

## **Restoring One Another - Part 2**

Galatians 6:1

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### TRANSCRIPT:

Galatians Chapter 6:1-5 states, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load."

Let us pray. Almighty God, we come to You now understanding that it is Your Word that is truth, it is Your Word that saves, it is Your Word that guides and directs our path, and all this it does effectually by the work of the Holy Spirit. And so, we pray, O God Almighty, that You would send Your Spirit to accompany the Word, that this word will not go out in word only, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that the faith of Your people will not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Revive our hearts, teach us Your law, we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

We considered the first part of verse number one of chapter 6 last week, and I'd like to finish off that verse this morning. We considered the reality of Christians getting bogged and overtaken in trespasses or sins, caught in transgressions. This is a reality that demands a certain responsibility from other believers to help restore those who are stuck in any trouble or in any trespass. It is part of our bearing one another's burdens, it is part of our living and demonstrating the law of love. It is something that we are all called to do as Christians. Christians are to do this work; however, it says, "you which are spiritual," and therefore not only Christians ought to do this work, but we must understand that it requires spiritual maturity to do this work effectively. And the reason for that is because there is so much mitigating against this spiritual operation of restoring someone who is fallen. The world is against the restoration of a fallen Christian, the devil is against the restoration of a fallen Christian, the fallen Christian's own fallen flesh is against his or her own restoration. And so, it requires spiritual maturity that we must understand how to warfare effectively in this,

and it also requires spiritual maturity because this work contains a measure of complexities. It's not as simple as just going in there and rebuking or letting off a bomb and running. It's a spiritual operation that requires care, it requires skill, it requires sensitivity, it requires a care for the soul so that you go in like a surgeon, you cut out the cancer, you stitch that person back up so they can go on to recovery without destroying their lives. And so, we considered that this work is an important work, and therefore we were encouraged to draw near to God and to be holy as He is holy, so that we can carry out this work of restoration more effectively in the lives of those around us.

But now we come to a consideration of how we are to restore one another, and there are two main considerations in this text. In verse number two, it says we are to restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. And so, we are encouraged to restore with meekness and with watchfulness. We are to restore in a spirit of gentleness, and the word gentleness there can also be translated as meekness, and they share in this context the same Greek word. And this is the idea of gentleness, is that it's meekness. Gentleness, I think, zeros in on a certain aspect of meekness, but it doesn't encapsulate all that meekness tells us. And I think it's important that we approach this understanding it from the standpoint of meekness primarily. But what the Apostle is saying here is that in our attempts to restore one another, meekness and gentleness should guide and inform and shape every aspect of our labor to help Christians out of the spiritual bog. And what is meekness or what is gentleness? It is a mild, non-excessive, tamed temper of spirit, best illustrated, in my opinion, with the illustration of a wild horse that has been broken in and made to wear a bit and bridle. The horse is wild before the instructor; the instructor approaches it, but the instructor seeks to domesticate the horse, to subdue the horse, so that this unpredictability of its nature, which means if you make a loud noise, could just bolt at you or bolt the other way or do something dangerous, is subdued and predictable and controlled to the point that its natural tempers don't go out of control when outward pressures come to shake it. The breaking in of a horse is the process of getting the horse to wear a saddle so that the rider can ride the horse, and then to introduce the bit and bridle so as to direct the horse. And this process is actually the beginning of this process is even called gentling the horse. I like that, isn't it? It's making this wild beast of an animal tamed, bringing it to a place of gentleness and meekness, whereby it is subdued; its strength is not lost, but it is channeled for good ends. And in the same way, this is what the idea of meekness is. When the horse is brought to that place, it is brought to the place of meekness. What we can understand about this is that the instructor tries to first and foremost with that horse establish trust. The wild horse has no trust in this foreign being called a human that approaches it, and so the rider, the trainer, is seeking to first

