My name is Jim Fleming and this is Our Sunday School.

Our Sunday School is part of Stewart Heights Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

To prepare for this lesson, please go to oursundayschool.com for a copy of today's handout.

Now, let's get to this week's lesson.

Well, good morning everybody.

Welcome to Our Sunday School. Glad you guys are with us today.

If you've got your Bibles, head over to Philemon.

We're in Philemon still.

We're cresting a ridge today in Philemon. We'll talk about that in just a second.

But before we get into Philemon, just a quick review.

Just a touch point. How are we doing on our homework?

Have we reached out to somebody? Have we prayed for them?

Have we told them that we're thanking God for them?

Thank you, Zeke. I know you have. You did it to me.

You get zero credit for doing it to me, right?

So don't be doing that. You do it to somebody else. Somebody else.

But I'm going to read our song again, "Speak, O Lord."

I don't know how long I'm going to do this, but I still like it a lot.

So I'm just going to keep reading it for a hot minute.

"Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Take your truth, plant it deep in us.

Shape and fashion us in your likeness that the light of Christ might be seen today

in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise. Cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority.

Words of power that can never fail. Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds.

Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

Truths unchanged from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises.

And by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your church is built and the earth is filled with your glory."

I still dig it. There you go.

All right, so let's take a look at our text today.

I'll read all the way through Philemon, and then we will pick up, Lord willing,

in just a second on page 37 with verse 8.

So, Philemon.

"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

to Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Othea our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier,

and to the church that meets in your home.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, because I hear of your love for all the saints

and the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus.

I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing every good thing that is in us

for the glory of Christ.

For I have great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right,

I appeal to you instead on the basis of love.

I, Paul, as an elderly man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus, appeal to you for my son, Onesimus.

I became his father while I was in chains.

Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me.

I'm sending him back to you. I'm sending my very own heart.

I wanted to keep him with me so that in my imprisonment for the gospel he might serve me in your place,

but I didn't want to do anything without your consent,

so that your good deed might not be out of obligation but of your own free will.

For perhaps this is why he was separated for you for a brief time so that you might get him back permanently,

no longer as a slave but much more than a slave, as a dearly loved brother.

He is especially so to me, but how much more to you both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would me,

and if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

I, Paul, write this with my own hand. I will repay it, not to mention that you owe me even your very self.

Yes, brother, may I benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

Since I am confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, since I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do Mark,

Aristarchus, Themis, and Luke, my co-workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

So today, as we get into this next section in Philemon,

our focus is going to be on verse 8 and the first part of verse 9,

and I apologize again to the apostle for interrupting him in the middle of a sentence,

and we'll talk about that in a second. So our text today is,

"For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right,

I appeal to you instead on the basis of love."

So a couple of quotes here to kind of get us in the framework of where we're going to be today.

So the first from Payson Aiken, "We need to learn how to say the right thing in the right way,

at the right time, and to the right person." Would that be a cool way to live?

Like that's just, like there's a lot going on there.

Our next up is from Dr. Mu. Again, go easy on him. His last name is Mu, right?

He's a really good guy. He writes huge books.

But most interpreters agree that the body of the letter to Philemon begins at verse 8.

What's our text today? We start with verse 8.

Like we are just now getting into the thing that Paul wanted to address.

One of my business heroes talks about everything before you get to your message is intellectual throat clearing.

And there's a lot more substance to what Paul is doing and the way he's doing it

and why he's doing it than just, "Yeah, we've got to get all the formalities out of the way."

No, no, no, no. He's planting the foundation for the ask that he's going to make.

And then our last is back to Payson Aiken.

So Paul figuratively walks up to Philemon, gives him a big hug, and puts his arm around him.

And this is, he's got a big ask to make.

And we're going to look at how he makes this ask and why he makes this ask

and what's his motivation for making this ask this particular way.

But I want us to notice real quick on page 37, so don't skip past page 37.

I have a question for you. So you've got your blue books.

Open up to page 37.

How many periods are on page 37?

How many sentences are there on page 37?

Say that louder, Darla. Say that louder.

Those high-flying periods are not really periods.

They are not really periods. Head over to page 13 in your blue book.

