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Acts chapter 20 verses 17 through 19. These are god's words. From my latest, he sent to Ephesus. And called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them. You know, from the first day that i came to asia. In what manner?

I always lived among you. Serving the lord. With all humility. With many tears and trials. Which happened to me. By the plotting. Of the Jews. Amen, the sends this reading of god's inspired and inherent word. We rejoice to know that he blesses the reading and especially the preaching of it.

Please we see it.

As we thought about at the beginning of last lord's day's portion versus one through 16. The apostle Paul is in a hurry. He's on the way to jerusalem. He is Making decisions to get there quickly. That informed us and helped us to read with more understanding and verses, 1 through 16.

The significance of The length of the lord's day that he kept and the way. That he kept that lord's day in troaz, and at the end of That portion last week, we read that for paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to that. He would not have to spend time in asia.

And yet, even as he's doing that, he stops at my leadus and he calls the ephesian elders to himself. And so there's an emphasis and urgency a necessity. Of. Of what he is going to be saying in this final conversation, this final interview and really charge with the ephesian elders.

And as we listen in on this and he reminds them of his example, he reminds them of what they are called to, he reminds them that the church among which they minister is purchased with the blood of god. And that it's the spirit of god who has set men redeemed, sinners as overseers, and shepherds in the church.

And that they are now commended to the grace of god as he commends them to to the word. And it's very solemn and serious and urgent. This to say the elders, have a crucial ministry. There's a lot here, of course for those who are elders in the church and those who are shepherds in the home for such a husband is to be to his wife and a father is to be to his children that the Lord who has instituted those ministries.

The lord, who is our, hope, our help. And all of our everlasting happiness, has charged them with the duty that they have. Those are the churches, his institution, the family is his institution. And so there's much there for them, but there's also much there for us who are eldered who are overseen, who are shepard dead.

That we would remember that christ is the chief shepherd. And that we are not at liberty to come up with an individualistic or self-directed. Way of doing things, we have need of that, which he has provided, because we have need Of him. And we have need to do it in the way.

That we are instructed. And as we look at those things that next several weeks, i thought four maybe five. And then i began preparing versus 20 and 21 for the next lord's day, and it's just

verse 20 now. For the next lord's day is, as we go through these several weeks, it is going to be Extremely challenging to us.

Because the kind of ministry. Of shepherding in the church. That is As commanded here. And the kind of ministry of shepherding in the home. Uh, by analogy. When the kind of ministers that our elders are to be that we elders And speak as one of them. Are to be and shepherds that fathers and husbands are.

We not only are not like that because we are still sinful, we still live on this side of glory, we're still partially sanctified but we are in a season. Of great weakness. In the churches. And in the homes. So we come and It'll help us. I I pray god helping.

The preacher to be faithful. Uh, as we see all of these things in relation to christ, in relation to his spirit, That we will have our comfort from him and our confidence in him that we might have repentance that. We might have growth that we might seek to do that, which we hear.

And not have the wounds of god's people easily healed or the stains upon us easily whitewashed. But knowing that, we have him who created all things and gave himself to redeem us. And who has poured out his own spirit to apply that redemption. That we would come in hope but if we're hoping in him, Then we must do things as he has said.

To do them. Let me find that this is a crucial ministry that it is crucial in two ways, it's placed and it's pattern. The first is that it is literally at the crux of the way. The lord shepherds, his people. Paul was on speeding to jerusalem. And yet in his love for christ and his love for christ's church and his love for the sheep who are in the congregations in Ephesus.

He could not speed by without addressing their shepherds one last time, their elders, one last time. It's a crucial ministry and its place in how the lord shepherds us how the lord ministers to and works in his church. It's also crucial ministry because it's across shaped. It holds to a joy.

That we cannot see. But as set before us, And it perseveres in suffering. For the joy that is set before us, it's not easy. It's not easy to do and easy things. Do not come when we do it. But it is according to the pattern of christ. It does depend on an almighty power.

And a delights in an almighty pleasure and therefore it is worth doing and it can be done. Independence upon him devotion to him, delighting. In him. Jesus is not visibly among them. They may hear. Of him and his suffering, and his joy. And he works by his words that he gives by his spirit and that his spirit attends as they read, and especially hear preached and taught those words.

