are going to be long-suffering with people, then we must remember God's patience with us.

As I was thinking about long-suffering friendships, I was reminded of a story that I learned in church history. A story of a friendship between a man named William Cooper and John Newton. You've maybe you've heard of John Newton before. He wrote to him Amazing Grace. He was a pastor in England and in 1767, William Cooper moved into his town. They became fast friends. William Cooper was a poet and a writer and they began writing hymns together. In fact, their friends said that they were inseparable. There was a lady that lived between them and they paid this lady a stipend so that they could walk through her yard to get to each other's houses.

For six years, they enjoyed this friendship. They wrote hundreds of hymns together and encouraged one another and enjoyed each other, but William Cooper was prone to depression and despair. And in 1773, he fell into a deep darkness that he would never recover from. He attempted suicide that night. John Newton was called and John went to see his friend, William Cooper. He saw his friend in great need, moved William Cooper into his own house and for 14 months took care of him. It says, and some of their biographers write about all this, it says Newton maintained a nearly constant attendance at his bedside, calming the afflicted poet from the effects of his nightmares, delusions and hallucinations. John Newton would write about this season of walking with his friend through this deep darkness. He says, "The Lord has numbered the days in which I am appointed to wait upon him in this dark valley. And he has given us such a love to him, both as a believer and as a friend that I am not weary."

For 14 months, William Cooper lived in John Newton's house. And even after that, John Newton was regularly visiting him and spending time with him almost each day at the end of the work day. Eventually John Newton was called to another city where he was pastoring, but he never gave up on William Cooper. He continued to write him letters and continued to go and see him and sit with him and visit with his friend who was suffering in deep darkness. Cooper would later write of Newton near the end of his life a sincere or more affectionate friend no man has ever had. In 1800, William Cooper finally died and John Newton said at his funeral, "The Lord has given me many friends, but with none have I had so great an intimacy as with Mr. Cooper." Their biographers would write William would one day say of Newton that he had the tenderest disposition toward him. He knew the instructions of the apostle admonished the idol, encouraged the faint-hearted, helped the weak.

And you have to imagine that along the way, 27 years, John Newton would've been tempted to say, somebody

else can take care of William Cooper now. As he moved away to another city, surely he would've said people in his own town can take care of him, but he never abandoned him. He continued to walk patiently with him. And it's obvious from John Newton's writings that it's because he knew how patient God had been with him. He knew his own weakness and he knew that apart from the grace of God, he could be just like William Cooper. And so he never gave up on him. He was patient with him always.

This is the kind of friendship that we are called to as people of God, a friendship marked by the patience and care of God. Finally, in verse 15, Paul gives an overarching instruction that should govern our thinking and actions towards each other in the church and then towards people in general. And if you're taking notes, it's the third and last point this morning that people of the kingdom pursue good for others instead of retaliation. People of the kingdom pursue good for others instead of retaliation. Paul says it like this, "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone." So first, he instructs us not to seek retaliation. Don't repay evil for evil. This is easier said than done. And this is one of the most basic human instincts. Anyone who has a parent knows how deeply this thinking is ingrained in our sinful hearts. We are born thinking that if someone does something bad to me, I have the right and maybe even the responsibility to retaliate. I've got to make things fair. I've got to make things just.

It's exhausting if you've ever tried. And you're standing before two of your kids and you're trying to get them both to recognize that they've done something wrong and trying to work with the one who has responded is almost impossible. And so you'll say something like, "Hey, did you take that toy from your brother?" They say, "Well, dad, he took it from me." "Okay. I know that, but did you take it from him?" "Dad, I don't know if you know or not, but he took it from me first, so I don't know why you're asking me this question over and over again." So I'll try again. I'll try to reframe it. "Okay. Let me say it differently. Did you with violent intent and no concern for your brother's safety rip that toy out of his hands?" "Dad, maybe you forgot. He took the toy from me first. Have you forgotten that?"

It's this endless circle. It's almost impossible to get them to embrace this idea that they did something wrong because someone did something wrong to them first. "Dad, it's only just. It's only right. Of course, I had the right to rip that toy back out of his hands. He took it from me first." And we watch kids do this, but we are not much better. Trying to work through two adults that have had some kind of conflict, it sounds almost the exact same. Did you say something that was hurtful in order to try to get what you wanted? Well, yes, but they said something hurtful to me first.

It's the same cycle. All of this completely motivated, of course, by our self-interest. I can't let them get away with this because then they might do it again. And I've got to watch out for my own self-interest. I need to teach them a lesson that this kind of behavior towards me won't work. We become the judge and jury. We declare them guilty and we must punish them. Matthew chapter five verse 38 and 39. Jesus says, "You've heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil, but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Now Jesus is instructing us to forsake

self-interest, which is a radical thing for him to do.

How are we supposed to do this? How are we supposed to follow Jesus's command here? Well, we have to first all come to the conclusion that we have acknowledged and submitted to the almighty judge of the universe. We believe that there is a God in heaven who sits in authority over all things and sees all things and is a just and righteous judge. And because we believe that we are free to not be the judge and jury for everyone around us. We are free to leave those things in his hands. We're free to do what Jesus said. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Well, how do I do that? Because we trust that God almighty sees it. He will make things right. It's not my responsibility to bring justice in every situation. There is a just and righteous judge who sits in heaven.

He did not treat me as my sins deserve and I should not treat others as their sins deserve. And Jesus modeled this perfectly. In first Peter chapter two verses 21 to 25, it says, "For to this you've been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might in his steps. He committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued." Here's the key, in trusting himself to him who judges justly. The secret to Jesus's successful walk to the cross without retaliating against everyone who was sinning against him is that he was entrusting himself to the one who judges justly. He knew God the Father could see it all.