Page 13 in your blue book.

And I want to show you what you're looking at and what you think you're looking at

and what you're really looking at.

Because it's not really what you're looking at.

So let's go forward one more, Dave.

Punctuation in Greek is not the same thing as punctuation in English.

And you might think, "Why?"

Well, this is a gravity issue. We're just going to have to accept it.

Commas are commas.

Periods are periods.

Periods above are semicolons.

And semicolons are question marks.

So there is a reason I put page 13 in your book.

Because you can get a wrong sense of the length or complexity of Paul's argument.

Now, go back to page 37.

So what's at the end of verse 9?

A semicolon. What's at the end of verse 12?

A semicolon. And what's at the end of verse 14?

A period.

Now, if you submitted a formal paper to any English teacher on the planet right now

with two semicolons in it that took up this much space,

what would that English teacher tell you to do?

Bring me my red paper.

Yes. You're going to do this again.

You're going to do this again.

Paul is not making small, pithy little...

No, no, no. This is a larger argument.

And we get to follow his train of thought as we go through and see what's going on.

Do you have a question, Errol?

OK, cool. I wasn't sure if this was... OK. Gotcha.

Alright, so there's only one... This is one big...

I hesitate to say "run on."

Can I say the Holy Spirit writes in run-on sentences?

I don't know that I want to say that.

He can do exactly what he wants, right?

If it's punctuated correctly, it's not a run-on sentence, yes.

Now, we could debate about whether it is or not, but there you go.

Alright, so let's go to page 38. Enough of Greek?

Y'all done with Greek? You ready? Cool. Let's keep going.

So page 38, we'll start with verse 8 down at the bottom.

"For this reason..."

For what reason?

One through seven, right.

"Because of Philemon's love and the refreshment of the saints."

Because of how he's demonstrated and what he's walked

and the evidence in his life so far.

And the word "although" is just kind of added in English

to give us a little bit of a smoother translation.

"For this reason, I have..."

So this is a present active participle. This is a habit or a lifestyle.

This is continuous ongoing action.

"For this reason, Paul's normal posture toward Philemon

is great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right."

You're like, "Okay, let's talk about this."

So on page 39, this "great boldness."

This word "boldness" shows up several other times in the New Testament.

I've got a couple of them listed on the screen here.

So the first one is Acts 4-13.

You've heard this one many times.

When they observe the boldness of Peter and John,

they realize they were uneducated and untrained men.

They are amazed and recognize they've been with Jesus.

So this boldness here of the gospel has made an impact in my life,

and now I have an unnatural boldness to do the thing that I am doing.

So let's look at the next one.

The next one is Acts 28-31.

So Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house.

This is when he was under house arrest.

"And you welcome all who visited him, proclaiming the kingdom of God,

and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

What is special about Acts 28-31?

Anybody know?

It would be hard to tell from looking at it this way.

It's the very last verse in the book of Acts.

We end the story of the early church with boldness,

because the gospel has made a difference,

and now we are unnaturally bold to go and to do what the gospel commands us to go and to do.

And then one more.

Hebrews 4-16, "Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness."

The gospel has done something that enables us to have unnatural boldness in a particular situation.

Same word Paul uses right here.

So this is a gospel-associated word in many different places in the New Testament.

So, for this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ,

the source of Paul's boldness is in Christ.

Please don't misunderstand the excursus that we're going to take here in just a second,

talking about apostolic authority.

The reason for that is Christ. The reason for that is not Paul.

So, "Although I have great boldness in Christ to command."

Alright, this "command" word is "epitasso."

I'll show you the B-dag definition of it here real quick.

This is "to command with authority."

It means to order or command.

If you look up on almost any translation, this is the way this is going to be translated.

It's a very, very simple, clear word.

So, Dave, stand up.

Was there any doubt in my tone or in my words that I was being very directed right there?

Like this was, it felt commanding, right?

Thank you Dave, have a seat.

We're going to go a couple other ways here in just a minute, alright?

So, don't worry. Don't worry.

But this word shows up ten times in the New Testament,

and there is a concept in the New Testament that is not explicitly stated like this,

but the concept is "apostolic authority."

So, how many of you have heard the phrase "apostolic authority" before?

