

# **First This ... Then That ...**

**Galatians 6**

**Robert Morris ---- January 7, 2024**

Well, good morning, Grace. Welcome to 2024. Man, I do not know how that number got so big so fast, but here we are. Look at us, right? We made it. I do hope that you all and your families had a great holiday season. My name is Robert and I'm just glad to be with you this morning.

Most of my formative, I'd say teenage college years happened in what I'll call the rapid expansion of technology. I kind of had the best of both worlds. I think I was able to straddle the fence. You see, I grew up talking on a phone that was attached to a wall and begging my dad for a longer cord.



When I did get my first cell phone when I was in college, I could only call you after 9:00 or on the weekends, because that's when we had minutes. It was a glorious time to be alive if you weren't there.

So, I go off to college in this rapid expansion of technology, and when I showed up my first semester at my small, private Christian college, we still did registration in a really old-fashioned way. We lined up in a conference center with our paper schedules and went from signing up for classes to financial aid, and then room and board, and then tuition payments, and all this stuff. We did it kind of the old-fashioned way.

But as I progressed through those years, our college began to use some of these online tools for registration. So, I needed to take some language credits at the beginning of my sophomore year, because everyone did. And so, I put my things in the little system, and my advisor was supposed to give the rubber stamp to those, and I was supposed to show up with a schedule the next fall.

Now I still to this day don't know how this happened, but I got signed up for Greek II. Yeah. The only problem was that I hadn't yet taken Greek I. Now I'm not here to blame anybody. I missed it completely too. I just saw some numbers on a schedule, a class number. Frankly, I had spent the first couple of days of the semester being pretty locked in on trying to figure out whether a certain Mrs. Right thought I was Mr. Right. (Spoiler alert—she wasn't.)

In a rush, I just show up to this classroom and I sit down and I begin to notice that some things are off. Around me are a bunch of juniors and seniors. The professor begins to talk about what they're going to cover. And I realize that I am in the wrong place. There has been a grave mistake. But they've already taken roll, so I don't really know what to do. So, I do what I think every normal nineteen-year-old guy would do who doesn't want to be embarrassed in front of his peers. I just sat there sweating for fifty minutes, frantically wondering, *How do I get out of this and save face?*

But then here's what happened during that fifty minutes. I started to think, *You know what? I'm pretty smart. I think maybe if I get a tutor and really lock in, I could hang with the Greek II crowd. I mean, I'm a smart guy, I'm a pretty capable guy. I can handle it.*

See, I don't know if you know this or not, but Greek II comes after Greek I. And it was all Greek to me.

Now some things rightly come before others. No rational person thinks they can handle Greek II without Greek I. Come to find out, I had a hard enough time with Greek I. Some things are just made to come before others. And that's our big idea for today that I want to leave with

you: first this ... then that. Greek I comes before Greek II. It doesn't work if you do it in the wrong order.

As Pastor Matt has said a time or two around here, you can't fight physics. But the human condition—we'll do this to ourselves. I sat there, genuinely in my heart believing, actively fooling myself, that I could get away with mastering Greek II without taking Greek I. I'm special. I'm unique. Of course, the laws of nature don't apply to me in this situation.

And friends, as I've spent the last twenty or something years serving the local church, the body of Jesus Christ, I can think of—there's almost no bigger way that I see this concept playing out than how people fool themselves when it comes to their involvement and their investment in the local church; when it comes to their connection and community with the faith family, and in their spiritual health and vitality. You see, even in these areas some things come before others. First this ... then that.

### **“First This ... Then That” Passage**

So, today what I'd like to do with us this morning is I'd like us to consider a passage of Scripture, one big scriptural principle that I think you can find all over the Bible. But it's most noticeably displayed in Galatians 6. And I want us to consider together the implications of that verse and that principle. And I'd love us to try to apply that. Although we could probably apply this principle in a lot of different areas, I want us to apply it to how we do this thing called church together. And on the way we'll talk about a few factors that I think are getting in the way of us really thriving when it comes to our relationships in the faith family.