And yet he has in his wisdom. Ascended to heaven. We do not sit. We do not see him. Where he sits though, not having seen him. We love him. Blessed are those who not having seen him believe? And paul has been an example to them, but he tells them in verse 25 that they will see his face no more.

And that's something that is really shaping this entire conversation. We hear at the conclusion of the passage in verse 38 that they were sorrowing, most of all, For those words, which he spoke that they would see his face. No more. And so the effusion christians. The moms and dads and boys, and girls and widows and single people in the congregation.

They would have this their only visible example of what it looks like to live the christian life to live this cross-shaped life. They would have their elders. The elders would continue as examples. And so he would tell them verse 28. Therefore take heed to yourselves. And to all the flock among which the holy spirit has made you overseers To temper the church of god,

which he purchased with his own blood, taking heed to themselves as a necessary, part of their ministry, verse 32.

Now, brother and I commend you to God and to the word of His grace. Is not just their ministry but they themselves who must be kept by God, they themselves who must be kept by the word of His grace so that as they minister His word to others, they see word kept elders.

Through whom God gives the word through which He will keep them to. Elders, must be examples. And in verse 35, I have shown you in every way. By laboring like this. That you must support the weak. And they, of course, are to show then by their labor among the congregation that they are sacrificing themselves to be a help.

To those who need it to carry. Along. Those who need it, verse 35. And we remember of course, Hebrews 13:7. Um, which applies not just to elders in the congregation, but to fathers and husbands in the home, the mothers with their children. In the home. That we submit to those in the Lord has set over us.

And we are to follow their faith, remembering the outcome that they are examples to us. As those whom the Lord has set over us. And so the ministry of the elders is not just one of preaching teaching, shepherding oversight. But as examples unto, the flock. And the first thing that He points out to them.

The thing that we're covering in these three verses is the consistency. Of the example that they are to set. The consistency and He reminds them of the consistency of His own ministry. That consistency in that it was continuous. Consistency and that it was comprehensive. Not just in the word, but in the life, not just verbal, but visible.

And consistency. And that it was convincing and convicted. That those specific things. That He has preached had specific applications. Specific differences. They made in the life. First then consistency. In time, continuous. A consistently continuous. Ministry. When they had come to Him verse 18, He said to them. You know from the first day that I came to Asia in what manner, I all ways lived among you.

Always. All the time. No breaks. The. The Christian ministry. Must be like the Christian life. Believers respond to the mercies of God. You remember that at the beginning of Roman chapter 12, and this wonderful opening of the mercies of God in the first 11 chapters? And how do we respond to the mercies of God, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices, which is to say that that has been handed over to God.

It is our very bodies are very selves. And in that place it uses a word that is the basis of our word for corpse. There's not a hair on our head or a fingernail on our, our hands that isn't now set apart, to God, consecrated to God in the whole life all the time.

You know, we have this horrible phrase in American speak, but it's not a uniquely American thing. Me time. There's no me time for the Christian. It's all Jesus time. It's all Christ's time. We have been purchased, we have been bought, as He is going to say of Himself.

In verse 19, He functioned as a slave. We don't have. Me time. When we work, it's it's working in and for Jesus Christ, which is shaped by when we worship. God help us that even in our worship, we seek that which serves ourselves, which pleases our emotions, which seems good to our minds.

But if that's going to be the christian life, that needs to be the christian ministry, And he reminds them that he was always on. He was always on for christ. That doesn't mean he was always strong. It doesn't mean he always maintained the same level of passion. Or intensity.

There was no time off. From being a minister because there's no time off from being a christian. The minister sabbath is the lord's day. Because the lord comes, and he has fellowship with us as his body. And he addresses us from his word, he speaks to you right now.

From his word and his spirit comes and attends the preaching of his words so that you can see what's in the passage. And as he brings that home to your heart and you become aware that, it's not just a man standing in front of you. But the lord jesus sitting in throne in heaven.