Yes? Okay, great.

So, we're going to take a little excursus.

So, if you read a, if you'd like a, I almost said a real commentary.

If you read like a dense commentary, there will be things that the commentator wants to talk about

that they will spend 10, 15, 20 pages on that aren't really in line with the text,

but they want to run that down and come back and then it makes the rest of the explanation make more sense.

So, we're going to take an apostolic authority excursus this morning,

and we're going to look at some words that are not all epitasso,

but they are related to epitasso in this vein of command, instruct, push, direct.

So, this is Matthew 10 where Jesus is commissioning the 12.

At the very end of the chapter, he says, "Those, the one who welcomes you,"

and he's talking to the 12, "welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me, welcomes him who sent me."

So, who's the "me" here if Jesus is talking? That's Jesus.

And who's the "him who sent me"? The Father, right?

So, there is a relationship between how the apostles are interfaced with and how the Father is interfaced with.

So, we're going to circle back to that at the very end, but I just want you to kind of keep that in your working memory for a second.

So, John 17, this is in Jesus' high priestly prayer.

"I pray not only for these, but also for these." Who's the "these" here?

The 12. He's praying for the 12 specifically here.

"But also for those who will believe in me through their word."

What is this about? The "through their word"? Through the apostles' word.

Through the apostles' word.

It's like that chunk of your Bible. The New Testament. Right?

How do we know anything about our Lord Jesus Christ?

Through the apostles' word. Now, who told the apostles what to speak?

The Holy Spirit told the apostles what to speak.

But we have the paper because somebody put it on the paper. Right?

They wrote the word. So, this is "through their word" that they're going to say and write for us out.

Next is Acts 2.

"They," the early church, "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."

And we all look at this and we go, "Well, of course they did."

They were the Bible teachers at that time. They took the Old Testament

and correctly interpreted and applied it to who Jesus was and what He had done

and helped the early church start on a firm foundation.

Now, did they always stand firmly on the firm foundation? No.

Because Paul had to write Corinthians, right? Like four times, we think.

Next one is going to be Ephesians 2. So, this is Paul talking about this.

"So then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household,

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets."

Apostles being New Testament, prophets being Old Testament,

built on the foundation of God's very word.

Because God's word is the basis for what we do.

And the apostles were the vehicle that the Spirit used to get God's word to us.

Like, okay, this makes sense.

What's the next one? Is the next one sprawl? No, not yet. Not yet.

Now, there is a way to teach apostolic authority

that also includes apostolic succession.

And that is where I would go, "Nnnn, no way."

Problem here, we have a real issue.

My real issue with it is that nowhere in the New Testament is apostolic succession commanded.

And if I talk to my apostolic succession friends, and if you read the Times Free Press yesterday,

there was a church in Chattanooga who had a promotion.

A pastor went to an apostle.

Time out.

We have, in the New Testament, early in Acts, an example of what Jesus commissioned the 12th.

And who is the 12th one? Always the listed one. Who's the last one listed?

Judas is always the last one listed, right?

So, we go through the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How many apostles are there like that next week? Eleven.

Well, the apostles looked back and they saw what Jesus did, that He picked 12, and they went,

"We should have 12, because Jesus picked 12."

And they went and they found, and they weren't sure, and Joseph, Barsabbas, Justus, and Matthias,

and they rolled the dice, and the dice came up Matthias, and they picked Matthias.

You're like, "Well, that sounds like a very unspiritual way to do it."

Well, there's a verse in the Old Testament that says, "The die cast is up to the Lord."

So, that's a lot of faith in the Lord.

Like, you're going to pick somebody to be promoted to a pretty important job, right?

But we have no other record of succeeding apostles.

We have other apostles that are listed in the New Testament.

We have Barnabas, we have Paul, but nobody else that, like,

"Well, I'm done with my office, so somebody needs to take my role."

No, no, no, no, no, no. We don't have any evidence of that.

And what we don't want to do is that we don't want to build our life and our practice off of something with no biblical evidence.

Like, that is a shaky place to be.

So, I am totally okay with apostolic authority, because we got the New Testament because of it.