So, Galatians 6. If you want to follow along, that's where we're going to be. It's Paul's classic “First this ... then that” passage. He wants to make sure that his audience understands this spiritual principle, because like many of us, we don't always get it. So, he gives them this agricultural analogy to emphasize the point. It starts in verse 7: **“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever sows,”**—or plants—**“that he will also reap”**—or harvest. **“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”** (Galatians 6:7-10)

Now I love that Paul connects this reap and sow concept to our responsibility towards one another in the household of faith. Paul says that you sow and then you reap. You plant and then you harvest. But maybe the reaping and sowing analogy goes over your head—you're not the farming type, you're city folk. If Paul were writing it today it might write something like this: *Invest now, start early so that you have something to rely on in the future.* He might say, *Invest early and often and reap the benefit of compound interest.*

There's an Old Testament version of this concept as well. In Proverbs 20 Solomon says it this way. "The sluggard does not plow in autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing." (Proverbs 20:4) The sluggard, the lazy, the fool in the Book of Proverbs expects the results without the front-end work. *I'll just get to that plowing later.*

I turned forty-two this last November, and one of the hardest parts of that, besides being sore for longer than I want to when I do something physically, is that I am now living with the consequences of what I've sown into my life, both good and bad. And as I look at my life, I'm pleased with some of it. God's been really gracious to me in a number of different ways. But there are still some things that I wish I had handled differently back when I was younger. There are some things that I wish I would've killed off in my twenties. It would have made this decade a lot easier.

And again, our temptation, generally speaking, is to ignore this "reap and sow" concept and to think it doesn't apply to us. It's why Paul has to say to the Galatian believers, "Don't be deceived." Don't be deceived. You reap what you sow. Instead, we're pretty good at this: we're pretty good at what psychologists would call "magical thinking." And even more so, spiritual magical thinking.

I'll give you an example from my own life. Let's just say I have a friend. I have a friend who could stand to lose ten or fifteen pounds. And let's just say that he knows it, he's aware of it, it's important to him. He and his doctor have had a conversation about how it would probably be wise for him to do this so he can avoid some future health outcomes. But let's say this friend still likes to eat like his twenty-five-year-old self sometimes. He doesn't know how to say no to himself all the time, and he, frankly, still likes to eat like he's a twenty-five-year-old, but his metabolism has slowed down a couple of decades. But then he starts thinking, *I could just run more. I can probably just outrun this thing.* Stop looking at me like that—it's a friend.

We all have those friends. We are those friends. There's always something. There's something in your life where you say, *No, no, the laws of nature don't apply to me in this case. I can still lose ten pounds and eat fast food every day. I can get that promotion without putting in the effort. I can have deep friendships without risking relationally or investing large amounts of time.* This is us. This is our condition. We have this place somewhere where you will throw all logic and all knowledge out the window and assume it will be different for you.

And we do this in our spiritual lives—especially in our spiritual lives. Because I think it's not as tangible and it's harder, sometimes, to measure spiritual growth.

We want to magically believe that I can get the deep, rich support and community amongst a group of believers while being a part-time participant. Paul says, "Don't be deceived. You're going to reap what you sow." Do you really think you can plant disconnection and sporadic commitment and then reap rich and meaningful connection with a community of people who may see you through your darkest days?

We want the connection, but not the investment on the front end. We want the growth, but we'll ignore the vehicles of growth that the Lord puts right in front us, often. And then we'll sit back and wonder why we have the harvest that we do.

Today I'd love for us to consider this spiritual metaphor, this concept of sowing and reaping. Because if you want or expect a certain result, if you desire to get to point B, you're going to need to do some things long before the harvest. You're going to need to not grow weary in doing those things, because the proper reward comes later, and sometimes much later. But it's coming.

### **Three Factors Working Against Us**

Now as we're talking about this context of investment and relationship within the local body of believers and your spiritual health and vitality, I think we have a number of things working against us. I don't think our modern and advanced world is doing us any favors here. We know this. In a world that's so connected we can still feel so disconnected sometimes, and lonely. And I think there are at least three factors that are working against us. There are probably a whole lot more, but these three came to mind as I thought about what our unique struggles are in our day and age with this idea of being connected as a faith family.

