

# The Art of the Welcome

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[ 0 : 00 ] How many of you consider yourself to be a welcoming, warm, friendly person? Wow, that's a rough bunch. Most of you didn't raise your hand.

! Like, nope, that's not me at all. Trust me, you don't want to be around me. At least not before a coffee, right? All right, so we're going to talk this morning about the art of the welcome.

Let's go to Romans chapter 14. Romans chapter 14. We are continuing on this series, When in Romans, a study into Paul's most influential, probably impactful, and definitely controversial letter to the multiple churches in Rome.

How many of you are Marvel fans? Marvel comics? You know, the whole Iron Man, Captain America, Spider-Man, that whole deal. How many of you are waiting for me to get past this part because you can't stand all that nonsense?

Yeah, there you go. All right, for those of you, I have kids, I have boys specifically, they love it. I would love to blame it on them, but I'm pretty sure I'm the one who got them into it, so I'm sorry for that.

[ 1 : 17 ] But for those of you, we're going deep into the Marvel Cinematic Universe here. What happened when Thanos snapped his fingers? Anybody? Half the known population of the Earth disappeared.

It's a fantasy, y'all. It's not in the scriptures, all right? This is not, just roll with us for a minute. For all the nerds out there who are into that, you know, how long did that last for?

Five years, right? Five years. And then everybody came back through the efforts of whatever Avengers were left, and, you know, it was a whole thing.

Anyway. The interesting part of that whole deal was, and you'll see little, if you get into those shows and movies, you'll see little references to this.

Can you imagine what it's like to disappear for five years from the Earth and then just get dropped right back into the life you had, except it's five years later and things are different.

[ 2 : 25 ] You, like, get up to go to work the next morning and find somebody else has taken your job because you've been gone for five years. You, have you ever thought about the family implications?

You were married with a family, and now it's been five years, and they've moved on. Rough, rough situation, right? Where in the world are we going with this? Well, the interesting thing is, this happened to the church in Rome.

You ready for this? This literally happened to the church in Rome. They experienced this. This thing's not working for some reason, so would you mind? You know what?

It doesn't have any batteries in it. Okay. Okay, wait, wait, wait. There we go. Hey, yes! Y'all fixed it somehow.

I don't know what you did, but thank you. All right. Do you see what happened on the left? This was called the Edict of Claudius. This was in Rome, and the emperor, kind of evil emperor, Claudius, kicked all the Christians out of Rome.

[ 3 : 33 ] Well, let me rephrase that. He kicked all the Jews out of Rome. This was an early form of anti-Semitism, and the emperor of Claudius thought the Jews were rabble-rousing people.

He thought they were a menace to society and would, you know, potentially want to overthrow the government because of their theocracy. They seemed to follow a god more than man, and so he kicked them out. They had to leave their homes.

This also included the Jewish Christians, which held the majority position in the churches of Jesus Christ.

In the early days after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, the early church was just starting to get formed all around the known world at the time. And in Rome, you had these little house churches

that had sprung up, and most of them were populated by Jewish Christians until all of a sudden the Jewish people had to vacate Rome.

So what happened? The churches died, right, because they couldn't survive without the Jews. No. That's not at all what happened.

[ 4 : 43 ] In some ways, they thrived. Here's what happened. For five years, the churches of Jesus' followers in Rome were 100% Gentile, 100% non-Jewish.

Do you know what survived? Jesus' teachings. The heart of what Jesus wanted to do on this earth. His kingdom on earth.

Those teachings survived. Do you know what did not survive? Jewish traditions. Dietary laws. What you could eat, what you couldn't eat.

Observance of the Sabbath. There were things that the Jews thought unthinkable to not do, and the Gentiles were like, We've never had those laws.

We didn't convert to Judaism. We converted to the way of Jesus. We believe in him. We're teaching. We're following his teachings, not your traditions.

[ 5 : 52 ] So the traditions didn't survive. In the Marvel universe, five years later, the blip reverses, and all the people, half the earth's population comes back.

And it's chaos in a lot of ways, as you can imagine, that would be. Guess what happened five years after Claudius kicked the Jews out of Rome?

He died. A new emperor by the name of Nero came into power. And how many of you think Nero was a good Caesar or a bad Caesar? Bad Caesar.

Nero was a good Caesar. But he didn't start that way. It actually started very successful. He kind of ushered in Rome's golden age. Nero was seen as one of the most popular, most successful emperors of Rome that they had ever had.