I am not okay with apostolic succession, because if we got apostolic succession as a real thing,

then there are 12 dudes walking around the earth right now that are speaking on behalf of God,

directly from God, and they have the authority to write canon.

We got a problem, y'all.

Because... no.

Alright, so, does this make sense?

Yep, alright, great.

So, I'll let the good Dr. Sproul wrap us up on this.

So, the apostles were granted special authority to speak for Jesus.

They had the right to command Christians to act in certain ways.

Like, when you got a letter, there's instructions in here.

There's correction in here.

There's encouragement in here.

But, there's going to be direction.

And then the last quote from Dr. Sproul, and if you've never been to Ligonier.org,

I would encourage you to go.

Just a lot of really tight, clean theological stuff there.

If we reject the authority of the apostles, we reject the authority of Christ.

Remember Matthew 10, 40?

And if we reject the authority of Christ, we reject the authority of God Himself.

So, there was something serious on the line to get instruction from an apostle and go,

"No."

That's a problem.

Okay, so, when we look at Philemon verse 8, and it says,

"For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what was right..."

Paul could have commanded.

Did he command?

At any point in Philemon, does he command?

Does he lean over the edge of commanding and look at...

He gets pretty close.

He reminds Philemon of some things.

He reminds Philemon of the reality of his situation, and Paul's situation, and Onesimus' situation.

But, he does not actually command.

So, my application in personalization down at the bottom of page 40 is,

apostolic authority is real,

and so I am to submit to it.

We are to submit to it, because what is the residual of apostolic authority is the New Testament.

And I'm never, ever, ever going to stand up and tell you, like, "You should ignore the New Testament."

No, you should not ignore the New Testament.

We should not ignore the New Testament. We should do everything we could possibly do to put this into practice.

This is one of those doctrines that I firmly believe can be taught in a way that is consistent with the Scripture,

and it can be taught in a way that is radically inconsistent with the Scripture.

So, I've tried to present it from a, like, stay very close to the text perspective.

Yes, please.

I'm making the statement that I could order you is, ultimately, is a picture, but I'm exercising the right that our,

I'm going to rest in God's authority, and what the matter.

It's just a beautiful picture of what Jesus does.

Anyway, I've used that. I could do this, usually, with my kids,

but it's never something where I'm hoping that they'll see the bigger picture like that.

That's pretty heavy.

Yeah. There are, I think, a lot of parent-child wisdom examples in Philemon.

There are also, like, you do this with the wrong motive or out of the wrong spirit,

and it comes across as sarcastic and biting and threatening and all those things.

You can read Philemon a lot of different ways.

If you believe Paul has the gospel's best interest at heart, Philemon is kind and loving and gentle.

If you believe Paul has Paul's best interest at heart, Philemon is threatening and overbearing and obnoxious.

You're right. I've read it that way.

Yeah. I've had it read to me that way.

All right. So, verse 8, "For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ, to command you to do what is right."

This is a really fun word.

An echo is the present act of participle.

So, again, this is a habit, a lifestyle.

This word is... it only shows up a couple of times in the New Testament.

Ephesians 5, 4 translates it as "suitable."

Colossians 3, 18 translates it as "fitting."

B. Dagg gives a good definition here.

"To reach a point of connection with a focus on what is appropriate."

So, we generally only pull the last half of the definition when we're translating this because it's the "so what."

But this has a relational component to it.

That we are putting things together in a way that is proper, in a way that is fitting.

I wear almost exclusively hoodies now pretty much year-round.

Because I work from home and I can wear kind of whatever I want to and they're really comfortable and it works okay.

And we found... was it on Amazon where we got the crooked one? The blue one?

Old Navy. Old Navy.

You wouldn't think more of Amazon. You'd think more of Old Navy, right?

So, we found one that I really liked and so we got it in like eight colors.

I don't know. How many colors did we get? Three. Three. Three colors.

So, there was a black one, there was a gray one, and there was a blue one.

I really like the color blue.

And when I put it on... when a man wears a shirt... what is this called, Darla? This part right?

The placket.

You would have given me 10,000 guesses.

I am never getting... I don't think I've ever heard that word before.

Okay, so the placket. The placket should run straight up and down, right?

And if you're in the military and the placket doesn't run straight up and down, you get yelled at, right?