Who having loved his own who are in the world and loved them, even to the end of going to, the cross has continued to love them having departed from the world. By the ministry of his spiritual, pours out his love in our hearts. He comes, and he speaks to us.

And yes, sometimes it's a word of correction or a word of rebuke, and always, it ought to be a word of comfort and encouragement and gladness in him, because it's his He loves us.

There's something wobbling up here.

But he says, you remember. Or, you know, rather you know, And what manner? I always lived among you. The reason the christian life. Is an all the time. Not. Not something that you take breaks from. Is because christ is lord all the time. He never changes. You want to approve text for the fact that jesus christ is yahweh.

How about this from the book of hebrews? Jesus christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. That is not something that belongs to any of the creatures. He is lord. And he will never leave us or forsake us. This is why when the apostle says to rejoice always, he says rejoice in the lord always Your circumstances change.

You yourself change? There is much to grieve over in the circumstances and certainly much to grieve over in yourselves. But there is always. An abundance to rejoice over in him. We are. Jesus christ is always king. Always ruling and overruling. He works in all things. We never do anything apart from him.

He is. Present to us for is not only man but also God. He was always with us. As close as not just the the breath from your mouth, but the breath in your lungs behind us. And before us, everywhere we go, If you believe in the lord jesus christ and you go to glory.

It will be glorious because he is there. And you will know him without any more of your sin without any division of your your pleasure and desire. You will delight in him entirely and you will have him entirely. If you go to hell, If for your sin, For pushing down on the knowledge of your creator who made himself visible in everything that he has made, And and insisting on being a law to yourself rather than knowing in your heart.

And in your mind that you're creator, has a law that there is right and wrong. That is above you and outside of you and from him but you've sinned against him. If you go to hell and you get what you deserve, Who will be held for you because he's there.

And it's from, Him and the glory of his presence. The second Thessalonians. Chapter 1, tells us. It is from him and from the glory of his presence that destruction comes forever and ever. That will be an experience of the glory of the one whom you despise forever.

The lord never changes. And he has infinitely glorious, he has infinitely worthy, and he is holy and righteous and he has given himself to redeem sinners He has, he has not just atoned for our sin to take it away, but he has joined himself to sinners and to still doing so by the ministry of his spirit.

Who when you give you faith in jesus christ to believe that he is, god to believe that he died for you to believe that he rose again. For you. And that you are his and that he is yours forever and ever. When he does that for you, He brings you into a joy.

They thanksgiving a comfort that never leaves you.

So it is necessary that That we be consistent. If we do, not aim at this consistency and i know we don't get there in this life. But if we do not aim at this consistency, and if an increasing consistency is not part of christian maturity. And if an exemplary consistency is not part of the christian ministry, Then we basically say, with the way that we live or the way that we minister.

That all of this is a lie. It's just a pleasant fiction. Or maybe it's just an abstract theory. That has no practical application. To christian life. And so in the spirit comes and he convinces us of who jesus is And he convinces us of what jesus has done and he convinces us of what jesus by that spirit is doing in the believer's life.

He comes and he is unto us a spirit of power. And a spirit of love pouring out in our hearts. The love of god, so that we're always responding to him. Who loved us? We love him because he first loved us. And the believer's whole life is a a response in love to him, who has loved us, infinitely.

And uses to us a spirit of sound mind. Convincing us of that, which is more real. Or. More significantly, real. Then that which is visible. You know, there's There's this. It's become popular. To, to take. Ideas that the spiritual and the invisible is more real and more significant, more substantial Then that which is visible.

And palpable and accessible to our senses, it's become popular to say, oh well, that's a, you know, that's just platinism. You know, plato came up with No. Plato, got close enough to the truth. That those who want to deny God and want to, to live as if the the The physical and and temporal is more substantial to give them an excuse for ejecting.

What the scriptures tell us. But you and i have faith, which is certainty and conviction about things not yet and things not seen. In which we believe what god says. Even more than what we can see. And we could touch. You must live that way. Not just always, but From the first day.

Notice that's where he started when they had come to him. He said to them, you know from the first day That i came to asia. Oh, here is A great mistake with unbelieving friends and unbelieving family. I have made this mistake coming into ministry. It At a church. Where we think that we may slow play, the the intensity or comprehensiveness of our christianity.

