A Right Understanding of the Church for a Right Understanding of Ministry

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.! And obviously there's some exception to it, but I think that's true. I think that for the most part, if you want to find the most committed, dedicated, most involved in the day-to-day ministries and the things that go on in our church, you can simply assess the Sunday evening crowd.

Here in this room, we have people who faithfully serve in a number of ways, from golf carts driving on Sunday mornings, to the greeters at the doors, to people making coffee in the building, to people helping show you where a Sunday school classroom is at or how to get to the worship center, to children's workers and teachers and all throughout our church.
There are a number of you that serve in many different capacities. And you do it week after week. Many of you show up every week for highly critical areas of ministry, such as Sunday school teachers.
You study through the week. You get ready. You prepare. You're here. You're ready to teach, to help grow the people in your class, to help encourage them, support them.
Many of you serve with our kids and with our preschoolers. And it could be argued that that's even more important. It's certainly much harder than all the other jobs. But the ministries that go on in our church are not possible without those who do ministry week in and week out.
[1:53] And they show up time and time again. We were just talking about this group of people at our staff meeting last Monday and just talking about how incredible it is that we have so many people willing to be here each week.

And as typical staff meetings go, there's always things that we talk about and we appreciate and we enjoy. And there's always things that we have to address. There's things that need our attention. And as I'm sitting there, I'm kind of thinking to myself, you know, why is it that we continue to show up and do what we do week in, week out? As a pastor, why do I show up every day during the week, respond to emails and make hard phone calls and deal with things that aren't always fun? And ministry is fun. We have a blast. We have an incredible group here. Ministry here is incredible. But at the same time, there's still things that we have to deal with. And why is it that we have people in the church that show up every week, every Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening and they're here to make things happen.
We have people throughout the week here in the building doing various things to make sure events happen and all of those things. It's not uncommon to find Jeff on a Sunday morning and six o'clock hour going to war with a couple of territorial geese out in front of our building.
[3:16] Why does he show up to do that? So why do we do these things? That's my first question for you this evening. And I think the answer is simple.

It's because this is the Lord's church. That's why we do these things. Which naturally leads us to the next question. What is the church?
Because we can't go out and find ministry leaders and pastors and preschool workers and geese hunters and all of these things if we do not know what the church is, what we are trying to do.
We have to have some sort of organizational idea of where we're going and where we're headed. I think there's a lot of people who have forgotten.
Maybe they never knew really what the church is. I think that we see that all over the place. In his book, The Church, The Gospel Made Visible, Mark Dever says, For too many Christians today, the doctrine of the church is like a decoration on the front of the building.

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[4:17] Maybe it's pretty, maybe it's not, but finally it is unimportant because it bears no weight. Nothing could be further from the truth. The doctrine of the church is of the utmost importance. It is the most visible part of Christian theology and is vital, it is vitally connected to every other part.

Brent Prentiss, who's the pastor at Eagle Heights in Stillwater, he came and he was here for our men's conference. He mentioned, although he wasn't really talking about the church at the time, but he mentioned that the doctrine of the church is the most forgotten doctrine in the church.
And I think he's right. I think most of us don't know what the church is. And when we don't have a doctrine for the church and we don't understand what the church is, we begin to forget the importance of the church. And there are natural consequences that come along because of that.
According to the 2002 Ligonier, 2022 Ligonier State of Theology, 67% of people say they agree that worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church.
Reality is that most people don't stop and think about what the church is and why it exists. And we've started seeing the gathering of the church not as a sacred privilege, but as some sort of a social expectation and right.
[5:35] When the church becomes nothing more than a social gathering, I think it results in things like attendance being optional. We can show up when we feel like it, if we get around to it.