and foremost establish trust and then seeking to desensitize the horse to the things that cause it to startle and to react. And I think this is what God does with Christians to make them meek. Meekness and gentleness of spirit at first and primarily begins with us learning to trust God and not fearing and taking control or reacting harshly. This is the reason why many people react harshly because they seek to take control of a situation because they fail to trust in the God who is sovereign over all. And then also, as Christians, we have to come to the place where we are not so reactive. We are desensitized. We understand the nature of the human heart. We understand trials and afflictions. They become, as it were, a regular part of the Christian experience so that we're not startled. We are rather desensitized to them, not desensitized to God in them, but they don't shake up our entire world so that we fall to bits when something goes wrong. And this is God working meekness in His people. In fact, that is the fruit of the Spirit. This is what the Spirit works in His people. And how does this relate to the context of us restoring? Well, we are like wild beasts, and we need taming, and the more tame that we are, the more effective we may be in restoring someone else, lest our natural tempers get the better of us, and we hurt the person we're trying to help. And so, therefore, when we look at the idea of restoration, and we're thinking of meekness, we're basically coming to the place where we realize that when we restore someone in the spirit of meekness, we need to be a people meek that depend upon God in our restoration of others. We need to establish trust with God, in the sense that we need to trust Him. We need to learn to trust Him in this matter of restoration. Those that have a spirit of meekness in restoring others understand that it is impossible by their own human effort to achieve restoration. They recognize this work of restoration is impossible apart from the grace of God. They understand, yes, that we are instrumental in the spirit uses what we say and how we respond and things that how we relate and bring the Word of God to somebody to bring conviction, yes, but we understand, and we should understand, those that are meek do understand that it is God that grants repentance under the acknowledging of the truth. It is the meek who understand that it is God who gives eyes to see and ears to hear. It is the meek who understand that it is God who alone saves. The meek, when they come to approach someone, have as it were one eye toward the person, but another toward heaven. They do not approach this matter of restoration without dependence upon God. Therefore, you could probably say that the meek is marked by prayer when they go about restoring someone. They're not just rushing in there like the hero of the story that's going to make all the difference. They understand God is the hero of the story. Christ is the one who saves. Christ is the restorer, and therefore they lean upon Christ as they try and help others in being restored. They know that He is the ultimate restorer, and therefore the meek trust in God. So when Paul says restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, he's also saying restore such a one with a spirit of dependence upon God so that you realize

that it is not what you do that ultimately will impact that person's change.

Secondly, meekness or gentleness implies and teaches humility. You see, the meek are without conceit. They're not those that are proud and lofty in spirit, like verse 26 says, "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, and envying one another." They come to a person that is fallen, understanding that this is not an opportunity for them to prove something to that person or to someone else that is watching them. They come to this person that is fallen, realizing that it is not about me walking out here with another tick on my resume of effectiveness in the Christian ministry. They come to the one who is fallen, stooping down to that person's level so as to assist them. It's not about their glory; it's not about their honor; it's about the Christian being taken out of the bog so that they might glorify God more fully in their lives. And they see themselves in the same way as that person also who is fallen, so they're not conceited. They are meek. They have a humility of disposition as they approach this person. They're not scoffing; they are stooping. But they also realize that they are not above the problems of another or the other person. They realize that they are what they are by the grace of God. The meek understand that it is only by God's grace that they are what they are. They don't go to restore someone and therefore go in there decimating their character as if, "I can't believe they did this. Who would do such a thing?" They know exactly in their own hearts that if it were not for the grace of God, they would fall into the same sin. They know the same corruptions that run deep. They understand the depravity of their own nature. They're not looking for praise; they're looking to serve one another in love so as to restore the fallen and to bring them out of the ditch.

And so, meekness implies not only a sense of dependence upon God but also this concept of humility, where the meek are not only looking to God, but they also understand that in themselves, they could not be where they were were not for God's grace.

And finally, we look at the concept of meekness as gentleness, which is a truth that is ingrained in the concept of meekness. As I said, the word gentleness and meekness could be translated either way here, and so we must not take away from the concept of gentleness in meekness. Gentleness is ingrained in it, and what this means is the spirit of meekness is a spirit of tenderness when trying to restore someone. Not only dependence upon God and not only being someone who is humble, but rather being someone who is tender, someone who is healthy in their sensitivity, not to their own feelings but of the feelings of others. They seek, as it were, to help this fallen brother or sister in such a way that every rebuke and every reproof and every correction would land in a way that it would not add offense to the truth that they already fallen into sin.