We may, we may ease up at first, find ways to connect over worldly things. So we can ease into it. And we and it's not difficult to do because we're still very worldly in our flesh. And so if you want to interact with someone, as if the lord jesus himself isn't all of your pleasure and all of your purpose and life and that anything else that you do is subsidiary to that purpose and anything else that you enjoy is subsidiary.

Participatory in, in his part, it's very easy. To dial it back. And not be. All about christ in in, even the mundane things of life. And yet, if you if you dial it back and he's not everything. When are

you going to turn it on? When are you going to suddenly be deadly serious and heavenly joyful?

About everything that you do. Because it's going to be inconsistent. Sure you may make that connection, they may feel familiar with you but now when you want to come and say I know the God who made me and he didn't just make me but he saved me and he's the God who made you and he offers you to know him and his salvation, he offers you to have him as all of your joy.

And yet. You've spent the vast majority of your time, joking around speaking lightly of things. Not interacting over everything that you do in the context of the knowledge of God and Christ, who is your creator and your redeemer. And you can't do it. There's really no way back. Many of us with unbelieving family, one of the places that this happens, most of all.

Or one of the places I've seen it. Most, let's put it that way. Is with. Uh, children who have grown up and departed, from the faith. And rather than interacting with them, sort of the way you interact with the next communicated person, because they were covenant children. And in fact, the church.

In a, in a, a healthier season would actually X. Communicate, those who do not profess faith. And who live? According to that profession? But instead of having our interaction with them, as one, of seriousness over the peril of their soul and delight in the Lord myself. That I wish you would have my son, my daughter.

We try to dial it back, as are offended, by all that spiritual stuff. It makes things awkward quickly. They feel judged. And yet, the Lord is real. And eternity Israel and salvation, Israel.

How do you get back? If you start off with something else, it's folly to slow play Christianity. Because if your Christianity can be slow played, then it's not what the Bible says it is. And it's not what you hope to be able to convince them later that it actually is.

Because that's not the Christ that we have. The Christ that we have is the Christ. Who is he made? All things? They are from him. He upholds, all things they are through him. And he is the end of all things. They are to him.

Churches do this. Sat through a dreadful presentation recently about how to revitalize your church by having carnivals. We was, you know, don't change your worship, don't change your gospel. Just let everybody know that you're the carnival church and eventually they'll come to the nice and fun people.

When they remember that, hey, they were nice and they were fun.

But carnival is not what the church has to offer. Imagine. I've got a bouncy castle and free blood pressure screenings for you. And then they come later and they find you saying, I have the living God who gave himself for sinful creatures, who deserved his wrath. And you just want to ask well.

If that's actually true. Why didn't you lead with that?

And yet we do that not only to the ministry of the church, but even to the worship of God in the church. Slow playing Christ before the face of Christ. In hopes that unbelievers will find it attractive. Do you not want them to find him attractive?

Now this is a perfection that is aimed at, but not expected. What does that mean? Well, Christ doesn't change, but we do and praise god. We change even by the power of christ, it means repentance is necessary. One of the reasons why we have husbands and fathers who cannot seriously lead their family in a life that is hemmed in at the beginning and end of every day with some form of worship and devotion to god.

Gratitude for keeping us through the night and committing the day to him. Gratitude for helping us through the day and committing the night to him. One of the reasons we can't do that is because that's not how dad lives in between the morning and the evening. Christ does not everything to him.

And in his work christ is not everything to him as he interacts with his family. They do not know that we are not just having family time with dad but we are having family time with our heavenly father, who has joined us to his son and adopted us all as his children, and this is dad's life, and this is dad's heart.

And he doesn't turn it on when it's family worship time and then it's off for the rest of the day and turn it back on again. No, you always lives before them. In that way.

None of us do that. Every one of you husbands and fathers who are taking this word seriously just now Sort of smudge, your heart. Struck your heart. Pounded, you As it does me. Because living with a christ who doesn't change as Imperfect people. Is a life that is full of repenting.