We don't really have to prepare our minds and hearts before we go. We can just kind of show up however. If this church doesn't do it for me, I can go down the street and find a church that will. It shifts our focus from the important things that the church does, like what is being taught, the things that don't matter, like what the building looks like and what programs are offered and what kind of instruments John likes to use on a Sunday morning.
We begin to see things like parachurch ministries and watching church services online as worthy replacements for the church. Despite the warning from the author of Hebrews telling us not to neglect meeting together in Hebrews 10.25, I think that when we lose the doctrine of the church and forget what the church is, ultimately it will lead us to a rejection of scripture.
So I think if we can answer the question of what the church is, we can also answer the question of why we do what we do. So that's my goal this evening is to answer those two questions.
What is the church and why do we do what we do? And I think we can start in 1 Timothy 3, verses 14, 15, and 16. When you walk through the book of 1 Timothy, you're quickly going to realize that this is a book written to church leadership to help us understand how to organize the church and how to do ministry.
[7:13] The front half, dealing with things directly towards the leadership of the church on the back half, stuff particularly for ministry in the church. I think that this passage here, these three verses, right in the middle of the book, are kind of Paul taking a breath from the instructions that he's given.

And he's kind of giving a reminder of what the church is and the message that we have to Timothy as he continues in ministry. During the institute banquet last night, Todd Fisher, the executive director for Oklahoma Baptist, was talking about different building projects that he's worked on.
He talked about having a blueprint and how through the building project, he regularly refers back to the blueprint and how critical it is to go back to the blueprint. Otherwise, you're going to build something incorrectly.
You're going to do something that doesn't work. It's not correct. In fact, he said last night, the problem with our culture and I being Todd would argue many of our churches is that we are trying to build without a blueprint.
We want to say that Scripture has to be the blueprint and foundation of everything that we do. And I would add that includes the church. This evening I have four headings for you.
[8:32] First, an understanding of the church. Secondly, how understanding affects behavior. Third, the description of the church.

And fourth, the message of the church. This is a letter written to Timothy from Paul.
Paul is not with Timothy at the time and he starts off in verse 14. I hope to come see you soon. I hope to come see you soon. So number one, an understanding of the church.
Paul obviously wants to go and see him and is obviously not with Timothy at the time. If you look at verse 3, chapter 1, it says that I urged you as I was going to Macedonia to remain in Ephesus.
He wants Timothy to remain there to pastor these people. Timothy is a young pastor trying to learn the things of ministry and try to understand how to organize and lead his church well.

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[9:29] But I think there's more to why Paul is saying that he wants to go and see Timothy. I think he is his child of faith as 1-2 would tell us. I think that he wants to teach him and train him as we see all through this book.

But I think there's more to it. I think Paul wants to go and see Timothy and he wants to go see the church there in Ephesus because he understands what the church is.
And Paul would have such a unique understanding and perspective of the church. And I think we all remember Paul's conversion from Saul as he went from being a persecutor of the church to being a champion of the church and proclaiming the message of Christ.
As we get into this, you could call this an introduction to ecclesiology or introduction to 1 Timothy. Ecclesiology just being the study of the church is a theological discipline of studying the church.
And I think it's good and helpful for us to understand what it is that Paul knew about the church. We know that Christ founded the church. Matthew 16, 18 tells us, Paul knew this even before his conversion.
[10:44] He knew that Christ had built the church, that he founded the church. In chapter 7 of Acts, verse 58, it says, And they were stoning Stephen.

And he called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold the sin against them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
In chapter 8, And Saul approved of his execution. That's Paul. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.
And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great limitation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church and entered house after house.
He dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Paul recounts this after his conversion in Acts 22. I'm sure it's something that never left him. He approved of the stoning of Stephen.
[11:46] Because Stephen was proclaiming Christ. He knew exactly where this movement was coming from. It was coming from the man, Jesus. Paul thought, if I can eradicate these people, then this message of Jesus goes away.

That's not true. At Paul's conversion in Acts 9, he learns that Jesus identifies intimately with the church. In Acts 9, verse 4, it says, In falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?
And he said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. At his conversion, Paul would have come to truly understand that Jesus died for the church.
And Paul teaches this throughout his epistles, all over the place. And for a self-righteous man as Saul was at that time, it would have been a baffling and infuriating thing to have this Jesus die for his people.
But for you and me, Christian, this is where we find our hope in this life and in death. And how incredible it must have been to go from working to see the movement of Christ die to being united with the one who died to give you hope.
[13:06] And that was Paul's story. He writes in Ephesians 5, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Christ loves the church and died for her.