This is a problem.

The placket on this shirt ends a little to the left of my left pocket.

It is... it is... it's not that bad.

It's pretty bad. It's pretty bad.

It feels right up here, and then it just goes horribly, horribly wrong.

And I'm going to say it's not my body shape that's wrong.

It's that somebody didn't put it together in a way that fit.

Right?

Right. There's something that was...

Yeah, they placketed incorrectly. Can I make it a verb?

You're going to need to see a picture of this?

Okay, I'll put a picture of this stuff on Facebook later.

No, two of them are fantastic, and one of them is terrible.

So, it's just... this is the reality, right?

Yes, ma'am?

That's worse than seconds?

That's worse than seconds? Oh yeah, I'm not getting into seconds. No, no, no, no.

So, the mental framework I want you to have when you read this verse is that

for this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ,

to command you to put this together in the way that works, right?

What's the thing that he's about to ask him to put together?

Reconciliation with Onesimus.

Right? So, he's again, he's picking words that project what he's going to need

Philemon to actually go and do.

And Dr. Mellick has a really nice quote here.

"What is right speaks to what is proper because of the Christian order of things."

Like, the gospel makes a difference how we engage with each other.

The gospel makes a difference how we reconcile with each other.

The gospel is worth it.

So, Christians are in fact to do what is right and suitable and fitting.

So, let's go and do what is right and suitable and fitting.

And it's not just this...

Wait, have I? No, sorry, sorry.

I panicked there for a second. I thought I had to find the wrong word.

I have not defined the wrong word. We're good.

Every once in a while I do this, then I have to roll it back.

So, there we go.

So, for this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right,

I appeal. What's the Greek word there?

I appeal.

Parakaleo.

Yeah, this is the verb form of the noun, parakleit.

Anybody know who the parakleit is?

The Holy Spirit is the parakleit.

Right.

I am... you could... a terrible way that nobody would ever translate this.

I am Holy Spirit-ing instead.

I am comforting. I am coming around.

This is where Payson Aiken got the... put the arm around the shoulder and do the reconciliation work.

So, I appeal to you instead.

Or actually the word is more.

And then, on the basis of... what's the Greek word there, Darla?

For on the basis of?

Diya.

Diya. What does diya mean?

Diya means it goes through something.

There is a basis, there is a why for Christian reconciliation and reasoning.

And what's the reason?

Love.

Love. Like the object of that prepositional phrase is love.

Because love is the reason... love is the reason for Christian appeal.

Love is the reason that reconciliation matters.

Love is the reason... like it's the outcome of the gospel in our lives.

And that makes a dramatic and beautiful difference.

Right.

So, Dave, would you mind standing up for just a second?

Thank you brother. That was awesome.

So did you all sense a difference in the way that I said it before?

Like just a smidge, right?

I thought about screaming it.

And then I thought, well then I have to go fix the audio because I'd be blowing people's eardrums out on the podcast and all that kind of garbage.

I don't want to do all that.

But F.F. Bruce, who probably wrote the definitive commentary on Colossians and Philemon of the 20th century.

And this is the happiest picture that I could find of the man.

He did not write the definitive commentary on Philippians, right?

He wrote it on Colossians and Philemon.

Orders are liable to be resented from whomsoever, you know this is written a minute ago, right?

But an appeal from a friend is difficult to resist.

Paul doesn't get very far in this conversation if he and Philemon are not already friends.

Please understand, this is not the first conversation that Paul and Philemon had.

And I hope it's not the last.

Well no, they're kicking it right now.

There you go. Of course it's not the last.

But this to me is important to remember that we don't start, like our first interaction with somebody is not,

"Hey, y'all are fighting, let's get together."

There's a little work that's got to be done here.

I will tell you, I think, let's go one more day.

I think most people look at the letter to Philemon this way.

Like there's three main characters and they're interacting with each other.

And you go through and you work through and you're like,

"Well, Paul interacting with Onesimus and Onesimus with Philemon and Philemon with Paul."

And who have I told you guys four times now is the main character of Philemon?

Jesus is the main character of Philemon.

So this is, I think, actually what it looks like.