They're tender; they're gentle; they're not looking, as it were, for a fight and for trouble. There are people that, in a spirit of meekness, come to this person and tenderly bind the brokenhearted and treat the wounds of the fallen. They're not pushing or shoving, as it were. They understand that the person that is fallen and knows that he is fallen is already wounded in his own conscience and does not necessarily need a hammer to weigh that person down deeper into the mud or to burden him with more of his own cares and anxieties and worries about his life, but to tenderly come and assist him and lift him or her up out of their trouble and to do that tenderly, to do that gently. And as I said, this is not removing the aspect of rebuke or firmness, but it is done in a spirit of gentleness because it is concerned about restoring and not about destroying the person that is to be helped.

This is so well illustrated in Christ Jesus our Lord, who in restoring those that were burdened, called them with tenderness and meekness, saying unto them, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly at heart, and you shall find rest to your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Hear the approachability in that statement to the fallen, to the bogs, to the heavy laden and burdened down, is a Savior who does not scold them and does not push them away but calls them to come and to find help for their souls.

This is what was read to us by brother Zack this morning in Isaiah chapter 42, which is also restated in Matthew chapter 12: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he will declare justice to the Gentiles. Listen to these words: He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking flax or a smoldering wick he will not quench. He sends forth justice to victory, and in his name will the Gentiles trust." Here is a Savior whose nature is marked by meekness. Here is one who is not quarreling nor crying out, nor is he trying to be seen or heard. His dealings with the overtaken are tender and sensitive. A bruised reed he doesn't break. The bruised reed is broken, the bruised reed is bowed down, the bruised reed is wounded. It is like the bull rushes in the bush, and it's bent down and is wounded and is broken. What would usually be treaded on by people without thought and without care, Christ condescends to the one who is broken and bruised and restores the bruised reed. To the smoldering wick on a candle that is about to go out but would usually be snuffed out by the breath of another and just say, "This candle's done; it served its time," Christ comes in and condescends and strengthens it and brings more light to that smoldering wick so that it will not go out. Gentleness, meekness, tenderness, not say-

ing, "Ah, that brother's stuffed up so many times, stuff him," no, coming down, condescending, restoring, helping gently, bringing people and restoring them back to God.

In Moses, we see it demonstrated when he's leading these people out of Egypt. Apart from his one occasion of a lack of meekness, which cost him a lot—you can see the danger of that—he constantly, at the threats of the congregation and the complaints of the children of Israel, you find himself depending upon God in prayer. You see that often takes the complaints to the Lord. He falls on his face before God, and he's concerned for the restoration of the people, that even when God says, "I'm gonna wipe them all out," he says, "No, no, me instead of them, O God," showing us and demonstrating to us a man who was regarded in the Scriptures, in Numbers 12:3, the man who was very meek, more than all the people who are on the face of the earth. And his life is generally marked by this submission to God's will and prayer and dependence upon God in the face of the difficulties that were around him.

Now, imagine your surgeon was aggressive, overly confident, proud, arrogant, someone who didn't know how to rule their spirit, the kind of guy you might see in the pub, you know, getting angry and fighting and getting—imagine you walked into the surgery for a surgery, the next thing you saw that was the guy is about to cut your chest open and perform a heart surgery on you. Unpredictable in spirit, uncontrolled—would you be comfortable with that kind of a man performing surgery on you? Thank God for general anesthetic; you probably won't know what's going on, and you won't be anxious when you're knocked out, but the reality is you'd be freaking out because if something goes on in the waiting room that's no good, or one of the nurses gives him a hard time, and he's—I—and he just, you know, does that, you don't know what's gonna happen; it could cost your life. But the tenderness and the control and the ruling of the surgeon's spirit gives you a sense of comfort as he performs his operation upon you. And I would argue it's part of the reason for the successes of his operations. If this is done in a physical realm in a hospital, how much more for spiritually restoring those that are broken? How much more vital when handling the souls of men and women, the eternal destinies of people before you, and you're instrumental in the proclamation of truth and in the counseling and in the guiding and of the strengthening and of their participation in the community of believers, and you going in to help and to restore is so important. How much more important that's than a physical operation. So much more. You can see why Paul makes a point of meekness and gentleness, zeroing on that as an important aspect to the way in which we should carry out restoring each other. "Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness," is what we are told to do.