Until some things started to get him off track. And then he became arguably the worst that they'd ever had and went crazy. But before any of that happened, he lifted the edict of Claudius, allowing Jews to come back to Rome.

[ 7 : 00 ] So they all flooded back, thankful to God they could return to their homes and their churches. And what did they find when they went back to church?

Everything was different. Everything was not the same. Change had happened. Change that they did not approve of.

And it was into this moment that Paul was compelled to write this letter to the churches in Rome. So this was the entire context for the letter to the Romans.

So when we read the book of Romans and you open it up, chapter 1 and read all the way through chapter 16. A lot of times in 2026, we think of Romans as, well, Paul was writing the plan of salvation.

He was putting down his doctrine of salvation and all that he believed about theology. He was trying to save a fractured church. He was trying to keep this church from falling apart.

[ 8 : 08 ] He had plans to do ministry in Rome and he needed a strong home base to be able to go and reach the people in Rome.

He needed this church to survive. So that's what he was trying to do. So let's look at Romans chapter 14. For years, the Gentiles had not followed the Jewish way.

And then the Jews came flooding back in. They walked into a church that they had essentially founded.

A church that they had essentially started themselves. And they felt now that it was pagan. That it was lawless. And Paul identifies two sides of this struggle.

He identifies the weak and the strong. Now we might think that by the weak, he was referring to the Gentiles who had abandoned the Jewish traditions.

[ 9 : 14 ] And by the strong, he would be referring to the Jews who had kept these Old Testament commandments. But Paul reveals to us in his letter that it's exactly the opposite. The way Paul identifies these two parties who are basically going to war with each other.

Is that those who did not need all the Jewish traditions and adherence to the laws. He calls them stronger in faith.

He refers to them as the strong. So when you're reading through Romans, when you see Paul refer to the weak and the strong. The strong, he's referring to the Gentiles. But the weak, he's referring to the Jews who were coming back in.

Just in that usage of those words. Just in how he's referring to them. Feels like Paul chose sides, didn't he? Now it's interesting because Paul was a Jew.

He was one of those Jewish Christians. But his faith was not dependent in such a way as the Roman Jewish Christians seemed to be.

[10:24] That they had to have the old laws along with their new faith in Christ. So this is the setup for what we're going to be studying in this series on Rome.

And this is where Paul writes his letter. And on the right you've got a depiction of his messenger Phoebe. The deacon from the church in Chantry to come to them.

She carried the letter. And then she preached this letter time and time again to all the different house churches in Rome. And she would have to expound the letter.

She would have to answer questions about it. They would be stopping her along the way and saying, What? Why would he say that? What does Paul mean by this? And she would have to know well enough from Paul what his intentions were to expound upon the letter that he had sent her with.

Thousands of miles away. So Paul writes to the Romans to prove that if everyone is saved by grace. And that's kind of a theme from chapters 1 through 11.

[11:27] Saved by the same grace that God shows to all of us. Then they must be able to share the same table. And this is the theme of what we're covering today. Chapters 14 and 15.

They must learn the art of the welcome. They must be able to welcome everyone at the Lord's table together. This is one of the reasons that we're reading Romans backwards.

On Mother's Day we kicked it off with Romans 16. And we looked at some of the kingdom matriarchs. The women that were used mightily in Paul's life. And instrumental in the early church where we got our start.

And we gave recognition to them and how God used them greatly. And now we're moving into chapters 14 and 15. And we see the people that Paul was trying to save from a church split.

So, I also want to draw your attention to 1 Corinthians 8. You don't have to turn there right now.

Because we're going to read in Romans 14 in just a moment. But in 1 Corinthians 8 we see that this was not the only time that Paul had dealt with this.

[12:33] He had already dealt with this with the church in Corinth. And in his first letter to the Corinthians. Paul had already dealt with the issue of how do we coexist?

How do we merge this ancient Jewish faith with the Messiah who has now come and has invited in non-Jews to have a part in it?

Do they have to abide by all the same old laws? Or is all of that fulfilled in Jesus? And they don't have to abide by those same old laws. Think in your minds as we work through this today in just a few short minutes we have.

Think in your minds. How does this apply to First Baptist Church of Henrietta, Texas? How does this apply to how I see faith? How does this apply to the people in the room that I know well or maybe the people that I don't know well?

Look around the room. Don't be awkward or weird about it. Okay. But look around the room. Don't stare. Just kind of sneak a peek. Those people maybe that don't sit in your section.

