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Acts 21, verses 15 through 30. These are god's words. And after those days, we packed and went up to jerusalem. Also some of the disciples from caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain nation of cyprus. And early disciple. With whom we were to launch. And when we come to jerusalem, The brethren received us, gladly And on the following day, Paul went in with us to james and all the elders were present.

When he had greeted them. He told in detail. Those things which god had done. Among the gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the lord. And they said to him, You see brother? How many myriads of jews. There are, who have believed. And they are all zealous for the long.

But they have been informed about you. That you teach all the jews who are among the gentiles to forsake moses. Saying that they ought not to circumcise their children. Nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet. For, they will hear that. You have come.

Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them. And pay their expenses. So that they may shave their heads. And that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing. But that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

But concerning the gentiles, who believe we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing. Except that they should keep themselves from things offer to idols. From blood. From things strangled. And from sexual immorality. Then paul took the men. And the next day having been purified with them.

Entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at, which time an offering should be made for each one of them. Now, when the seven days, we're almost ended. The jews from asia seeing him in the temple stirred up, the whole crowd and laid hands on him crying out, men of Israel, help.

This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law and this place. And furthermore, he also brought greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. For the head previously, seen triphamus, the ephesian with him in the city. And they suppose the poll had brought into the temple.

And all the city was disturbed and the people ran together. Seized paul and dragged him out of the temple. And immediately. The doors were shut. Amen. The sends this reading of gods inspired and inherent word. We rejoice to worship him by hearing it preached, as we know that he is pleased to add his blessing to do it.

Please be seated.

You know, we christians don't always do one another good. If only it were that simple.

I was part of. Something called a youth group and they're not all the same, and I know mine was one of the most more egregious examples. Although in a believing church that preached the gospel, but the assumption was that if you collect a bunch of people who profess the name of Christ together, Uh, that it will automatically be for their spiritual benefit.

And yet, we who live in families and households in which we rejoice to profess the name of Christ together, and yet, we are all still sinners. We know that we do not always do each other's spiritual good in the home in our family. And the same as we will see.

Eventually in this Passage is true of our church family. And so we are much encouraged. Where the scripture tells us of all the good that God is pleased to do through believers even unto one another. And we're much encouraged by the examples that he gives in scripture. Of what this sometimes look like.

Uh, looks like and praise God. We have a couple such examples in the opening portion of our text. Where God's grace through the fellowship of the saints is expressed in mutual service. And where God's grace through the fellowship of the saints is expressed in praise that they are able to bring to God, on account of what he has done through and two, and four, the one or through and two.

And for the other God's grace, through the fellowship of praise. But we're also much encouraged as we observe the providence of God in the last portion of the passage showing us God's grace restraining. The negative effects of fellowship. Poorly exercised poorly executed. And how merciful it is of God to do this for us.

Lest we who do tend to focus more, we do pay too much attention to ourselves and not enough attention to God. We could out of fear. Of. Of doing one another spiritual harm or bringing one another down together. We might come together, not with pleasure, not with hope. Uh, not with eagerness.

To edify to build one another up into Christ. But we might come to Katherine instead. With this dreadful. Halting shrinking anxiety. Over, whether we are harming one. Another. Or even worse, not come together at all. But what my what good it does to encourage us. When we see that God who is ruling and over ruling, all things for the good whom he has been determined to adopt as his children in Christ and to join together as one body in order to be one bride to Christ will overrule.

Even that in which we With, in which we treat or do one another? Disservice. In walking with the Lord even Uh, even by our fellowship, he will overrule that. And so we are liberated not to say. Uh, well then I guess it doesn't really matter. Uh, whether or not we edify each other certainly, we cannot think that way coming away from the Bible, that's the way the flesh responds to the Bible.

But we've been learning. In Ephesians, 7, not efficient and Romans. There aren't seven chapters infusion. And in Roman seven, in the midweek meetings to distinguish between Those responses to the word that come from the remaining sin that come from the flesh and those responses to the word that come from the Spirit.