**First is what is called the epidemic of loneliness.** I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but the Surgeon General recently put out a report that says that we are facing an "epidemic of loneliness and isolation." This man's job is to survey the health of our nation, and he's saying, *Look, there's something wrong here.* There's a lack of connection, and too much isolation and loneliness in our country. His exact quote goes this way: "Disconnection fundamentally affects our mental, physical, and societal health. In fact, loneliness and isolation increase the risk for individuals to develop mental health challenges in their lives, and lacking connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking daily." (Dr. Vivek Murthy)

And if you read his report, he specifically says, *Look, these things were in place long before COVID, but the COVID season threw some gasoline on the fire.* He's saying, *Look, there's this epidemic and it's leading to all these other negative health outcomes.*

He goes on and says this: "The physical health consequences of poor or insufficient connection include a 29% increased risk of heart disease, a 32% increased risk of stroke, and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Additionally, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60%."

I might add—and I don't expect the Surgeon General to share my worldview—that I think it's wreaking havoc on our spiritual health as well. The Surgeon General would say—and he does in his report—that we need to do some things about this. So, he says we need to strengthen the social infrastructure. We need to reform digital environments. We need to cultivate a different kind of culture. We need to have some pro-connection policies.

And he's probably right. We probably do need to do some of those things. But I wish I could tell the Surgeon General that there was a community that was designed by God to be the answer to this, that in its best moments and its most beautiful form, is the answer to this problem in a way that technology reforms will never be able to do. The Church of Jesus Christ was designed for this, friends. It's not perfect, but it has the answers.

**The second thing that I think we have working against us is this kind of worldview of what's called expressive individualism.** Scholar Robert Bellah coined this term. He said it's the modern view that we're all living in. If you pay any attention, you'll see it more. He says it's this concept that says that my truest self is where I achieve authenticity by acting outwardly in accordance to whatever my inward feelings are.

Now there's some good there. But the down side of that is that if I show disapproval of the way you're doing something or I disapprove of an action, it's not just disapproval of that; it's an attack on your identity. It's an attack on who you are. And so, I'm looking for people who will believe all the same things I believe or let me do whatever it is I want to do based on my current set of feelings.

Now in this modern view, relationships therefore have to serve that end, or they're oppressive and should be avoided. Now I don't know if you know this, but you don't have to go very far down the track before you're left all alone. I don't even agree with myself all the time. How on earth am I going to find one or two other people who are going to agree with me all the time or not disagree with me?

So, everything is kind of pushing us away from this genuine connection. And this is the air that we swim in daily ... especially the younger you are.

**Factor three, I think, is what I'll call the trouble of busyness.** I don't think we're unique, but we have our own version of this in our day and age. All of our busyness doesn't seem to be leaving us feeling relationally satisfied. All of our meetings, all of our appointments, all of our apps that connect us, all of our social media friends and followers, all of this and that, has often left us feeling even more empty, realizing that there's something amiss.

Many of you share a similar life stage that I'm in right now. I feel like my life is just a constant reprioritization of what's most important to do today, and never having enough time to get it all done. We're not crazy people. I'm in what some people call the crunch years. We have two parents with jobs, two kids who are reasonably involved in activities. We're not even the crazy folks—we're the one-sport-at-a-time people. And some weeks I don't feel like we have enough time to get it all done. It's just nuts, and I don't want to add another thing to my calendar.

But friends, I've discovered—and I know a lot of people have discovered this—there's a unique loneliness of running around crazy, always around people, yet still feeling isolated and disconnected. It's a double whammy.

One of the ways I've seen this here at Grace is this. One of the roles I have here at Grace is that I oversee our men's ministry. And one of the very interesting trends I've seen over the last couple of years that I didn't expect, frankly, but I've seen it—it's happened enough times that it's now a trend—is what I would say is, as we start new groups, is the prevalence of men who are fifty-five and older who are now joining groups looking for connection. And I love it. We

need their wisdom, we need their contribution in the body of Christ. I love that they're there. But as I have the conversations I'm having with some of these men, there's a few common things that keep coming up to the surface. They'll say things like, "I have more time now. The kids are out of the house, they're older. I'm out of those crunch years." Sometimes they say something like, "You know, I got to this stage in my life and I realized that I don't have the purposeful and Christ-centered relationships that I thought I had." Or they'll say something like, "I just need better connections to church. I'm here, I've been coming for a while, but I don't know that I'm connected all that well. I don't know that anybody really knows me."