[13:41] Those people that don't know you that well or you don't know them that well. Keep that in the back of your mind as we read through this teaching from Paul that was so essential for this church.

And it's essential for ours today. Romans 14 chapter 14 and verse 1. Accept the one whose faith is weak without quarreling over disputable matters.

Who's the weak? Was it the Jews or the Gentiles? Jews. So he's talking to the Gentiles now. He's saying accept the Jewish faith. Accept the one whose faith is weak.

Without quarreling. Kids, don't quarrel with each other. Don't fight. Don't get in needless arguments. Over disputable matters. This is the theme.

These two words. Disputable matters. Disputable matters. It's what they were dealing with in Corinth when he was in 1 Corinthians chapter 8.

[14:35] And he was writing about these same disputable matters. Can I just pause and say that Christians have always found a way to fight each other over disputable matters.

What do we mean by disputable matters? Matters that are not of first level importance to the faith of Jesus Christ. Matters in which there's room to disagree.

And we can all still love and follow Jesus according to how we best believe we're following the Holy Spirit of God. We don't have to have carbon copy faith.

But it all has to be in the same person. And we have to believe that he was born of the Virgin Mary. That he did walk and live a sinless life. That he performed miracles and taught people about the kingdom of God.

And then he willingly laid his life down as the sacrifice for our sins. To bring forgiveness to all who would repent and put their faith in him as God.

[ 15 : 34 ] And then God in power raised him up from the dead. And he is alive today and inhabits our praises. Loves us like dear children.

And calls us all to follow him in the way of Christ. If we believe that, then we have a shared faith. We can disagree about other things.

We can disagree over whether chairs or pews look better or serve a better purpose in the auditorium, the sanctuary. We can disagree over whether you should have screens up there. Whether everybody should be reading out of song books, you know. And those are kind of more trivial matters. But there are some bigger matters that people. We can disagree on what exactly Revelation is talking about.

Or how we interpret the book of Revelation. We can disagree on who should or shouldn't be a Sunday school teacher or not. We can disagree on a lot of other things. But Paul calls those disputable matters.

[ 16 : 36 ] They should not be driving us apart from our fellowship in Christ. So, let's get back to the text. Romans chapter 14.

Did you catch that?

That leads us to point number one. We cannot reject whom God has received. You see, both parties were guilty there. One was showing contempt for the others.

How dare you come in here and tell me what I can and cannot eat? Jesus never told us that. Why are you trying to put these laws and restrictions on us? And Paul is saying, don't put those laws and restrictions on them.

And then he's saying to the other side, quit getting angry at these people about it. Have some understanding and compassion for this ancient faith that has been passed down from generation to generation.

[ 17 : 47 ] And they're still holding on to it. Accept them as the weaker brother or sister in Christ. Yeah, they still need to do this in their minds.

Your faith is a little bit stronger because you recognize you don't have to do this. God is enough. Faith in Jesus is enough. But, he says, don't treat them with contempt.

And then on the other side, don't judge these ones who aren't following the rules that have never applied to them. And you still believe apply to you. He says, who are you to judge someone else's servant?

To their own master, servants either stand or they fall. Leave that up to the master. Leave that up to God. They're servants of him, just like you are.

Let God be the master, not you. So, Paul's point here is that the art of the welcome is not based on personality. It's recognition of God's ownership.

[ 18 : 51 ] You may not agree on everything. You may not vibe with that person. I don't exactly even know what that means. But I feel like young people like to talk about vibes. You may not get good vibes from them or not.

You may not see eye to eye on some issues that are important to you. But the art of the welcome says, in Christ's name, I receive you. I accept you because God has received you.

God has accepted you. So, I will not reject whom God has received. Because what this is, is rebellion against God's judgment. So, we're in Romans chapter 14 and all the way down to verse 13.

And we're not going to read all this. We don't have time for all that today. We could do a month-long series just on this chapter if we wanted to. But to keep it short today, let's look down at verse 5.

One person considers one day more sacred than another. Another considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in their own mind. So, whoever regards one day as special, they're doing that for the Lord.

[ 19 : 57 ] Whoever eats meat does that for the Lord. Whoever does not abstains does that to the Lord. So, then, verse 10. So, then, why do you judge your brother or sister?

Why do you treat them with contempt? We will all stand before God's judgment seat. So, let's stop passing judgment, verse 13, on one another. The point in disputable matters is this.