And that response that we hope will come by the Spirit's work growing. Our new nature in Christ. Jesus is and eagerness to edify and eagerness to have this fellowship with one another through, which God graciously works in one another's lives. And then a confidence and a hope that even when we We do this poorly, God is overruling it for the good of all who are his in Christ Jesus so that we will not suffer the discouragement of seeing how poorly we do.

Uh, but rather depend upon god and have renewed commitment and joy and and zeal for his own. Good institutions. Uh, we were, i was going to say at this part, like we heard yesterday. In the second half of of chapter 6 in gose, but we didn't get to the second half.

So, those of you Who have opportunity next month? Can see the institution of marriage and the certainty that whether or not and earthly husband is following well, the word of god by the spirit of god and union with the son of god to to shepherd, his wife. Well, unto her sanctification yet.

Her heavenly husband is doing perfectly through him. For. He can be counted upon to overrule all our failures, what other hope would there be. You know, their hope for marriage, no other hope for parenting and here. No other hope for christian fellowship. So those are the three things that we'll see, lord willing, lord, helping us in the next little while.

God's grace, through the fellowship of the saints, in their mutual service, god's grace, through the fellowship of the saints in their united. Praise and even god's grace to restrain and a negative effects. Of. Our fellowship. First then god's grace through the fellowship of the saints in mutual service. And this we can't get more than six words.

Into the passage to see. And after those days, we packed It was, this was a A slave and servant society. It was very common that if you had a fair amount of baggage, as As probably they had a fair amount of baggage. Although we know from what he writes to Timothy that paul was always for, or at least in one case for 10 to forget things.

An overcoat here and some books there. And And yet they had their things. There were a fairly large company picking up people along the way. Although they started with paul and luke and other companions already, Uh, And it was and they probably also had with them the gift to the same in jerusalem.

From okay, from Macedonia. And so, This, we packed is no small thing but they didn't use servants. Luke himself is identifying for us verse 15 that his hands were on the baggage. He didn't say, you know, i'm the that beloved to disciple who has a good reputation among the churches.

Somebody else really ought to be doing the packing. No, luke was elbow's deep in the packing. Along with everyone else. And he was serving and he was facilitating, but what was he serving in facilitating? The very thing that just a couple verses ago, he was crying and pleading would not happen in the first place.

That paul would go up. To jerusalem. But you see how they went from? Oh, no, our teacher. Our apostle might be taken for us for a little while. Uh, by being bound or he might be taken from us permanently by being killed and weeping, similar tears to those tears of the ephesian, elders on the shore of my leadus.

As they. As a webbed, especially for these words, that they would not see his face again, how they had gone from that, by paul's edification to them. So, we heard last week to say, the will of the lord be done because rather than saying, oh no, our teacher might be taken from us.

They were now saying with the one, with the one through whom god had taught them that Praise god, the name of the lord. Jesus may be honored in jerusalem. Praise god. The name of the lord. Jesus may be glorified in jerusalem. And you remember the paul said, i'm willing not only to be bound but also to die.

Don't break my heart with your weeping, join my heart with my willing. And they had done so. But you know, this fellowship that we have as saints, where where god working graciously in the one uses him to help the others. See a little bit more completely. What is going on in god's interaction with his people and think a little more completely theologically about what is going on?

This grace doesn't just produce sympathy and better theology. And unity of mind. It also produces action. For god has made us body and soul. And there ought to be a difference in what we do. And we have that already here. Don't we, after those days, we packed And went up to jerusalem and just as there had been some disciples from caesarea who had wept and pleaded along with Luke in his traveling companions.

If you can remember to last week's portion or look a few verses up in your copy of the word of god. Now some of the disciples from caesarea are going with them. In fact they have solved a logistical difficulty Because until they get to caesarea, they don't know how they're going to find room in jerusalem.

You remember the problem? When? Uh, when there was the census when jesus was, Um, was about to be born that. There was no room in and i know most, we all grew up hearing it no room in the in but it's actually probably the upper room. Um, It's the same word that's used of the place that they have last supper all of the guest rooms in the houses of of the people.

Would be taken. And where is paul with luke? And the original company that left all the way back in akea. And then asia. And then, And then now in jerusalem, and there have been picking up people along the way from tire and from caesarea, where all these people going to find a place to lodge during the feast jerusalem is going to be packed.