He identifies intimately with her. He founded the church. As a Christ follower, Paul knows that he's united with Christ and is now a member of the body of Christ. Much of what we just read out of Ephesians 4.
Paul understands this about the church being the body of Christ. In Ephesians 5, verse 29 says, For no one has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.
This means that we are a separate people, a holy people, called for God's purpose and his plan. We are the body of Christ. Paul also knows that this isn't just that the church is the body of Christ, but that Christ holds that body together.
As we just read in Ephesians 4, speaking truth and love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head and to Christ, from whom the whole body, joined together, held by every joint with which is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it itself builds itself up in love.

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[14:29] Christ is the head, we are the body, and he holds us together. Paul understands that within the people of God, the church, that this is where the spirit of God dwells.

In 2 Corinthians 6, he says, verse 16 says, What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, and he's actually quoting Leviticus here, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will bear and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
He has a people he's called to himself, and now the spirit of God dwells within us. This is also a great example of how Paul understands that scripture is what informs our understanding of who God is.
Paul understands the church. This permeates every part of his life in ministry. He risked his life, and he ultimately died for the sake of the church. So he wants to come and see Timothy, and he wants to see the church because he understands the church.
In Ephesians 2, 19, he says, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
[15:54] In him you are also being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. And I don't know about you, but that does not sound like something that a YouTube live stream can replace. A common misconception today is that the church is just a building or a calendared event.

But as we see, as Paul has shown us, and we could spend hours talking about and fleshing out this doctrine of the church, you see that Christ has founded and built the church, that Christ identifies intimately with the church, that the church is the body of Christ, that we are a holy people separated from this world for God's glory.
It is the people whom the Spirit of God is working in and is sanctifying. We are the dwelling place of God. It's because of what Christ understands about the church, that he tells the church in Corinth, I am acting with great boldness towards you.
I have great pride in you. I am filled with comfort in our affliction. I am overflowing with joy. 2 Corinthians 7.4 I think many professing believers would be surprised to hear Scripture speak of the church in such a high manner.
But I think if we truly understood the church, we too would take a great pride in the church. And in the midst of affliction, we would be filled with comfort and joy because of what the church is, what Christ has done for the church, the fact that he has established the church for us to gather together.
[17:34] And I think this is why Paul tells Timothy, I hope to see you soon. Because Paul understands the church. And as a result, he loves the church.

The word ekklesia is used 114 times in the New Testament. 64, I believe, are in Paul's epistles. Paul has so much to contribute to our understanding of the church.
And he's certainly someone we can look to to help inform us on what the church is. Secondly, that understanding must affect our behavior.
Understanding affects behavior. He will continue. I hope to come see you soon. But I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.
And if you wanted to describe this whole book of 1 Timothy in just one sentence, that is exactly the sentence you would use. This whole book is an instruction for how we are to behave, how one ought to behave in the household of God, in the church.
[18:41] Because of our position, because we have been brought into unity with Christ, because we have been bought and purchased by Christ on the cross, God has an expectation for how we are to conduct ourselves, a standard that we are supposed to live by, the way we ought to behave.

God has an order for all things, and so it is with the church as well. We don't get to define the church. God has already done that for us. We do not get to organize the church in any way we see fit.
God has already done that for us. Church polity and experience mean nothing if we are not following the prescribed methods and organization that are laid out in Scripture. This is our blueprint for life and for the church.
So many of you already know that, though, and so many of you already understand that it is because of what the Word says about the church and who Christ is and our responsibility to it and

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the way that we are to live, and that is part of the reason why you show up and continue to be here. Perhaps for a crowd like this, the bigger danger is to forget passages like Ephesians 2, 8. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and it is not of your own doing.
[19:54] It is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. It is not the work of ministry that saves us. It is not church attendance that saves us. It is Christ and Him alone.