Don't rebel against God as judge. When you place yourself in the seat of judgment of another brother or Christ, brother or sister in Christ, not according to what their faith in Christ is, but you're judging how well or not they're living up to your disputable matters, what you're doing is placing yourself in the seat of judgment where God alone can sit.

You can't do that. You can't do that and call yourself a follower of Jesus. Because you're not. You're following something else. You've made your brand of religion as a God above what Jesus has taught.

I recently heard a prominent leader in Baptist life, which broke my heart, get on a recorded podcast and say, I don't think that women ought to be talking about theology on podcasts.

[ 21 : 26 ] And I'm thinking, what? Sorry, what? I would love to find a chapter and a verse in the scripture where that principle is given.

I would love to point to a teaching of Jesus where he modeled that. I would love to say that Paul didn't send Phoebe to teach his letter to the churches in Rome.

And that's one example out of many. We talked about that a few weeks ago. But I cannot understand why people would take such giant leaps from the teaching of Jesus.

But then I start thinking about the Pharisees and the thousands of laws that they tacked onto the many laws that God had already given. And they took it much further.

Because they took the spirit of it and then wrote their own laws on top of that. Missing the point of what the law was supposed to do, which was reveal our own inadequacy to us and drive us to Christ alone as the hope of our salvation, not the law.

[ 22 : 33 ] Never the law. But instead, they just expanded the law. And made all kinds of additional man-made laws and required people to live by those laws as though they were equal with the ones that had been given from the mouth of God to Moses, etc.

And this is what we see even happening today. When religion, not Jesus, but religion, will take what God instituted and put their own twist on it.

And then hold people to that standard rather than what Jesus was, said, did, and still is today. So, these are disputable matters.

I want to say to my brother, listen, if you don't think a woman should be on a podcast, then don't bring a woman on your podcast. But brother, what are we doing?

Taking men or women created in the image of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, and saying, nope, you can't do that. Nope, you can't do that. Ben Franklin said it this way.

[ 23 : 47 ] Might be a little small to read, so I'll try to read it off for you. And those disputing, contradicting, and confuting, or getting into verbal arguments or verbal wars with each other, those people who do those things, disputing with each other, contradicting each other all the time, getting into verbal arguments, those people are generally unfortunate in their affairs.

Benjamin Franklin, one of the fathers of our nation, he had a lot of wisdom. I don't know that it was always coming from a place of faith, but he had a lot of wisdom. And so, he got this about human nature. He said, these people will get victory sometimes, but they never get good will, which would be of more use to them.

And I just want to remind you of that. Good will is not everything. There are times when speaking the truth will make you unpopular. There are times when good will is not the answer.

But do you know, among the people of God, God prioritized good will above almost everything else. He was continually, Jesus was continually trying to bring his people together and stop their strivings.

Paul was continually trying to fight for unity in the church rather than disunity. That is one of the consistent themes from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

[ 25 : 08 ] There must be good will toward one another. So, the art of the welcome looks like listening without immediately jumping to argue, immediately jumping to correct.

Don't place yourself as judge in someone else's life and their walk with God. Secondly, spirituality is shown by sacrifice.

Spirituality is shown by sacrifice. That back in chapter 14 of Romans, make up your mind, verse 13, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. Skip down to verse 17. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking. It is a matter of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

These are the things that are most important. Protect these things. Guard these things. So, the responsibility of the stronger Christians who were not bound by their allegiance to something that God had fulfilled, not necessarily done away with, but fulfilled and loosened the restrictions to, which was the law that the Roman Jews were bound by.

[ 26 : 24 ] So, the responsibility of the stronger Christians then is, he says in chapter 15, the next chapter, if you'll flip over one page, verses 1 and 2, we who are strong ought to do this.

We ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not just live to please ourselves. I don't have to abide by your rules. Yeah, you're right. You don't.

So, you do it out of love. You do it out of sacrifice for the good of your weaker brother or sister. He says we ought to bear with the feelings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Each of us should please our neighbors for their good to build them up. Paul moves from theory to the person of Jesus.

And this is why Romans was written. Look down in verse 3. You ready? Here it is. You want to know why was the book of Romans written? This is why. For even Christ did not please himself.

[ 27 : 30 ] Remember? We who are strong ought to bear with the feelings of the weak, not just to please ourselves, because Jesus' goal was not pleasing himself. Now look at verse 5.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

So that with one mind and one voice. Can we say that together? With one mind and one voice. One more time, church. With one mind and one voice.