And yet the the disciples in Caesarea have among them, a man named nation who is apparently, a man of some significant earthly stature. Because although he's in caesarea, he's from cyprus and he has a house in jerusalem that is apparently large enough to lodge the whole company. But his stature in spiritual things.

Is greater than his stature in earthly things. Because he's referred to, as And early disciple. An early disciple. And there are probably, there are a couple of things, a couple of possibilities here. Might be an earlier disciple than paul. Paul took a while to become a disciple, didn't he?

Or, as you remember, When paul left on his first missionary journey, The first place he stopped was cypress. And he passed through the island. Evangelizing from the east side of the island to the west. And it's possible that this mason Was one of paul's first converts. As he preached on his first missionary journey.

Whichever way it is. He is a disciple now of longstanding and what a blessing to have those among us, whether Those who god has come and helped them, especially in the understanding of the word, the ability to see christ throughout the scripture and preach him correctly from the scripture, so that we would all come to a right understanding and unity of mind together.

Unity of doctrine together. Solid foundation not being blown about to and fro by every wind and wave of doctrine or on the other hand, perhaps like this nation, What a blessing to have those saints. Who have walked with the lord jesus a long time. Who can be like the older ladies in titus, too?

Who are telling the younger ladies who have to keep the house well, and obey their husbands and love their children and be devoted to good works and practice hospitality. It's not a small

calling to be a godly younger woman in the church. Even if you take the kids out of the equation, the husband out of the equation.

They're, they're still a lot to do in terms of practicing hospitality and attending to the needs of the saints, but the ones to whom god has assigned wifedom and mother, they're so much to do. And whom has the lord placed in the church to help them. Widows, who As god has taken off their plate.

One after another. Of these responsibilities that they had when they were younger. What do they do? They don't live in indulgence for themselves. No, say okay, i'm free to live now, how however, i want however, i want They are continuing with good works. Continuing full of prayer, like the women from first, Timothy 5 and they are able to tell those younger women goddess.

Faithful, I walked with him in that way for decades and look at how mercifully he carried me. I know, honey, you don't know how you could possibly do it or how he could possibly carry you to do it. I don't even know how he carried me to do it.

But he did and he still is and he will. Well, the same with godly older saints like this nation. What an important? Role those who are long-standing believers early disciples that we use the the phrase of the text god's grace, through their fellowship, and their maturity and their continuity, many of us know of especially in the age of the internet celebrity christian god have mercy on a culture that has such phrases.

Especially in this age, all of us, know of people who seemed to make great profession of faith and do much service, and then we're exposed Whether by scandalous sin, Or even as an unbeliever by apostatizing to from the faith, which itself is a scandal sin. And so this nation is is to them.

An example of maturity and an example of continuity, the grace of god is worth it. The grace of god works. And his great value to them is not so much that he is wealthy. But that he's humble. That he doesn't say, you know. I have this huge house in jerusalem.

But it's already promised out to Uh, some imminent pharisee in jerusalem or someone in the local government or some great Jew from another city. That. That is going to be in jerusalem. For the feast. No. For this. Probably. Uh, bald headed. Poor cited. Guy who? Definitely has. Those who are his enemies.

Is barely popular among the saints in the churches. Let alone popular more. Generally said, no, he and his company. Uh he is god's servant. Maybe even god's servant through whom i was converted. I would be honored. To have this entire company. Of traveling believers, come and lodge in my house for the feast.

I don't have a better group of people. Than the believers in the lord jesus christ. To lodge with me. You know, we thank god when he gives those whom he has saved the things of this world with which to serve him, but the greater gift is the humility. To serve him and his church, with those things that god has given them.

And so he see this this grace of god, in the mutual service of the believers in the fellowship of the saints and it continues when they arise. And wood that this would have. Would have stuck with them even more, but what a blessing in verse 17, when we had come to jerusalem, the brethren received this gladly, Well, didn't those brethren get the message from James and the other elders?

About how many people were nervous about Paul, and we're even hostile toward Paul that just has arrived. Would mean, we're going to have to have a congregational meeting to see what to do about. No. Uh, this is one of the great ways that we can help one another. And in a society, That is.