And this should be something that they see in us too. Because if we cannot live before, them always as one, who is as we ought to be Then they ought to see us continually repenting. Continually saying, You know, we've not been finding our pleasure in him. I'm sorry. Forgive me.

He forgives me. My hope is in him for me. My hope is in him for us. Let's do it again. And we rejoice over the full forgiveness of the lord, jesus christ. And that jesus was actually always on for his heavenly father entirely devoted to him, loving him. As all of his, uh, with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, as all of his joy.

That the one for whom it would be most painful to be forsaken by god was the one who was forsaken for us. We rejoice that it is his devotion to god, that has counted for those who believe in him, you say no one can ever live. Like that, you're wrong.

There's only one who could ever live like that. And it is, the lord jesus christ. He's the only one whoever has and it's counted for you with you believe in him, but not only that, You are changed to be more and more like him when you believe in him.

Until the christian life is full of these repentings. And when we repent we believe and when we lay, hold of the fact that we have been forgiven so much. What does the one who is forgiven much do He loves much. Some of you know what i'm talking about. I would that all of you would know what i am talking about.

That when you have that moment of repentance before god, whether individually as a person or especially, for those of you who are heads in marriages and heads of households, That when you have that moment of repentance and you look back on what you have done and you say this is not how i should have been.

I have sinned against god, i've sinned against you, my family and then you start to tell them of the righteousness and sacrifice of christ and you start to realize for yourself of the

righteousness and sacrifice of christ and you lead them in prayer together. And you hold, they hold of that.

And how marvelous and glorious it is. To know that as much as you have imperiled your own soul and as much as you have imperiled, your family's soul up until this point god is given you repentance in jesus christ. God is atoned for all of your sin and taken away all your guilt.

And you almost can't believe. The greatness of the goodness. Of a god who ought to have been everything for us and we had we had despised that. We had treated that lightly and now he has come and he has washed all of that away. And counted us as righteous as if we had done it perfectly, every moment in every part of our life.

But you've realized with that joy. How much he has loved you and how much that love has done for you. We love him because he first loved us and he has loved us unto the point of giving christ for us and he who is forgiven much loves much. And you say, i have much to be forgiven of And i tell you, On the word of god.

You may be forgiven of all of it in jesus christ. The more you have been forgiven, the more you may love. And what does that love? Do it. It produces obedience and produces repentance. But to repentance is imperfect. You come along, and you realize again. My heart has been cold towards him.

I've been forgetful of him. I've been living with my wife. I've been living with my children as if this is all there is. I haven't been thoughtful of god. And what can you do at that moment? What must you do at that? Moment you're a pent again. When you've learned again the god it's it's the cycle of repenting and believing and in believing, you're forgiven much, you love much again.

And maybe you have been stuck. You've been stuck in the Needing to repent part of that cycle. And has been a long time. Since. You stopped everything. And said we're going to walk again with god now, And it's been a long time. Since you rejoiced over. The forgiveness of sinners.

And the sacrifice of christ and the righteousness of those sinners before god in the righteousness of christ. That has been a long time. Since that rejoic. Joy produced new love. But here you are. He spared you all this time. And he brought you to hear about it. And the more he works in you, the more you'll be able to say You know.

From the first day. Until now. I've always lived among you. Repentant. Trusting. Loving. Living. His lord over every moment of life. That was the first part of the consistency. Not just the always there. Literally all the time. In the text. But also that from the first day language, which is also comprehensive It's very interesting.

He says in what manner, i always lived among you. He uses the the present of that word, that The different tense of the verb. Is the way we say begotten, it refers to how he existed among them. Now he's going to tell them next week i kept back. Nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed, it to you and taught you publicly from house to house.

And that is going to need to need at least one sermon. Uh, for what he talks about for, what he says about this word ministry that he has. But he doesn't remind them. First of the word, he reminds them of his living. Says, you know from the first day that i came to asia and what manner i always and he could well have said preached and taught, Or proclaimed to you and taught you like he's going to talk about the proclaiming and the teaching in a couple of verses, isn't he?

But the first thing that he says is in what manner, i always lived among you. Because our consistency needs to show, not only that, jesus is lord over every moment. But the jesus is lord of every part over every part of life. That he is an actual lord in.