This was the thesis statement of his letter. This is what he was trying to accomplish.

Y'all got to quit fighting each other over this silly stuff. It doesn't matter what you eat or don't eat. It doesn't matter whether you're living up to all these legal issues and when the law of Moses was given and all these hundreds and even thousands of laws and requirements.

[ 28 : 50 ] It doesn't matter if you're living up to all these legal issues and things like that.

It doesn't matter if you're living up to all these legal issues and things like that. The Jews can't handle it, man. Just gets them all bent out of shape. So for sake of them and our Christian unity, I won't do this where it's going to lead them astray and it's going to cause problems.

Because if that Jewish person, thinking, convinced in their mind that God does not want them to eat pork, if the smell of the BLT is too much to overcome and they sneak a strip of bacon, they're sinning.

Because they're not doing it by faith. They think they're doing it against God. And remember, God is far, we've said this so many times, God is far more concerned about the why, about the heart, rather than the what you're doing.

Whatever is not a faith is sin. Because your heart is away from God.

[ 30 : 30 ] It's not sinful to eat pork. Those Jewish people were absolutely free under the spirit of God to eat bacon or pork chops or whatever else. God freed them.

They could do it. But until the Holy Spirit revealed that to them, until they could accept that, then it would be wrong of them to go against their faith and say, Well, God doesn't want me to do this, but I'm going to do it anyway.

That's it. And it's the same kind of sin for the person who knows that they're free and they're not bound by those laws to say, You know what?

I'll do it right in their face. I'll burp my bacon breath at them. That's gross. Why did I say that?

Anyway. But that's kind of the attitude, you know, that Paul's fighting against.

Like, can y'all be nice about this? Can you not flex your freedom on those who think that you're not supposed to have it? Can you not just shove it in their face? Can you not go post on social media about how you don't have to keep all the laws and show yourself out there in society breaking the Jewish laws?

[ 31 : 40 ] Can y'all stop this, please? This is not who Jesus is. This is not who he wants his church to be. And so I'm communicating that back to you, church.

Can we have some thought for each other? Can we have some patience and show some grace to each other? Whether you're more on the right or you're more on the left, whatever that's supposed to be.

And I'm pretty sure I just pointed to your right. That's all right. You know what we're saying. Real strength is the ability to lay down your rights to protect the person sitting next to you.

Real strength is your ability to sacrifice. So 1 Corinthians 8, 12, Paul wrote it this way. I told you he'd already dealt with this.

He said, when you sin against other believers in this way and you harm their weak consciences, you're actually sinning against Jesus. So you might think you're throwing it in somebody else's face because you're annoyed at how they judge you.

[ 32 : 48 ] In reality, you're throwing it in the face of the one who died for that person and died for you and loves both of you unconditionally. So don't sin against Christ by sinning against your brother.

Real strength is not winning an argument about your rights. It's the ability to lay down your rights for the sake of someone else. And then look at this, Romans 15.

We read it a moment ago, but just a reminder. May the God who gives you endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude. Philippians puts it this way, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Humbled himself. Made himself of no reputation. Went all the way to the cross. And sacrificed everything for those who did not deserve it. So you might see somebody else in this room.

Or you might say, man, nobody's driving me nuts right now. I got no problem with anybody.

Somebody, let's check back in another month or two and see if anybody's driving you nuts then. Sometimes we step on each other's toes.

[ 33 : 57 ] Sometimes we irk each other. Sometimes we rub each other the wrong way. Sometimes we push each other's buttons. And Jesus is saying, whether or not they deserve it, have the same attitude toward them that Christ had toward you and still has today.

Rick Warren said it this way. Sacrifice, hang on, we're going to get there. There we go. Sacrifice is the essence of love, which is the essence of God. I'm sure there's probably been things that I say that Rick Warren wouldn't agree with.

I'm sure there are things that Rick Warren has said that I necessarily wouldn't agree with. But I want to share this quote with you today. Sacrifice is the essence of love. And love is the essence of God. Love is who God is. God is love. Y'all knew that one. I didn't stump you on that, right? God is love. We read that in the scriptures.

Love equals sacrifice. Unsacrificial love is not love. So I want to close with this. Go to Ephesians chapter 2.

[ 35 : 13 ] We'll be done. Ephesians 2. As you turn, would you say these statements with me? God is love. Ready? God is love.

And then let's do this one. Ready? Love is sacrifice. Let's try it one more time. God is love. And love is. Yes, it is.