Departing from Christ, more and more with the visible church, including many in it. Who go along with the society and drift and everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ, Jesus will suffer persecution. When Paul was telling Timothy that and second Timothy he wasn't talking about persecution from the world.

He was talking about persecution from the the soft progressive world, accommodating parts of the church. Those whose doctrine was flexible, and who didn't care for holiness? And the love of God and obedience to his commandments. Those were the ones that Paul was telling Timothy. Uh if you desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus not just to name the name of Christ Jesus.

Put to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, you'll suffer persecution. Well, we're coming into a season. My dear. Beloved brothers and sisters. And especially my younger. Beloved brothers and sisters. If the Lord does not and we pray that he does and we labor towards that. But if he does not Bring reformation and revival in the churches.

You will soon be unpopular with people who used to be your friends who used to be your Christian acquaintances. Who can't understand why you're such a stickler for this truth or for that morality. That is from the Bible. And it will be a great ministry to you. When those who are sticking to Christ and who are sticking to the word of God, do as the brethren in verse 17, Here is Paul in his company.

And they may be a point of contention. But we're going to receive them gladly anyway. We'll take the shame with them. Will receive them gladly. Paul does this also in verse 19 on the next day. And he and Luke and their company. They go in and apparently it's a session meeting because not only James is there but all the elders are present.

When the first thing Paul does, in verse 19 says he had greeted them. So easy to pass over in our English translations but the word means to take great pleasure in or to anticipate with great pleasure. And, You know, it's like Uh, you know, we might say Please to see you, please to meet you, most languages have something like that.

Mutual gusto Uh, but In, in this case he is expressing genuine Christ. Loving pleasure. In seeing them. So both in verse 17 and in verse 19, you have that dynamic, when you come from Psalm 16 verse 2, Lord, I have no good apart from you. You are all my good to Psalm 16 verse 3.

The godly ones in the land, they are my delight. Why? Because there is ones, he is all my good. And so the ones who are is, are my delight and my pleasure, this is an important part of Christian fellowship. That we anticipate with great pleasure and receive and see with great pleasure one another.

And so you have all of these aspects The the edification of one, another that produces action that we see in polls affect upon the Luke and the disciples from Caesarea. And then they follow up with action and they go with him. They're like Thomas Uh, who Because of, you know, one Context.

You know, he's Received the nickname doubting Thomas but you remember. He was also the one who when When Lazarus was dying and dead actually in Jerusalem. And Jesus said, Let's

go see him and the others were like, don't you know, the Jews are trying to kill you and Jesus is determined to go.

What does Thomas say? He says, let's go die with him. Let's go die with him. And so you have You have that and you have nascent and you have the brethren in Jerusalem and their pleasure to receive Paul and you have Paul's expression of pleasure at seeing James and all the elders what a marvelous Uh, what a marvelous effect of grace in all of these different ways.

God works through the fellowship of the saints in their service to one another. And so our fellowship too. Your fellowship too should seek to build up in Christ. Your fellowship too should seek to produce action service things that you do with your hands and your feet that the that has as we say not just an idea but something that has legs that results in doing things that express.

What the Lord has done in us, that's been And even again this morning in this habit school, that's been one of the main points, hasn't it? Been as we've been studying? What the what the office of the diaconate is for and what the service of the parts of the body to one another led by and helped by the diaconate is for what actions?

Is your fellowship producing, what transmission of the faith and strengthening of it from one to another? Um, Yeah, do you rejoice? To think of your church. Not just as the church with all of the young families. That's that's the thing in American Christianity. All our church is full of young families and you'll even hear Saints.

From from churches that do need help for many reasons. But why should it be? Oh, our churches full of elderly. Shouldn't it be our churches full of long-standing disciples in the Lord? Uh, some of you know, because we have told you, if you are not elderly enough to have been told just think of yourself as young.

But we prayed My family, my wife and I especially prayed for years. That God would bring into our congregation. Elderly saints of long standing devoted faith. That. That. Christ devotedness over against worldliness. Uh, of of decades of time. Uh, would be An effect that they bring what transmission and strengthening of the faith.