But we also told not only to watch ourselves in terms of our spirit in how we relate to them, but we must also watch ourselves. Secondly, with watchfulness, lest we fall into the sin we are trying to help others be restored from. Look what he says in verse number one: "Restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." That's partly why meekness is important, right? The humility aspect, where you realize that you could fall into the same situation and sin that they are in. But not just acknowledging that, but feeling that is important, believing that to the point that it affects the way that you relate to them, not only in helping them in humility but also in looking to yourself. We are familiar with the passage, "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." You know, those who go into a burning house must beware lest the flames burn them. As the book of Jude says, "Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, even hating the garments that have been defiled by the flesh." A lifeguard must look to himself and to the people that he saves. An abseiler who is going down into a ditch to rescue someone must make sure that he has enough rope and that he is strapped sufficiently so that he does not fall into the same pit and is trapped and potentially die. And so, the Christian must beware in restoring others that he and she understands that they could very well fall into the same pit and therefore must watch their own hearts and the temptations that are just around the corner as they seek to restore others. As I said, this could be the very same sin that you're trying to help someone out of. You could try and help someone out of cheating on your taxes, but then you get tempted because you learn how that person cheated on their taxes, and all of a sudden, you think, "Wow, I can save a few bucks this year." You might be trying to help someone with how they use their devices for the glory of God and not for lust and pornography and things like this, and as you discover the ways in which they found the things that satisfied them, you find yourself also tempted to go down the same path and look at the same things that they looked at. And you can go on when it comes to matters of envy, and you're trying to help someone deal with envy, and all of a sudden, you learn the ways of envy, and you start to feel envy in your heart towards other people.

But brothers and sisters, this is not limited to falling into the same sin of the person that you are helping. It also goes beyond that. It goes beyond that because it may be another sin that we fall into as we're trying to help others. You're helping others makes you quite vulnerable, and it is important to watch our own hearts lest we fall into sin as we're trying to help someone else out of sin. Think about it like this: trying to help someone who is stubborn out of their stubborn bog or whatever sin it is, and you become extremely angry with them with an unrighteous anger and you break Christ's commandment of loving your brother instead of hating them, which is equal, as it were, to murder because you are frustrated at their stubbornness. Consider yourself lest you also be tempted.

You may be trying to help a person of the opposite gender, and you're trying to help them, perhaps in a marriage issue or in their battles with singleness, and you might fall into lust or something else. And trying to help someone in their marital problems, not even particularly with their own battle with lust. And so, it must be very careful that there are other sins lurking around the corners as you try to restore others. As I said, you might be envious of someone because you start to see that the pleasures of sin that they were enjoying for a season in their lives start to stir up desires for you and say, "Well, I wish I had that kind of experience in my life. It would have been nice to experience those things." It could be pride as you look upon the weaknesses of others and you hear of the failings of others, and instead of trying to magnify God for keeping you from falling into that particular sin, you lift up your hearts with pride and say, like the Pharisee, "Lord, I thank you that I am not like other men are." Consider yourself lest you also be tempted.

The work of restoration is a work that requires meekness, but it requires watchfulness because as you handle people in sin, you are but a few steps closer to the very sin that you are handling and bringing them out of, and we must be warned because it is a very common problem of the relationship between restoration and falling into sin.