So much of what Paul describes for us is actually, for the Christian life, is actually within the confines of the church. If you will flip back to Ephesians 4, where we were earlier during our prayer time.
In verse 11 it says, He gave the apostles and the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, the teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, the building of the body of Christ.
That is the church. There are people there that He has appointed to be leaders, to be teachers, to help us grow, to build up the church. Verse 13, Until we attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
He's talking about sanctification there. So He's talking about us as a body of Christ, having people over us that teach us and help us and build the body of Christ.
[21:04] And then He's talking about personal sanctification, that we grow to mature manhood, that we come to the same stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed and fro from waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

So there's this false teaching that goes on, and He wants us to avoid those things. He wants us to avoid the things of the world. Verse 15, Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head into Christ.
So He is the head, we are the body. He wants us to grow up into Him. He's given us teachers and people over us to help get us there. Verse 16, From who the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped.
when each part is working properly, makes the body grow up, that it builds itself up in love. I think that's the third time we've read that this evening.
But we have a body of believers, that when we are working correctly, we are encouraging one another to be sanctified and to grow in our maturity and understanding of who Christ is to mature manhood.
[22:13] So you have this individual sanctification that is bookended by statements about the church and how within the confines of the church, that is how we are sanctified, and that is how we grow.

The church is not something that we can just replace. We cannot accomplish what Ephesians 4 is talking about from watching YouTube videos.
At times they're helpful. They're great. But not when we are not connected to the church. We can't accomplish this by worshiping privately in our homes.
They can be good and be helpful. My family, we sing. We do family devos. We have those things. But I also know that my kids are not going to grow to mature manhood in their understanding of who Christ is if they are not connected to the church.
Because Paul understands what the church is, he then gives instructions on how we are to behave in the church. And this includes the ministry that we are a part of.
[23:31] This all comes back to our understanding of the church. Third, Paul's going to give us this description of the church in three statements.

In verse 15, he says that we know how we ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.
I love this description, this short description of what the church is that Paul gives us. It's concise yet full. I think these can serve as reminders as you get up early on a Sunday morning and maybe you're not feeling it that day, maybe you're not wanting to teach that day, maybe you're not wanting to go serve with the kids that day, maybe you're not ready to go back to church in the evening and be ready to be involved in whatever ministry it is that you're doing.
Remind yourself of these descriptions that Paul has given for what the church is. Firstly, he calls us the household of God. We are his children.
We are his household. I have a household. I have kids. And in theory, my kids live according to my rules. In theory. I have an expectation for them and they have to abide by that.

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[24:55] That's what a household is. That there's someone over that household and things operate according to the head of that household. I have a wife and kids who I love and I care for them.

I provide for them. I protect them. They are my household. They are a people separate from everyone else. I get to serve with our Crossroads students, primarily college students, and I love our college students.
I get up early to go do ministry with them. I'll stay up late on phone calls with them. I work extra just to make sure they have extra things to do. I give myself in a lot of ways to those college students. However, I have a household and I love them and care for them and provide for them in a very different way than any of those college students. If one of those college students are up in the middle of the night and their stomach is upset, I'm sorry to tell you, I will not be there.
You're going to have to figure it out. But my daughter Calvin comes to me at night and says that her stomach hurts. I'm jumping out of bed to care for her. And that's what our God does for us.
[26:09] We are his household. We are a separate people, a holy people, that he cares for, that he provides for. We can lean in on the security that he provides.

At the same time, there's an expectation for the way that we live. Just like I have an expectation for my kids. There's a way they are to live. Secondly, he calls us the church of the living God, the ecclesia of the living God, literally the gathered people of the living God.
And I think that's one thing we forget. There's that description of the ecclesia is a gathered people. We want to forget that in our culture today. But we are to be a gathered people of the living God.
In the Old Testament, Paul gives, I'm sorry, God gives Moses instructions on how to build the tabernacle. It's a place where God would dwell. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is within us. He leads us and he directs us.
Michael has just finished a series on Psalm 23 and he talked about a shepherd who leads us, who walks with us, who comes after us.
[27:11] He knows us in an intimate way. He is the living God, which stresses the unique identity of the church as an assembly of people who enjoy the presence of God in their midst.

This is not a tradition that we pass down and a lot of churches are. This is not bylaws and things that we follow because we thought that would be a good idea.
No, we are a people gathered together, the household of God, who is the living God. He rules and reigns today, now.
Then he calls us a pillar and buttress of truth. A pillar holds up. You've probably seen a pillar. You may have a pillar on the front of your house or an office building. We have them out in the foyer and they don't look like traditional pillars, but if you remove one of them, you would see just how important those pillars are because the building would start falling in.
But a pillar holds something up in a position that it belongs in. Holds and usually it's out on the front of the building. It's pretty. It's decorative.
[28:24] But it proclaims something architecturally. Holds something up. A buttress is not a word that second graders call each other but it's a support that leans into.