And how are we, how are we seeking to reinforce that in one another? How are we expressing delight and one another? For the Lord's sick. And sometimes you have to coach yourself in this, uh, you know often Um, In other contexts, you know, I'll tell people who have have gone into a season of not to lighting.

One another, you know, that not delighting in one, another parents and their children or children, and their parents or husband and his wife. Uh you may have to be very like intentional, like I'm about to see them for the first time today. I'm going to smile. I'm going to soften my facial features under to express.

Uh, gladness at seeing them and ask. After their well-being or express, praise to God for them or whatever. And you do it mechanically intentionally like someone learning his footwork for the first time in a sport or his finger work for the first time playing an instrument. Taking an expressing delight in one.

Another is part of the Christian fellowship that God has given us. Let us do it together. So that's God's grace through the fellowship of the saints and their mutual service to one another. Then there's God's grace through the fellowship of the same in their united, preys of him. And this is the, the next thing that Paul does Um, You know, is that someone else's session meeting and he turns it into a long session meeting.

Which isn't? Um, ordinarily polite thing to do. Some of, you know, and have been praying with me that The general senate would take its time with things. And one of the things that we want, Whether it's a broad court, like a general senate, or a A more regional court like a Presbytery or a local court, like a session.

This is the word session. Just comes from the word for sitting. It means when the ordained elders of a particular congregation are sitting together as a body that has been appointed for the shepherding and oversight of the church. It just means the sitting of elders. That's a session of Of elders.

And here James and all the elders are there together and they're, they're having their meeting and Paul and Luke and company go in. And he when he had greeted them, he told in detail. Those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. Well, God has done a lot of things among the Gentiles through Paul's ministry.

And he tells them in detail. Which means this just became a very long session meeting. But you could tell even by the way that Paul speaks these quoted here in the summary, those things, which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And so, his report is And then God did this and then God did that.

And then God helping me to say this, God was helping them to hear it this way and they responded that way. And then God and his providence brought us enemies who attacked us and drove us out of the city. And and and so forth, but it was all about what God had done.

So that by the time he's done. How else could you respond? God had done all this and the apostle Paul was talking about God, having done all this. And when he finally finishes, When they heard it. The glorified, the Lord. And so, Uh, God's grace through the fellowship of united.

Praise. Yeah, how often believers gather together? And the things that they are quickest to tell one another are the things that were difficult this week and the the things that they're worried might be happening at work, or in the society, or in the churches. And yet, God has given us a fellowship that is, especially one.

That should aim at united praise. There's place. For those things. But they shouldn't be the great thing. Of Christian fellowship. This is something that many of, you know, Even the servant who preaches now. Has had to work on and grow in. Trained himself. Not just to say, nishkuryasua, we will.

Thank Jesus. But to feel, Thankfulness to Jesus and hope that it will become corporate that it will infect. And we infecting one, another as it is with the praise of the Lord. May it be more viral and long-lasting than covet. Which now in hindsight. Really. Was not what many were worried.

It would be. Shouldn't our infecting one another. With the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Shouldn't we seek? Uh, to do that with one another as they do here. And we want, The whole earth to be full of the praise of God. The praise of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want the whole earth to be full of the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, let me ask you, dear Christian. Who else? But the saints. Is going to praise God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Humanly speaking, you're it. Shall we not take this privilege, especially in our fellowship?

You know, it's harder. We're really good at it, so many of us don't find it too much of an obstacle. But it's harder to have a grumbling spirit with others. Than it is by yourself. You can

nurse that discouragement and that bitterness and that anxiety all by yourself and then you come together with other believers and especially if we're well instructed.

And especially if we're well instructed and we care about one another. We suddenly feel the responsibility to give praise to christ and stir one another up to praise to christ. Shall not our fellowship aim, not only at service to one another, but the worship, the praise of god and his goodness.

So that somebody who knew us before, they came a christian isn't shocked to open. Galatians 5 and read the fruit of the spirit is love joy. Joy. The fruit of it. Joy. Because you have come to know, God, you have come to know him in his sovereign providence. You have come to know him in the plan of his redemption and his starting to execute that plan and saving you as part of that plan and using you who have been, who have been saved by his grace created new now in christ jesus to walk in, good works that he is prepared for you and excited to tell of the good things that the lord has done.