I can't help but think of Job's friends. Here are these all-wise heroes of the faith who look upon their friend that is afflicted and feel that they have the answers for him, and they barrage him with statement after statement, declaring, yes, good and true things, perhaps, but things that do not relate to Job's situation and do not apply to him. And as we read the friends' accounts, we see, "Wow, this is good stuff," and yes, many of this stuff is good stuff; it is great stuff. But at the end of the book of Job, God rebukes the friends and says, "You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." These friends that set out to restore Job find themselves falling into sin in how they were trying to help Job.

What about the young prophet that goes to King Jeroboam from his wickedness with a command decrying against him in the judgment that it was to fall if he did not repent and turn? But God said to that young prophet, "You go in there, and you get out of there. You do not stay anywhere along your journey; you get back home." But the young prophet, going to be the restorer, ends up dying because he disobeyed God and stayed with the old prophet and died by a lion in the streets. He should have considered himself lest he was also tempted.

What about the story of that minister, of that Christian, who, trying to help people with addictions to alcohol, began having a glass to relate to



them, which led to his own addiction and his own ruin? All too common a story. Consider yourself lest you also be tempted.

We need to take heed to ourselves, Christian, because just like Cain, sin lies at the door, and its desire is for you, you even, you who are restoring. But we should hear the Word of God that even though sin lies at the door and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. We need to take heed to ourselves, even as pastors and elders and teachers. This is what the Bible says: "Take heed to yourselves and to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you an overseer." Take heed to yourselves, and as you do pastoral work in this way of restoring, also it equally applies to you, brothers and sisters, that you must watch yourself as you take heed to one of God's sheep. You do also must take heed to yourself and carefully watch your heart.

Maybe you look at a passage like this, and you consider meekness and watchfulness, and you say to yourself this morning, "I want to be a better restorer of God's fallen people, but oh, I need meekness. I need gentleness. I'm like a horse untamed; find myself kicking and bucking, and I go in to help someone, and I make a mess of the situation, and I hurt them, whether it be my spouse or whether it were my children or whether it be others in church or your brothers and sisters in Christ, or even in your evangelism attempts to help people with the gospel. You find yourself consistently in conflict due to pride because of a failure of meekness, and you say, 'Oh, I long for more meekness.'"

I say to you this morning, come and look at the cross of Jesus Christ, and there you will find meekness like no other. Here we see at the cross the greatest restorer ever known, and we see the greatest restoration ever in the history and will ever be in the history of the human race. Here we have the greatest restorer performing the greatest work of restoration as he there hangs upon a cross. Restoration unfathomable and unimaginable. There, you want meekness? Look upon Him who suffers, the one who, according to Matthew chapter 26, said, "I could right now pray to my Father, and He could send twelve legions of angels." And with such strength and with such might, He submitted Himself to the will of God, despite His ability to destroy all His enemies with just one prayer. But there He suffered, one who was reviled, who did not revile in return. When He was threatened, He did not threaten back, but He rather committed Himself to Him that judged righteously. Here we have the Son of God dying and suffering in meekness and in gentleness, dependent upon the will of the Father, seeking the restoration of the people for whom He dies. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," committing Himself to one who judges righteously. Who, when He was restoring sinners, He suffered and bore and endured and was rejected and despised, but all that so you and I might be restored,

all so that you and I might be brought out of our desperate deep bog that was sinking us down into the eternal flame. And there, the Son of God hangs there in our place, meekly, gently, restoring us to God, dependent upon the Father's will. He, by an unfailing work of restoration, redeems and restores all for whom He died.

What is even more marvelous about this, even as God through His Spirit applies redemption to us, He does it in the same gentleness and in the same meekness. It is a glorious thought to think about how God has tenderly persisted with us in our rebellion over years and years and years. It is because of the mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. He is faithful in the way that He handles us, even when we were dead in trespasses and in sins. He did not force us, but He wooed us through grace, persuading us by word and by Spirit, persisting with us in our sin to bring us out. Sure, He could have wrestled us to the ground and violated our wills and our desires so as to accomplish His end in a moment. He could have done that, but He patiently persists with us and tenderly woos and opens our eyes and opens our hearts and gives us desires for God and changes our nature and brings us into His everlasting kingdom willingly. This is God. It's everywhere, the meekness and gentleness of God toward us should propel us in the way in which we handle others.