In practice. That the lord jesus and his salvation are real. Not imaginary. They are not merely theoretical their applicational. Christ lordship is something that It must show up in how we live. Not just how we speak. Or how we think. How we feel? I went through various phases and what the Lord has done for me in my life.

There was one which is kind of a youthy face. A. You know, flimsy. Even jellyfish. Face. And this is always looking for. An emotional experience of the lord. And there are those great emotional experiences. But a betrayed, the fact that i was not grasping how real he is, it's not wrong to have emotions about god.

But if you're looking for the highs, Then maybe it's because you're not actually experiencing life with him in the lows and in the in between as if he actually is And so it's in moments where you think as if he exists and you think as if you may be forgiven and when you think, as if you may have a divine purpose for your life, and in those moments, You think and feel as if the lord is and as if the lord saves, but the lord is, and the Lord does save

Well. Was on the other side of the horse. Fell off the other side of the horse at one time. Love to get together with people and Argue maybe. A fairly strong word but discuss theology. The calculus. Of doctrine. Of who god is of how salvation works. Of of all of the applications of his his good law and what that should look like.

And yet it wasn't something that i loved when i was alone. To, to be living out in the way that i studied, or the way that i worked. The way that i played. We can use that language how i found recreation. No, it's comprehensive. It's not just something we preach and teach and the one side or here on the other.

It's something that forms the life. So lord over every moment to lord over every part of life. There's a comprehensiveness not just mind life and emotional life, but living life. Not just what happens with your head and what happens with your heart? Yes, your heart should say. Jesus is lord and your head should say.

Jesus is lord, but your hands should also say jesus is lord. And that was actually the first thing. That the apostle called their attention to. In the passage.

And how does that happen? Well, it happens by conviction. He says, you know, from the first day that i came to asia and what manner, i always lived among you and so he reminds them of the necessity of consistency and time and he reminds him of the necessity of consistency between Of the whole person.

Uh, my mind and and body body and soul. But also that the particular manner in which we live, would be consistent with the particular doctrine that we preached. And so, in the first half of verse 19, He says that he's convinced of the lordship of christ because the way that he lived says that jesus is a lord worth slaving for And then the second half of verse 19.

He demonstrated that he was convinced of the the delightful lordship of christ, not just the authoritative worthy. Uh, Uh, lordship of christ. But now the the Pleasant worthwhile. Value of the lord jesus christ because he's not just a word lord worth slaving forth. First half of the verse, here's a word lord.

Sorry he's a lord worth suffering for. Second half of the verse. Excuse me. Serving and it's the word for slave. Here, you know that sometimes you see that serving word, it's the it's the deacon word. This isn't the deacon word, this is the slave. So, you know what? I was always like First day i set foot in asia.

Anybody who ran into me was like, this guy is someone slave. Is never seeking his own interests. He's always on mission, he's always on an errand. Slaving for the lord with all humility. See, this is what slaves are like. When you interact with someone, Who thinks that he is someone.

What he is communicating to you. And you might miss perceive this, this doesn't necessarily if you see it incorrectly, it doesn't necessarily mean that he is wrong. But there's a great difference, isn't there between someone who wants to appear like a great slave? And someone who in the way that he slaves, you think he must have a great master.

And this is how Paul was. Is the mind of the bridegroom. Not the brighter, the bridegroom's friend. Who knows the wedding isn't about him. And he must decrease and the, the groom must increase. And this is how paul was with the Ephesian elders, and this is how he's now.

He's now trying to convince and and reminding that the ephesian elders that they must be among the flock. Because later on he's going to talk about not just savage wolves who come in among them. But those who rise up from within the effusion elders and draw people after themselves.

And why themselves is because they don't know themselves to be slaves of the great lord, the great master, the worthy, jesus christ. He says, this is what i was, it was a problem for Poland his ministry. You remember his letters to Corinth? He wasn't like the super apostles. He was the humble unimpressive guy.

Whose letters seemed so great, but he doesn't seem so great. But it was because his god is great. Has redeemer is great, his master is great. Paul says, conduct yourself with an attitude. Where everybody knows that you're a slave. You know, where i previously lived to here, there was a servant class.