Through your ministry. Through your service. Maybe not ordained, servant like paul but i saved servant. Like, every believer. Must be. What do we wish to most do together? When we are gathered together. I suggest to you. It should follow the three, great commandments. You know, them as too. But jesus said, a new commandment.

I give you and he gave it in the form of the two. Shall we not most wish together? To love our god with all our hearts. So, mind and strength. Acknowledge and express our gratitude and praise. Love the brethren is christ. Loved us. Because we do not yet get to physically embrace the lord jesus christ.

Which we will get to do. We will get to physically embrace. The lord jesus christ. But after the last supper, Put them on, notice that. He was going and they couldn't follow, but they could love one another. As he had loved them. And so all of that, reciprocal, love and john 13.

To be shown to the body. And then loving our neighbor and even as ourselves and loving, even our enemy should not those three things especially Govern. Our aim and our practice in what we wish to do together. So that god's grace would be seen and exercise through the fellowship of the saints in united.

Praise as we have heard in the second place and also that god's grace Would be seen and expressed through the fellowship of the saints in their mutual service to one another. As we saw in the first place, But now, in the third place, God's grace to restrain any negative effects.

Of our fellowship. And here the apostles are not, the apostles, james is the brother of jesus. He's counted as among the apostles, he was leader in the church in jerusalem even though he's not officially one of the 12. Uh, but he who appears to be the moderator of the session.

Currently in the jerusalem church and all the elders with him. They said to him. You see brother? How many myriads of jews. There are, who have believed. What joy? Must have filled the apostle, Paul's heart. Almost certainly with tears. You remember the opening? Three verses. Or more of the opening 9, verse 8 verses.

Was what we have. In our written outline of Romans chapter 9. I tell the truth in christ, i am not lying, my conscience. Also bearing me witness in the holy spirit that i have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For i could wish that i myself were a cursed from christ.

That means i could wish that i myself would go to hell. For the sake of my brethren, my countrymen, according to the flesh who are israelites to whom pertain the adoption the glory,

the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of god and the promises of whom are the fathers and from whom according to the flesh christ came and he he's Um, Literally, Weeping over how few Jews have believed.

And then he defends the word of god and is not that the word of god has taken to effect verse 6. For, they are not all israel, who are of israel. But it is not the children of the flesh. That are the children of god verse 8, but the children of the promise, And again.

Uh, A couple chapters later. A little further into the argument of the same portion. In Romans i say then has god cast away. His people chapter 11 verse 1. Certainly not for. I also am in israelite. Of the seed of abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. God is not cast away his people, whom he foreign you.

And you hear paul loving the the jews, but wishing that, more of them would have turned out to be a lacked. Would be children, not only of the flesh, but also of the promise and still holding out, hope for something that would happen in his ministry. And, and if you don't catch that in in Romans chapter 11, you're in a really mess up.

How you read Romans chapter 11? Because a lot of people read Romans 11 and they're like, well, there's going to be this in gathering of jews in the last days. We'll never mind that the new testament already called the time that the New Testament was written the last days.

But now, in Uh, Romans 11 13, for i speak to you Gentiles and as much as i am, an apostle to the gentiles, i magnify my ministry, if by any means, i may provoke to jealousy. Those who are my flesh talking about the israelites, the jews and save some of them.

And then he goes on to describe how this dynamic in in god's work. Among both those who are elect from among the greeks. And those who are elect from among the Jews. And then he says, Uh, verse 25. For i do not desire brethren. That you should be ignorant of this ministry.

Lest you should be wising your own opinion that a partial blindness blindness and part has happened to israel until the fullness of the gentiles come in. And so, there's a few Jews at first, but there are many Gentiles. And thus, And that's the, the better translation. Of of the word, that's translated.

So there. For your Greek persons who toss in this manner in this way. All israel will be saved, not and then later. But by the end gathering of the two, The israel who are from among the Jews and the israel who are from among the nations, All that to say.

That what you see here in verse 20, when they say you see brother, how many myriads of jesus there are who have believed is something that paul has agonized over longed for, in fact, part of his goal as he evangelized Gentiles, Was that every gentile. He evangelized have regent mostly gentile church.