Paul makes an argument of it in Romans chapter 2. He says, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" Are you restored to God this morning? Are you one of those that have been restored for the cross of Jesus Christ? Has God restored you through grace so that you can say with assurance today that I belong to Him? I am not sinking down in sin into the pit of hell, but God has redeemed me out of the pit. He's put a new song in my heart, even praise unto God, and now I know Him, and I believe in Him, and I trust in Him. Can you say that this morning? If not, you are in rebellion against God and still dead in your sins. Does not the thought of His tenderness and gentleness this morning move you? Doesn't the consideration of His condescension from heaven, coming down to earth to die for our sins, to redeem us unto God, and to restore us, does it not touch us? How is it that you still refuse such a gracious Savior who suffered and bled and died to restore us? He there dying in our place, He there redeeming us through grace, He there then, even after His death and suffering, calling us to Himself, "Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does not this meek and tender Savior burn in your heart to call you to come to Himself? Don't you feel to come by the grace of Christ this morning and by the Spirit of our God, to believe on Him who so woos you through grace? Let me encourage you, no matter how deep your sin is, no matter how high that list of sin might be, or the

offense against God that you have committed, hear the words of a gracious Savior this morning who calls you, "Come." He is meek, and He desires to restore you. You say, "How can He restore a sinner like me?" Look at the cross and ask how He can restore a sinner like you. The power of His blood, the suffering of a righteous one, the only righteous one, God's servant from heaven, to redeem us and restore us. He will not fail in restoring you if you will come to Him and believe on Him. You will know the restoration of His grace in your life.

What will you have? The aggressiveness of the world and of the devil trying to destroy your soul, wooing you with pleasures, and then turning around and defeating you and destroying you and kicking you when you're down and leaving you to the gutter? Would you not rather a gracious Savior, a merciful, meek, and mild Savior that will come to you and restore you if you will but come to Him and call out upon His name? Will you not desire such one like this? He says, "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. He will wash your sins; He will make you clean. "Behold, your King comes," says the scripture. "He is coming to you, but He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, the colt, the foal of a donkey." Our King is meek, but He is coming as judge of all the earth, and He will judge those in righteousness who refused His tender mercy today. Today is the day of grace and of salvation, but there will come a day when it will be too late, and you will stand before the judge of all the earth and be punished with an everlasting judgment if you do not turn to Him now and believe on His gospel and trust in His mercy. Today, you will be forgiven.

And Christian, look at this Savior, look at this mercy, and pursue the same meekness when you deal with those who are in your life. Handle people as God would handle them. Begin with the humiliation of yourself. Sympathize and empathize with those that are caught in sin, realizing that you were caught in sin, but God redeemed you. If your attempts for restoration are leading to hostility, you may be this morning in need of a good dose of meekness and a look back at the cross of Jesus and say, "Lord, make me like Your Son. Make me like Your Son, that I might be one of Your trusted surgeons that can help restore people that are broken without destroying their lives. Can God trust you this morning with a knife, the scalpel? Can God trust you and say, 'Here, my son, here, my daughter, take up the knife and perform the operation because you are meek and lowly like My Son?'"

Let it be our prayer that we would have such meekness. Let us pray.

Oh, Lord, we come before You, recognizing our need for the meekness and gentleness that was so perfectly embodied in Your Son, Jesus Christ. We acknowledge our own shortcomings, our own pride, and our own lack of gentleness in dealing with those around us. We ask, Father, that You

would instill in us a spirit of meekness, that we might approach the work of restoration with the same tenderness and care that Christ showed to us. Help us to be watchful over our own hearts, that we might not fall into the same sins we seek to help others escape. May we always depend on You, trust in Your grace, and act with humility and love. We thank You for the cross, for the ultimate act of restoration that it represents, and we pray that its message would continue to transform us and enable us to be instruments of Your peace and restoration in the lives of others. In Jesus' name, Amen.