And so it wasn't up to him to determine what everyone's punishment should be. It was his to turn the other cheek. And he did. See that no one repays evil for evil, but instead always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. This means we're to seek to do good and say only what is beneficial to those around us in every circumstance. Remember, I warned you that this all is impossible. Seek the good of others and only say what is beneficial to those around us in every circumstance. Always seek to do good. Whether someone has done good or evil, whether they're weak or strong, we are to always seek to do them good. We do this for the people of the church and we do it to everyone around us. Paul says it like this in Galatians chapter six, verse 10, "So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone. And especially to those who are of the household of faith."

So let's talk about how we do good to those who are inside and outside the church. How do we do good to those outside the church? Well, here at Providence, we use the terminology of blessing those around us.

B.L.E.S.S. is an acronym that helps us to think about relational evangelism. Bless B, begin with prayer. Are we praying for those around us? Begin with prayer. L, listen with care. Are we serving the people around us by asking them questions about their lives and listening to their answers? Eat together. Great conversations happen over meals. If you read through the gospels, you'll see how Jesus was basically on an eating tour. He went from place to place eating with people, sharing meals with them. Why? Because it's a place for great conversation. Serve with love. Consider how you might lay down your life for those around you. How could you serve the people around you? As simple as rolling your neighbors trash cans up when they're out of town. Look for ways to serve. Share your story. Finally, share what God has done in your life and use it as an

opportunity to share his story.

Share the good news of the gospel. That's how we do good to those who are outside of the church. How do we do good to those inside the church by laying our lives down for each other, to admonish, to encourage and to help. The most difficult thing about all this will be that it'll require us to stop thinking so much about ourselves.

The most natural thing in the world for us is to think about ourselves. We do it all day every day and you won't stop thinking about yourself accidentally. It's not something that you're just going to begin to stop doing. You're going to have to be intentional. You're going to have to be thinking about others and doing good to others and sacrificing your own desires and priorities and it's all going to take intentionality and discipline. It takes a transformation, in fact, of the heart and mind. God's word must penetrate and reshape our selfish hearts or we will never put others first.

There's is all this instruction here, do this, don't do that. And there are times when we as the church are tempted to make that our central message, don't do this, do this, but this is not our central message. It's because it can't be our central message because you and I can't do these things. And when a church makes this the central message, we just create this atmosphere of morality, where we're all trying really hard to follow the rules and we're all failing. And when we're doing well, we think a lot of ourselves. And when we fail, we think that God doesn't want to have anything to do with us. And that's why these calls to action, these instructions are not the central message. These are flowing out of the central message and what is the central message? The gospel. All of this will require the mind of Christ.

Philippians two starting in verse three says this, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interests of others." These are the same instructions. "Have this mind among yourselves, here it is, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

That is our central message, that Jesus came to save us from our sins, that he left the comfort of heaven and entered into our broken reality, lived the life that we could not live, died the death that we deserved to die in our place. And on the third day, he was raised from the dead. That's our central message. And out of that flows this desire to serve one another the way that he has served us and to love the community the way that he has loved us and to lay our lives down for one another the way that he has laid his life down for us.

So the final application, let's put self-interest to death and seek the good of others. Let's put self-interest to death and seek the good of others. In church family, we will only do that if we are regularly and effectively

soaking our souls in the gospel. You will only find the endurance to continue with patience, loving those around you if you are soaking your soul in the realities of the gospel, this good news that Jesus died for us, that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And so I want to invite you church just to soak your soul in the gospel for a few minutes, as we close. And I want to soak our souls in the gospel using the words of William Cooper, who wrote the hymn There is a Fountain Filled with Blood. It starts out there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins. Emmanuel means God with us. He's talking about the blood of Jesus that his blood was drained from him. And how did that happen? It happened on the cross, that his hands and his feet were pierced and a crown of thorns was pressed upon his head. And his back was torn open with whips and blood flowed from him. The blood of sacrifice, the blood of atonement. There's a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And then Cooper goes on to say and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. So if we're going to appreciate the weight of what is happening here, we have to think for just a second about all our guilty stains. Some of us think about them more regularly than others. Some of you are haunted by them and you shouldn't be. Some of you rarely think about it.

But if we're going to appreciate the power of the gospel, we must consider all those guilty stains and how you and I are not worthy to be in the presence of God. But as a gospel people, we don't dwell on the guilty stains very long. We go back to the beginning. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. Christ spilled his blood so that you and I could be washed clean. We are healed through his wounds. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to lay his life down as a ransom for many. And as the recipients of that gift, we ought to be a people who are laying our lives down for one another. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, then I would invite you to consider the claims of Jesus Christ. There's a fountain filled with blood drawn from his veins and sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. That could be you.

By faith in Jesus Christ, you could be separated from your sin as far as the east is from the west. There is nothing you could do to earn the forgiveness of God. It's a free gift. If you will put your faith in Jesus. To believers, soak your soul in these realities. And if you're hearing and you're an unbeliever, today is the day to run to Jesus Christ. Confess your sin and ask for his forgiveness and you'll be saved.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for the promises of your word, the hope that we have in the gospel. Thank you that it gives us everything that we need to live together, to love one another, to be patient, to be long-suffering, to consider the needs of others is more important than our own. God, would you give us grace to walk in these things? Help us to be a reflection of your love to us. Help us to love others the way that you have so clearly and sacrificially loved us. God, would you give us grace to believe these promises to live as if they're true? God, will you draw all of us to yourself? We pray these things in Jesus name, amen.



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