That was planted would be one more thing that god might use to provoke to convert some Jews. And he comes. And he's told them in detail. The great things, the things that's god has done among the gentiles through his ministry verse 19. And they said to him, you see brother how many myriads and because you know, speak Latin.

That doesn't mean anything to you. A myriad is 10. Thousand. Remember a moment ago? In. The book of in his letter to the Romans. Paul paul was using himself, the jews aren't abandoned because at least one got saved. And now he's in jerusalem and what are James? And the elders saying?

See how many tens of thousands believe. This was near and dear to Paul's heart. And then a statement. That should have been said, with embarrassment. And we don't know from the text just doesn't give us. And the indication from how they say it. But we certainly see. How they respond to it.

And they are all zealous for the law. But what part of the law are they emphasizing in the rest of the passage. Ritual purification. Dividing wall in the temple. Continuing to offering blood sacrifices.

You see verse 21. And verse 22. Is a missed opportunity. This is something that always threatens. Church sessions or church presbyteries or general senates. And that is they're always those who are going to be hostile. To saying the right thing and doing the right thing. And there's always the danger.

Of worrying about the murmurs, and the complainers and the grumblers. And making your decision in fear. That's the negative response. Of saying the right thing or doing the right thing. And that's what happens here. We already know from verse 17, don't we that there are there are disciples in Jerusalem who are glad to see him.

But they say they have been informed about you. That you teach all the Jews who are among the gentiles to forsake Moses. They have the they have in front of them. The apostle who wrote Galatians. And then that's circumcision is nothing. They have in front of them, the apostle who wrote it by whom the Holy Spirit gave us Ephesians in which one of the things we rejoice over in the sacrifice of Christ is that the dividing wall was abolished.

And the two have been made one. Not one set of rules for the Jewish Christians and another set of rules for the Gentile Christians. And probably the one who wrote Hebrews. Maybe didn't write Hebrews. He had all the doctrine of Hebrews. This is not a rejection of Moses to say Moses was faithful as a servant in the house.

It's just an acknowledgment of Jesus to say that Jesus is faithful and glorious as a son over the house. The sun has come to whom the house belongs. It's not rejecting the servant. Through whom God, maintained things in the house until the sun arrived. To say. His time of service is done.

And so they had an opportunity. They really have tens of thousands of Jewish, believers. And they're all zealous for the ceremonial law. They ought to thank you. God, for sending Paul. We were gonna have a conference on the old covenant versus the new covenant, and we would have invited him.

We didn't even know if he would come, but God sent him, we didn't even have to have it. But what do they do instead?

They've heard about you that, you teach all the Jews. Who are among the gentiles to forsake. Moses saying they ought not to circumcise their children, nor walk according to the customs. What then The assembly, the congregation must certainly meet For they will hear that. You are, you have come This is not an opportunity in the grace of God to them.

It's a problem.

And we know that Paul. At other times had boldness, especially on this issue. You remember, when? He was an Antioch and Peter. Was. Yeah. Breaking the food laws, sitting with the gentiles enjoying as bacon and shrimp and lobster. And then some juice from Jerusalem, came down and Peter very kind of clandestinely moved all of the non-coaster stuff off the tray.

Took his tray over to the Jews only table. And Paul got up and read him, the riot act in public to his face.

But here they say, therefore do what we tell you We have four men who have taken a vow. They make an argument for how it's okay, for the Jews to keep obeying. The ceremonial law.

Paul listens to them. You know, sometimes in our Christian fellowship, We have ideas. That are not fully formed from the Bible. And they have turned into practices. That are not fully consistent with the all-preciousness of the Lord Jesus. And we can even in our fellowship, have the effect of spreading that To others.

And so, Paul takes them in The next day. Does the cleansing ritual? They go into the temple. They announce that in seven days. They're going to make an offering. It's not amazing. Paul had seven days to think about it. The man who wrote, what we will quote. A couple of times.

The blood of the new covenant is the blood of Jesus alone. There's no blood of bulls in the new covenant. There's no blood of goats in the new covenant, there's no blood of lambs in the new covenant. And yet, he announced in seven days time, I'm going to come and we're going to have animal sacrifice.