It's concrete or brick or something that leans into a building. You'll see them on old cathedrals. These slanted sloped kind of walls into the side of these buildings and what those are there for is that while the pillar holds up and keeps things in its proper position, the buttress leans in when the storm comes and keeps the building right where it needs to be.
There's no shifting. There's no change. It's right where it belongs. And for us as a church, as a people, while the pillar is on the front of the building, it's pretty and the buttress is usually, a lot of times you don't even realize it's there.
They're both there for us to hold high the word of God and then to lean in and keep it exactly where it belongs. And that is, for us, the center and foundation of everything that we do as a church.
If you're newer with our church, you've probably heard it already that everything we do comes back to God's word.
[29:40] It is the foundation of everything we do. And if you grow tired of that statement, I hate to tell you, you're going to hear it over and over and over and over again because it is what we do.

We build everything on the word of God. and we are to be the pillar that holds up God's word, proclaims it for the world and we are to lean in in the storm and keep the word of God exactly where it belongs as the center of everything that we do.

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Paul understood this obviously in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17 says, all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
Much like Paul, that is what we go back to. Lastly, number four, the message of the church. Your Bible should have most of verse 16 in set like in a stanza.
That's because these are lyrics of an ancient church hymn and how appropriate in my opinion to have Paul reminding Timothy and the church there in Ephesus of who Christ is and what the church is in song.
[31:01] This is something that they would have sang in a corporate gathering together. Verse 16 says, great indeed we confess the mystery of godliness. He was manifest in the flesh, vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

A mystery, not something that is hidden but something that was once hidden that is now revealed because for those New Testament believers, they now understand who that coming Messiah is and what he did for them.
He was manifest in the flesh. He being Jesus came down to earth as a human. This is his incarnation, vindicated by the spirit. Vindicate means to deem right or to do right by somebody. Romans 8, 11 says if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.
Christ rose from the dead. What we just celebrated a few weeks ago on Easter and what for believers that know Christ we get to celebrate every day of the year. He goes on to say that he was seen by angels, there was a heavenly host of witnesses of the things that took place of Christ's sacrifice, death and his resurrection.
[32:20] He's proclaimed among the nations. Not only is there a heavenly witness but there's a human audience, those who saw and they bore testimony to it and this message began to spread.

It was proclaimed among the nations and not only did people hear it but it was believed on in the word. It's not just a message we hear but it has the power to transform and save people.
So people are now responding to this gospel and then Christ is taken up in glory which refers to Christ's ascension back into heaven from which he will one day return.
The message of the gospel is held high and it is the message that we hold high as the church. I think it is all the more fitting that Paul reminds us and reminds Timothy of this in the form of song because this is such a unique characteristic of God's gathered people.
Because when we gather as the ecclesia of the living God we sing songs of truth. And here you have Paul reminding Timothy of their own lyrics, their own songs that they sing of who Christ is.
[33:32] Psalm 96 verse 1, it was sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Ephesians 5, 18 and 19, be filled with the spirit addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.

Colossians 3, 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thanksgiveness in your heart.
He reminds them of the Messiah who was promised and is now revealed of Christ who has come in the flesh, the sacrifice of his life that he gave on behalf of the sinful people to call a people to himself to make us a holy people.
He came back from the dead. There was a heavenly host of witnesses. The gospel spreads around the world and now we have the church and we are to keep the words of the gospel in their proper place, the words of scripture in their proper place and proclaim them to the world around us.
And such a rich lyric for a corporate gathering. It is the gospel that we proclaim as the church to the neighborhoods and the nations and all the people around us.
[34:53] So I want to answer those two questions that I started with. Then I want to give you two points of application. First question is, what is the church?

Here's my definition as we, as I studied through this passage and thought on it. We are the household of God, his people, chosen, called, and gathered together according to his will and by the death and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ.