And as I'm having these conversations with these men, light bulbs in my head are going off, because I personally assume that if you got to that point in your life you had it all figured out. And it doesn't seem to be the case. You can get to fifty-five and sixty-five and seventy-five and still feel that you're lacking in connections and that you don't have true and genuine friendships.

And so, for me two lessons came immediately to mind. One is that it's never too late. Go ahead and start.

But two, it's a word of warning for those who are coming behind these folks, those of us in our twenties and thirties and forties, that maybe we still need to figure out how to prioritize these life-giving and discipleship-oriented relationships, lest we find ourselves there in a few years.

Paul would say you reap what you sow. And our world, and frankly, our practice of life, doesn't really do us any favors.

Now before we move onto application I think there are a couple of Scriptures I'd love to remind you of when it comes to the importance of what we're doing here collectively as a body of believers.

### **The Importance of a Body of Believers**

The first of those is in Acts 2. Acts 2 is this beautiful description of the earliest disciples of Jesus Christ. They had different societal and cultural challenges, but here's how they're described in this passage. Many of you know this passage, Acts 2, starting in verse 42:

**"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs**



were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to those who had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their home, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)

Now every time I read this passage, the one thing that just jumps out to me is that, for lack of a better term, they were devoted to being together. They were devoted to being together. It was almost as if they thought, *The world is hard enough, so I need my people*. This community of faith was central to who they were. These are the people who as a group had the most important thing in life in common, so they needed to be together on a somewhat regular basis. They were, in some ways, committed to a lifestyle that was built around their investment in the community of faith and their community of faith’s investment in them. It kind of went both ways.

Now when I read this passage, it always strikes me that what they believed about the faith family was never summarized as a weekly meeting that they attended occasionally as their schedule allowed. That’s now the image we get here. It was so woven into the fabric of their life, because honestly, it was the lifeblood of their survival in a very hostile situation and environment. It was so mission critical to their ability to follow Jesus and to be His disciple. It was so essential that obviously, other things had to be sacrificed in order for it to be in its rightful place.

One of my other favorite scriptures on this topic is actually my favorite friendship passage in the Bible. It’s in **Luke 5**. It’s a story many of us know about the four friends who bring their paralytic friend to Jesus. So, when I read that story, here’s where my mind goes. I want to know the backstory on these guys. How did they become such good friends that these four guys would be willing to maybe take off a day of work, carry their friend around, face the hassle of that, get met with some obstacles, and instead of giving up, they say, “No, plan B, let’s go. Let’s start digging on the roof.” Every time I read that I wonder, *Robert, man, do you have four people you could call right now? Do you have four people you could call right now and they would reasonably drop some things to help bring you to Jesus, not out of some sense of*

obligation or some sense of owing them something, but because you had invested in them and they had invested in you, and you've loved them and they've loved you?

**1 Corinthians 12** is a passage that we've been talking about a lot last year, about spiritual gifts at Grace. It says that we are all members of one body. I need you, you need me. We need to be using our gifts together. There are many parts of one body.

**Romans 12** talks about how in the community of faith we ought to be outdoing one another in honor. We're genuinely loving each other, we're contributing to the needs of each other, we're rejoicing with those who rejoice, we're weeping with those who weep.

**Galatians 6:2** talks about how we're instructed to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

So, Grace, I think the question for us today, the question I'll propose to you and I at the beginning of 2024, is: What is the level, in regards to your spiritual health, of your relational depth in the body of Christ? How are you doing? Maybe you're killing it. Maybe you're doing a great job. But for many of us, I fear and I feel that we're feeling the pinch of this world, that loneliness often creeps in. Or we're running around so crazy all the time that the deep and meaningful connections with brothers and sisters in Christ that would sustain us is lacking.

So, Paul would say, "What are you sowing?" Are you going to like it in ten years? You're going to live with it whether you like it or not. So, do you like what you're sowing? Don't be deceived.