On the island. And they were the sweetest christians. And you didn't necessarily know, by nationality. Although sometimes you did Or there was a general. Disparity between, you know, the ethnicities who were in the You know, the upper middle class and those who are in the servant class. But you really knew by how they carried themselves.

They're just people who they were servants. They were slaves. That was their mindset. There were not about themselves, they were always attending to someone else even when they were off duty even though they weren't on the clock. They come to church. They spent their whole week slaving for someone else.

Well, serving in the home. It wasn't, you know, What we usually mean? But they weren't living for themselves. When they come to church, and they are the ones. Who just immediately. They knew what it was to have a master day by day. And so when they were in the congregation They rejoiced.

To have a master, not the rest of the congregation so much as the one whose church it is the lord jesus christ.

Well, the leadership of the church and the leadership of a family should be like that. With all humility with all lowliness of mind. There is nothing. That was too low. For Paul to do. There was no opinion of him. That he worried someone out of him. That was too low.

In fact, when he defends himself in his letters to Corinth, he says, I write like somebody who has lost my mind. But he was the slave of Christ and his words. We're in service of Christ and in service of those to whom he preached in service of those to whom he wrote. And when he upheld his authority, he did not uphold his authority, the way that the lords of the gentiles do, and neither should elders and ministers in the church and neither should fathers and husbands in the home.

A wife, a child. Should know that Dad is willing to get down and do anything for everyone else. That Dad maintains his headship in the marriage and his authority over the children. Because he knows that that is given to his wife, that there's given to his children for their good.

And he is not trying. To be their hero. Or to use a more appropriate and common word. Now, scarily in, our culture is not trying to be their idol. Because they have a hero and they have a god. And that's the one who put him where he is. And the way he interacts the gentleness of manner, the compassion in difficulty, the willingness to get less sleep so she can have more sleep.

To bear the brunt of everything. That all of those things showed that here is one who is an authority, but he has the manner of a slave. All lowliness. Of mind. Why? Because we have a Lord worth slaving for I'd rather be the footman of Jesus. Then I took over a kingdom of my own.

Not just the Lord, we're sleeping for, but a Lord were suffering for serving the Lord with all humility. With many tears and trials, which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews, you know, the If you believe that Christ is real and that eternal souls are real, and that there's heaven and hell at stake.

Then ministry is full. Of tears and trials. Even. Without respect to what those outside the church, do. And there are those who are outside the church. He refers to the Jews here. We've already made reference to the savage wolves. In verse 29. But they're also those in the church.

Who rise up speaking, perverse things, and draw away disciples after themselves. And you think about Paul, you think, especially in this regard you think especially of Alexander the coppersmith in second Timothy Who is very clever and polished speaker and he spoke against the doctrine that Paul spoke and the whole congregation.

Abandoned Paul. Well, when Alexander opposed him Uh, the first none stood with him, but everyone left him. And you remember when he's giving the list of his ministry trials. You know how many times he's been given the 39 lashes? You know, because the 40th supposedly, Mike kill him. How many times you've been beaten with the rods?

Etc. And we know he was stoned and left for dead and he refers to two shipwrecks and Being. A drift night and day at sea and there was no coast guard. That's pretty bad. Even if there is a Coast Guard. But he says above all those things. This is anxiety over the churches.

If we do ministry. In the congregation, the way we're going to be hearing. In the next, 20 verses or so. The way we are to do ministry in the congregation counting Christ as real and redemption as real and the Christian life as real There's going to be a lot of grief.

Is going to be those who go away after poor theology and despise the lord Jesus and harm themselves. If you do ministry in your home, The lord Jesus. Working in different children. At different rates. There's going to be a lot of grief. Than if, you know yourself to be Inconsistent.

This is going to be a lot of grief. And yet Jesus is worth that grief. Do not. Do not dial back. The way you minister to your wife, the way you minister to your children, Because it will be painful if we do this, he has told you, it will be painful.

The lord Jesus was a suffering, savior. Paul was a suffering, apostle. And even in our Uh, in our reading in God's coordinating it for us. And second Timothy 1, he was calling Timothy to be a suffering, elder Christians are suffering people, And the greatest part of our suffering is our suffering against sin.