Now Ephesians chapter 2. Verse 14. Look down at verse 14. For he himself, Jesus, is our peace. He has made the two groups one.

What groups was he talking about? The Jews and the Gentiles. The same groups that were fighting in Rome. Ready? He's made the two groups one.

He has destroyed the barrier. The dividing wall of hostility. Jesus destroyed it in himself. There's no need for a wall anymore.

[ 36 : 10 ] There's no need for hostility anymore. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two. Give up your identity as a law-abiding Jew and become a Christ follower.

Give up your identity as a free, unencumbered Gentile and become a Christ follower. Give yourself a new identity, a new humanity out of the two.

The most human that we can possibly be is when we are following Jesus. So Paul's telling the Romans to welcome each other.

Because in Christ, the wall that divided them is torn down. So move a step toward each other. And then as God's grace allows and equips you to, move another step toward each other.

And soon you'll just be together enjoying your worship of Jesus. And not worried about who's eating what. Or who's keeping which holy day. Or etc, etc.

[ 37 : 18 ] And look, we can take those controversies that don't apply to us so much in small town Texas. But we can insert our own controversies that we get bent out of shape about with each other. Well, I don't think they ought to be doing that.

And I can't believe they're posting it on Facebook. Maybe it's unwise of them. And maybe God's spirit needs to work on them too. But he's got to work on you too.

Your contempt for those who judge you. And your proclivity to judge those who are not meeting your standard. That message applies today.

We've got to take it to heart. This is why Romans was written. And in this church, I think it particularly applies to us in this season. The Lord kind of gave me a theme for our church at the beginning of the year.

Which was, this is the year of direction, not perfection. Y'all remember that? Can we say that together? Direction, not perfection. Yeah. That's the Christian life.

[ 38 : 20 ] That's the walk with Jesus. It's never going to be perfect. But we're moving in a common direction. And that's what the Romans had to see. Whether it was Jew or Gentile, they were moving in a common direction toward Christ.

So join hands and do it together. We're all walking toward Jesus. Here's the question I want to leave you with today. What does love require of me?

Got this from another preacher I heard probably 15 years ago. And his sermon had nothing to do with this. But it popped back into my head as I was writing this sermon. I thought, that is the question to ask us today.

What does love require of me? Love required the Gentiles to stop getting so angry at the Jews when they came back in and found their church all different. Love required the Jews to show more grace and understanding when they came back and the church looked different from when they were gone.

What does love require of you today? Would you bow your heads with me? God is love and love is sacrifice.

[ 39 : 25 ] So the answer to that question is love will require you to sacrifice something. What is the sacrifice? Maybe love shone on the cross of Calvary.

Before we ever saw the power of God rising from the dead, we saw his love portrayed on the cross willingly dying and suffering to forgive you of your sins.

Maybe love is requiring you to surrender to that and say, yes, I believe in Jesus. I choose Jesus today. Is there somebody in the room today that would say, today is the day I would like to place my faith in Jesus Christ.

Would you slip your hand up? I'd love to talk to you. Thank you. For all those in the room who already identify as a follower of Jesus. Is there something that God's working on you in your heart about right now?

Says this is a sacrifice I can make. I can give up this to not be a problem for my brother or sister in Christ. I can ask God to change this way that I am to cause fewer conflicts in his church or in this community.

[ 40 : 40 ] I recognize that I carry the name of Jesus with me everywhere I go. God, make me a more patient person. Make me a more gracious person. Make me a kinder person. Make me a kinder employee.

Dad, husband, wife, mom, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparent, boss.

Whatever you are, whatever hats you wear, what does love require of you? What sacrifice in that role? God, show us exactly from your scriptures.

God, amen. And enlighten us, illuminate them by your spirit. Teach us gently, patiently, like you always do, what sacrifice you require of us.

For the sake of each other and for your glory. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Listen, my family and I are going to slip out. We're heading on vacation for a little bit. So we're going to be gone for a little bit.

[ 41 : 41 ] But we will be back with you soon. So I'm grateful to all of you for being here and worship today. If any of you would like to come and place your membership in the church, if you'd like to talk about putting your faith in Christ, I'll be back in the back for a little bit.

I'd love to have that conversation with you. So just find me back there and say I'd like to talk about church membership or any other question you may have. If you just want to know what time a

Wednesday night activity is, it's at what time, church?

Six. That's right. Just ask anybody. They'll tell you. All right. Speaking of that, back again Wednesday at six. And then again on Sunday. And we.