### Application

So, if you'd allow me for a few minutes, I'd love to be your relational investment planner, your farming coach, you could say. And as a good coach or a good investment planner, they might say something like this if we were trying to apply this concept to our lives. **They might say these three things: start early, stay patient, and let's do a relational audit.** Let's find out where you are.

**Start early.** Start sowing, start planting.

**Stay patient.** Don't give up too early. You have to reap in due season.

And third, **do a relational audit.** Do you have the kind of purposeful, intentional discipleship-oriented relationships? And if you do, great. Go deeper. But it's fair to ask, *Are my current set of relationships helping me achieve the ultimate goal that I've been designed by God*

*to achieve, which is to become like Christ in all of life? Do I have friends who are helping me get to that point? Or are they just golf buddies or drink-beer-in-the-driveway guys, or book club friends, or playdate partners?*

See, friends, I need a group of people, you need a group of people, who will not settle for me being the same old me a year from now. And so, it might be worth an audit. Are those relationships helping me?

Because I don't want to get to 2029 or 2034 or 2044 and be left with the reaping of disconnection. I think I'll be glad that I sowed some things now. And at Grace, we've tried it. As I'm being your relational investment planner, your farming coach here, we've tried to make this as easy as we can. It's a great season here at Grace to maybe consider this, to change the pattern, to start something new. It might be a great time to start sowing some things that you'd be happy to invest or harvest in the future.

There are a lot of options. This is a big place. Sometimes it's hard to find that smaller group of people. But we've done a really good job. The banquet table is full right now, friends, in front of you. All of our adult communities, our life stage communities, have started back up in January. These are a place where, if you're already driving twenty or thirty minutes to get here anyway and you've already invested the hour, what if you just stayed a little bit longer and met some people to go through life with, met some mentor couples.

Maybe it's ReEngage. Maybe you need to use the vehicle of working on your marriage to meet some lifelong friends on Monday nights.

Maybe it's CR. Maybe your hurts, your habits, your hang-ups, are beating you up and you need some people that you can be honest with, and they might be able to encourage you to take your next steps of discipleship.

Maybe it's the men's midweek groups on Thursdays. The women's ministry has a lot of great options. We've got MOPS and Women's Bible Study and MomsNext.

Maybe you could serve somewhere in Grace Kids or Connections or some other ministry. And as you're shoulder to shoulder with people, pursuing a goal and using your gifts, you might be able to love each other and care for each other and pray for one another.

Maybe it's just taking the existing group that you already have in your life, some relationship or set of relationships. And instead of just going along with the flow, you get a little

more purposeful about what you're doing with each other so that you don't just atrophy into some kind of dinner club or social connection.



We've done our best as a church to lay out a lot of great options. The table is full. If you haven't seen this yet, I encourage you to pick up one of these [Spring Connection Guide] in the lobby. It's your spring "sowing" guide. It's everything you need to know about Grace Covenant Church and what we're trying to do this spring and all the options that are right at your fingertips. I hope you can find one in the lobby today where you might be able to say, *No, no, not this year. I don't want to wake up in 2024 and wish that I had invested more in my spiritual health.* What would it cost you? A few extra hours? One less Netflix movie? One earlier alarm each week to invest in the kinds of things you want to invest in, the kinds of things you'd be happy to harvest in ten years from now?

I know we're all busy. My life is cranking up right now too. And our goal is not to get you busy for busyness' sake. Our goal, honestly, is to put around you a group of people who might be able to love you and encourage you and push you towards more Christ-likeness.

But the warning from the Apostle Paul is, *Don't be deceived. You will reap what you sow.* First this ... then that ... We will all wake up in ten years to a harvest that we ourselves sowed.

Friends, everything you want out of a church, all the best things that come from a faith community or a community of believers where there's real connection, people who share similar values to you—they're after the same goal in their life--there's something that comes before those benefits. There's a prerequisite for that kind of harvest. There's an investment you have to start making now.

As we wrap up, I'd love to share a story. It's one of my favorite stories here at Grace. It's not because of what this person went through, but because of how much it illustrates the beauty of what we're doing here as a church. There's a friend of mine, and whether you know it or not, you've been the beneficiary of how much this man loves this church and loves you and serves it.