That's what he's talking about. In the opening verses of Hebrews chapter 12, it says he says, don't give up you haven't yet resisted in to the point of shutting blood in your fight against sin. The father is willing that you had suffer so that you would be holy so that you would have him and you also be willing to suffer that you may have that holiness without which we will not see the lord.

Don't you see how wonderful is the suffering that isn't wasted? Because for a believer, it is being used to bring him into everlasting joy. And so Jesus, for the joy set before him was willing to suffer and Paul for the joy of having Jesus, and of being used by Jesus, who was willing to suffer and now he reminds the Ephesian elders, he doesn't say all right, guys, if you just do it, right, everyone will like you things will go.

Well, people will grow, they'll all trust in Christ, they'll all be smoothly sanctified more and more unto glory. No, he says. You've seen how painful the ministry is. Do it with all your heart. The one whom we serve. Is worth it and what he is doing. Purpose people. There's a worth it.

See, Christianity isn't a religion that says, You can. Get through this world with less suffering. To lie. So religion that says there's no amount of suffering in this world, that won't be worth it. Because of how worthy he is. And you can have him even in the midst. Of your suffering.

This is. Incidentally, the same thing Peter says, We're going to take the time. I've given it to you in a number of devotionals and we'll probably Come back to it before we finish. Um, Acts chapter 20. But uh, I won't take the time to open it up too much.

1st Peter chapter 5. The elders who are among you. I exhort. By who am a fellow elder? All humility. And a witness of the sufferings of Christ. And also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Shepherd, the flock of God, which is among you serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly Not being lords over those entrusted to you.

But being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise you youngsters and they said that way. Because it's Contrast to elders here it doesn't. Just mean those have less years Likewise you younger submit yourselves to your elders?

Yes. All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility for God. Resists, the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. That he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon him for he cares for you.

Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour resist him steadfast in the same faith knowing that the same sufferings

Our experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the god of all grace. Who called us to his eternal glory by christ jesus.

After you have suffered a while. Perfect, establish strengthen and settle you. To him, be the glory and the dominion. Forever and ever. Is he the god of all glory and the god of all grace? Then the christians should consistently live as someone who really believes. That's true. And if the christian should live that way, Shouldn't their shepherds?

In the congregation. As examples to the flock. Shouldn't the husband. And shouldn't the father. Do we have such a lord as paul? And the Ephesian elders and Timothy and peter did. Than with those who know us best in the church. And in our homes. Know that we had such a lord, From the way that we lift.

One of the ways they will know. Is when we hear of who he is, and we remember And we don't just shrug it off. But we repent. Because we know we have all righteousness counted for us and him. And we know that we have all righteousness guaranteed to us to be conformed, to in him.

And we lay hold of him so that we can make a new start again. The hundreds time, the thousandth time there is more than enough righteousness in jesus, counted for us, atonement in jesus, given for us, life and goodness in jesus to conform us to himself. There is more than enough for him in him.

That you may repent today and lay hold of that and rejoicing. That you may have him. You who have forgiven been forgiven much may love much. And may set out in that love. To live. For him. Oh, that god would give us. Such example. In our churches. And in our homes.

Because we know that he has given us such a redeemer. Who sits on the throne of heaven. Let's pray.

Our father in heaven. We offer you weakness. Weakness in preaching weakness and hearing. And certainly, That weakness with your word has exposed. But we come to you. Not by what we are able to offer. You even The brokenness of our hearts and our contrition comes. By your grace, by your spirit, using your word.

We come to you, because you have offered yourself to us in christ. And we ask that the reality of his lordship, the reality of his worth the reality of his value. Would be put on display by the repentance that you grant us. And the rejoicing. Over the forgiveness and righteousness that we have in him.

And then the life of love. Humility. Willingness to suffer. That you give us. Lord. Give us to taste and see and know. The value of jesus christ. So that it won't just be. An attempt to look like we. Realized we should. But a genuine response to knowing that he is.

What he says. Help us by your spirit. We ask. In jesus name. Amen.