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We are united under the authority, the rule, and protection and under the perfect love of the one true living God who now dwells within us. A people who hold to, hold up, and proclaim the truth of scripture in our actions, in life, in speech, and in song.
That is what the church is. Secondly, why do we do what we do? Why do we serve? Why do we work? Why do we prepare? Why do we get here early and hunt geese and on and on and on?
The answer is because our behavior, the way that we live, is determined by what we understand about the church. We know that Christ founded and died for the church. Christ loves the church and calls us his body and bride.
[36:06] We know that as the church, we are responsible to build one another up and to take the gospel to the world. And for the church, there is no substitute.

Two points of application for you as we close. When serving and ministry gets hard, remember that we are members of the body of Christ. It is Christ who holds us together.
He will sustain us. And while you are working to make sacrifices to do ministry for other people, remember, even if you don't realize that there are others in the church that are also making sacrifices to do ministry for you.
Just to be sitting here right now in this building. Somebody had to get here early to turn on the lights and to make sure this room was clean and to make sure that the AC was set. Thank you, Jeff. to make sure that trash wasn't sitting in the hallways, to get our bathrooms ready, to get the sound equipment on, get these lights on that I know is more difficult than it seems.
All of these things have to happen just for us to be here. And for all of those things to happen, somebody's got to pay the bills, which means we have to be tithing and giving sacrificially to make sure those bills can be paid.
[37:21] And Audrey has to make sure that she knows to pay them on time. Thank you, Audrey. We have to have people taking care of our kids, taking care of our preschoolers.

We have to have a safe place for them and buildings and toys and things for them to have while they're down there. That's all just for this one service. There's so much that goes into the life of ministry in our church.
So when ministry gets hard, remember that we are bodies, that we are members of the body of Christ, that we are members of the church. And while we work to minister to others, others are working to minister to us.
Secondly, when you forget who we are, who the church is supposed to be, I want to encourage you to listen to the songs that we sing. In the same way that Paul reminds Timothy of the lyrics of their corporate gathering, I want to remind you of the songs that we sing.
We have rich lyrics that we proclaim in this place. Take them with you.
[38:31] Don't leave them here. Take them with you throughout the week. Start building a playlist. We list them all in the bulletin. Start making a playlist in your Spotify account of all the songs that we do.

And I promise it will be so much more beneficial to you than just listening to the radio or listening to whatever's on at the time. Listen to the songs that we sing. Last time I was up to preach, my wife and I were walking through a pretty tough season of life as she was walking through some pretty serious health scares.
And she was on the back end of several surgeries. And along with that, we had home health care in the house a lot. And there were a lot of bandages being changed and things being tended to.
And those moments were uncomfortable and painful and hard to watch and difficult. And one thing my wife would always do, I'd walk in the bedroom with a home health care nurse.
My wife would have her phone on her pillow and just a playlist of the music that we sing on Sunday mornings, reminding herself of who Christ is and what he's done for us, who the church is and the work that we have and we're responsible to do, reminding her of the hope that she has in Christ alone.
[39:56] So remind yourself of the lyrics that we sing. May Christ be all and I be nothing. His glory shines and vessels weak.

May Christ be all and I be nothing. This is my hope, not I, but Christ in me. Let's pray. Father, we come before you in the name of Jesus, thankful, thankful for this church.
A holy people separate for your will and for your purpose. We thank you for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

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We thank you that he died for those who would come to know you, that you would call according to your purpose. Lord, we thank you that we find hope in him and him alone, that it's not by works that we're saved because we would all be lost.
Lord, I thank you for these people that continue to serve week in and week out and do the work of the ministry and ready to teach and to serve and to help and to make coffee and to do all the things that we do every week.
[41:21] I thank you for the message and this gospel that we proclaim, that it has the power to save. I thank you for the lyrics that we sing in this place.

Lord, I thank you for the freedom and the opportunity to have a corporate gathering for us to exercise what it looks like to be the ecclesia of the living God.
Lord, we thank you for your many blessings on this church. I pray that we would continue. I pray you would sustain us even in the midst of storm and hardship, that we would be the pillar and buttress of your truth.
We love you. We praise your name. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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