But his story at Grace starts off a long time ago, and it's pretty common, pretty straightforward. He was not sure about all this faith stuff. His wife and his daughter started attending some things here at Grace. And so, he reluctantly began to attend some things alongside them. And at first, he's kind of on the fringes, hanging out in his truck in the parking lot a lot, waiting for his wife and daughter to finish their things.

But eventually he takes some risks and he starts to get involved a little bit. He joins one of our adult communities. He joins up with a men's group on Thursday nights with some guys who love him and care for him and want to see him grow in his faith.

And if you fast forward a couple of years, he goes through your and my worst nightmare in his real life with a tragedy in their family. And he will tell you, just like he tells every group of men on Thursday nights for the last three years, that it was that group of guys, it was those relationships he had built, that sustained him in his darkest and hardest hour. He will tell you pretty frankly that he does not know how he would have survived without these people, without these men who cared about him and loved Jesus and loved him.

And they weren't surface relationships either. He had put the time and the investment into these things. And when he needed it—and boy, did he need it—it was already built. The foundation was secure.

It illustrates this point that some things come before others. He never—here's the truth—he never would have been able to build the kind of support system and a little faith family that he needed in that moment if he would have started when the tragedy struck. It would've been too late. When hard times came and found him, he had already made that investment. He already had

a fat savings account of relational connectivity and roots that he had put down. He was the beneficiary of doing some of these things before he needed it.

Now, unfortunately, the reverse of that is true as well. I could name you names of people who were loosely connected, always on the fringes, never relationally risking, keeping on the surface level, just dipping the toe in the water, never choosing to do the hard work of building friendships over time with other like-minded followers of Jesus Christ. And when life squeezed them, they had this terrible “Aha” moment that no one was really around.

So, Grace ... 2024 ... all the things that your heart desires about a community of faith and relationships and love and support and encouragement that you need, it happens on the other side of investment and effort and consistency. Here at Grace or some other faith community, if we're not quite your cup of tea. But your heart longs to find a place where you belong, and some place that is serious about helping you become all that God has designed you to be, with people who are there to help you do that, with you and alongside you.

Because there are moments coming, and we don't know when they are coming, when we will need each other. Everything that's good that happens at church happens after a long time, unfortunately. I wish I could microwave relational depth for us. It would certainly make my job a little bit easier. We do this thing where we tend to overestimate what can happen in a month or two, but we wildly underestimate what can happen in a decade. So, don't grow weary in doing the right things for your spiritual health. Don't grow weary in making the investments in other people. Because my prayer is that when we get to ten years from now we won't have regrets about what we're reaping. We won't have regrets about what we're harvesting.

One of the joys of ministry, but also one of the challenges for us who are in pastoral ministry, is that, often, we have front row seats to many of you in your hardest moments, the worst seasons of your life, the deep valleys. I've found some things to be true. I've been doing this for a little bit. I've got a lot of evidence and a lot of stories over twenty-something years of ministry. But those who are connected and invested and have been doing that for some time in their church family or in their smaller groups in a church family like ours—those people tend to walk through the challenges of life much differently than those who are not. So, let's begin with the end in mind, people of Grace. Let's start sowing. There's a harvest coming. And Paul would say, “Don't deceive yourself. What you put in the ground, you will get out.”

Let's do Greek I before Greek II. First this ... then that...

Let me pray for us as we start this year.

Our Father, we come before You on the edge of another year, and another year that You've given us, another year we don't deserve, but another year You've given us to glorify You by taking steps together, collectively, to become like Your Son Jesus Christ.

God, would You help us consider this powerful concept of reaping and sowing? And would You give us a vision for our lives? Would You give us a vision for this year? God, would You give us, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, the strength to make some decisions about how we're going to invest and where we're going to invest, for the sake of our connection and our connection with others and our connection with You and our spiritual health?

Would You, God, continue to protect this faith family? Keep working on us, God. We need it, so that we might become a place that is full of all these little pockets of beautiful community and rich discipleship that would glorify You as we become like Christ together. And we ask these things in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.