To complete the ritual of this vow. And even in those seven days, He didn't come out from under the pressure. Of having the other. Eminent saints the other elders. The home church where he was, he was a guest there.

And still he is. Going into the temple. Or he's getting to the point. Well, he's in the temple because they have to drag him out. In verse 30. But the seven days were almost ended. And what does God do? Well, just as Paul had. Told about what God had done and giving all those details back in verse 19.

Here. God does something else through the Jews. Who are from Asia? They recognize Paul. They stir up the whole crowd. They cry out. They Uh, They lie. Triphamus wasn't actually with him. Because sadly. Paul was observing the dividing wall. There's a literal wall. There was in the temple court.

If you were a gentile, you could only go so far. And then there was a place after it that was for Jews and posted every so often on the wall, where signs that said that, if a gentile crosses here, he has himself to thank for his imminent, death. It's a little bit of a paraphrase but not too much.

It's almost exactly what it says. And one of the things that Paul had written to the Ephesians rejoicing over, was that Jesus had abolished the dividing wall, But Paul hadn't taken Triphamus in with him. Because he was observing the dividing wall. And he was about to offer a blood sacrifice.

Well. It may be the hands of Jews from Asia and maybe others. From Jerusalem. In verse 30, that sees Paul. Drag him out of the temple. And shut the doors. But is it not also the providence of God? You see in their fellowship with one? Another Paul had been negatively affected.

Theologically. And spiritually. By the fear-based thinking. Of James and the Jerusalem elders. And things that were precious. The Ephesians 2 and the whole book of Hebrews, the ones for all sacrifice of Jesus. First Corinthians 11, He was about to deny. By his actions. And God and his providence intervened.

God is merciful. Even in this case, using wicked men to drag pole out and shut the doors. You know. He had known that, he would end up bound. All those prophecies from the holy spirit. He didn't know that, it would be because god was going to save him from something much worse.

Than being bound. Which is to sin against jesus. And you can just imagine. How many to whom Ephesians was precious and galatians was precious and hebrews was precious? How many of those who would have been scandalized if paul had been able to go through with offering a blood sacrifice?

And so god spared him from that. And sometimes it may take. A chastening providence, i'm not, we're not saying in verse 3 that it was a pleasant restraint. We're saying there's a good restraint. Sometimes we don't have the effect on one another, and our fellowship that we would want to have There's something about the exclusive claims of christ or something.

Something about how scripture tells us to walk with him and follow him and even in our interaction with one another, we can accidentally reinforce one another in the wrong way. Some of you have come from church traditions, in which there was charasmania or Feminist. Implications in. In feminist expression in And how the church was run.

Or. The. Uh, despising of the moral law and obedience to god's commandments. Yeah. That grace means that you don't work hard and run and fight for holiness. And yet in those churches, the lord still had done you much good. You believed in jesus, you loved his name. You can vest your sin.

But without Taking away the good that God did through it. Can't you also say It was his grace that has now restrained. The full effects. That i used to have on them, and they on me. God, mercifully intervened. Christian fellowship is a wonderful thing. But by god's own grace soul by god's own grace to us.

Let us seek to be a blessing of grace to one another. And let us also have good hope. That whatever is imperfect in us and may be reinforced. Each of us in the other that is negative. That his grace yet, will overrule. And restrain the effects. And it cannot ultimate, it cannot be to the ultimate harm of us or our brethren.

For that which christ his purpose purchased? The father purposed. And the spirit is applying Will not be lost. By what flaws there are in our fellowship. Oh man, let's pray.

Our gracious. God and our heavenly Father. We thank you and praise you. For bringing us into your own fellowship. That we the creature would call you. Oh god father. And that we do so because you have united us to your son Then in dwelt us by your spirit. And so we pray that our fellowship on earth would be conformed more and more.

To that. Fellowship, that is from everlasting and two everlasting in this perfect in you. We thank you, lord, for that. Very sacrifice of the lord jesus christ. Which has secured this fellowship for us. When we pray that all of our fellowship with one another, Would be a rejoicing in and application of.

What christ has done for us? Once for all we ask in his name, Amen.