Jesus is at the center and Christ's relationship with each one of these

enables relationship to occur in a way that's consistent with the gospel.

Now, inspired by Mu.

He's got this wonderful quote here I'm going to show you in just a second.

But I'll show you one first.

"The love they share with each other because of Christ is the basis on which he,

Paul, will encourage Philemon to do the right thing."

Christ is at the center and the ramifications of the gospel are what's driving this.

Have you heard me say this a couple of times today?

I think this is the point of the whole letter.

And then we've got Mu's longer quote.

"Our relationships to one another in Christ create expectations and impose obligations

that can't be ignored and then often go far beyond what any law might impose."

One of the beautiful things about the Old Testament is that it gave the children of Israel

a direction, like relationship with God is that way.

And then we get to the New Testament and we see relationship with God is the person of Jesus Christ.

And it gets fleshed out for us.

And we look back at the law and we go, well that was helpful.

We knew what to look for. We knew who to look for.

But, boy, Christ is better. This is so much better.

And, love one another is a way better direction for any and every scenario that could pop up in life

than on Tuesdays. You should have, like it just gets a little granular sometimes

and it feels a little prescriptive.

So, one more and, oh I thought that was, oh I think I have one more.

We didn't have one more. We'll end with Mu.

So, two applications and personalizations at the bottom of page 41.

Love is the reason for Christian appeal.

So, love and then appeal.

We ask before we love sometimes and that's just the wrong order.

So, love is the reason for Christian appeal. So, love and then appeal.

And then love, my second application, love is more compelling than commandment.

Love is more compelling than commandment.

Because Paul could have commanded.

He had the apostle hat and he could have flexed, but he didn't.

So, love is more compelling than commandment.

So, love and remember God's love to us.

Philemon, the whole letter, is a picture of what God is doing to us, for us, in us and through us.

Like it is really, really beautiful.

And I could not imagine, well now I'm going to get tore up.

Dead gummit.

I could not imagine a more appropriate way to end today's lesson

than taking two people who we love so, so dearly and sending them out

as missionaries to the second floor of this building at 9 o'clock.

So, Matt and Jen Ayers, we've been in Sunday School together.

We were talking before class 24 years.

That is half of my life I have gotten to know this dear brother and sister.

And Matt has been asked to lead Mel Leip's Sunday School class.

Mel is retiring from teaching. After teaching for, I don't know, 630 years.

I'm not really sure, but it's been a minute.

He's like one of my gospel heroes of just, you just go plug away and you teach the scripture.

And it's just, it's a beautiful picture of what we ought to be about.

He's about Jesus and I love that the next person to teach his class is going to be you.

So, we're excited to send you.

And I'd love if we could just all gather around and pray for Matt and Jen

as they take this next step of obedience and we're excited to be able to do it.

So, everybody touch somebody's shoulder and we'll pray for Matt and Jen.

(Praying)

Let's pray, guys.

Father, we thank you so much for loving us in just really beautifully tangible ways.

We thank you for the people that you have brought into our lives

and for just glowing examples of how to love others, how to care for others,

how to embrace the call to be a disciple of yours

and to share the gospel to our neighborhood and to the nations.

We thank you for Matt and Jen.

We thank you for their testimony, for their faithfulness, for their love for you.

And we know we're not losing them as brothers and sisters and they won't be far.

We thank you for their rich blessing on their new class that you would enable them

to say and do exactly as you would have them say and do,

that you would enable them to love that class and pour into them

and show them that they are in fact loved by you.

Help them to stay close to the gospel.

Help them to rightly divide the word.

Help them to shine the light of Jesus so that we can celebrate 24 years from now

and how faithful a job that they have done and how faithful that they have been

through walking through your Word with this group of saints.

We love you Lord and we love them

and we hope you let us continue to find ways to let them know that we do.

It's in Christ's name that we pray. Amen.

Alright guys, let's move into our prayer time

and then we will be dismissed to go and to celebrate the good news of the gospel

that makes all of this possible.

So, thanks for coming today guys.

Thanks for engaging and don't forget to subscribe to our podcast,

YouTube channel and weekly email.

You can subscribe to all three of those at OurSundaySchool.com.

Grace and peace to you.