**Sermon: “Pals, Partners, and Partakers”**

Text: Philippians 1:1-11

**WELCOME AND THE TEXT**

*Welcome everyone, ask them to turn in their Bibles to Philippians 1, and note that…*

We’re starting a new sermon series in Philippians this morning: **Have This Mind in You**, which comes from Philippians 2:5 in the hymn on Christ’s humility. Paul says there, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

So much of what we’ll learn in the coming two months will point us to Christ and remind us of the fact that our spiritual maturity must be rooted in Christ… we will only grow in the faith if we’re in Christ.

We’re looking forward to it and hope you are too.

With that, I’ll read our text for this morning: Philippians 1:1-11.

**1**Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: **2**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3**I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4**always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5**because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6**And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **7**It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8**For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. **9**And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10**so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11**filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is… the Word… of the Lord.

**INTRODUCTION**

We need true friends and true fellowship—when we think we do and when we act like we don’t. Whether we have good reasons or bad reasons to not… you need true friends and true fellowship more than you can realize.

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring is the first film of the original Lord of the Rings trilogy. It’s based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s novels and chronicles a diverse group of men, dwarves, elves, and hobbits who band together to save Middle Earth from the evil Sauron by destroying the One Ring in the fires of Mordor.

At the center of the journey is Frodo, a young hobbit who must be the ring bearer. He is tasked with holding on to the ring until it can be destroyed. His journey is a dangerous one, so he is given several friends to help him.

***But none are as close to him as Samwise Gamgee.***

Sam proves invaluable to Frodo many times during the course of the story.

Many of you have probably seen the movie. At one point, Boromir has been killed by evil Orcs and the fellowship of heroes has been broken apart. In this desperate moment, Frodo thinks he is a threat to his friends and that he can spare their lives by going alone. He leaves the safety of his friends and makes his way onto a boat, intent on sparing his friends from doom.

But he can’t seem to shake Samwise Gamgee. As Frodo’s trying to get away, Sam chases him. “Frodo, no! Frodo! Frodo!”

Frodo tells him, “No Sam. Go back Sam. I’m going to Mordor alone.”

***Sam tells him, “Of course you are. And I’m coming with you.”***

At this point, it’s clear that Sam can’t swim, and Frodo is screaming at him to stop. Sam’s head goes under water, and his death seems imminent. Frodo then goes back to him, pulls him from the water, and saves him.

Sam, once he comes to, then tells him: “I made a promise Mr. Frodo. A promise! ‘Don’t you leave him Samwise Gamgee.’ And I don’t mean to. I don’t mean to.”

And at the end of the trilogy, about six hours later, it’s Samwise there with Frodo as the ring is destroyed, and we know, at that point, that Frodo would’ve never made it without Sam.

These are the kinds of friendships the Christian life can lead us to… that it’s supposed to lead us to. This is the kind of friendship it seemed Paul and the Philippians had as we read this letter. If Paul was going to traverse the land to preach the gospel, then the Philippians were going to be his Samwise Gamgee.

**BRIEF BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The church at Philippi was the first church Paul founded in Europe in Acts 16. He had likely visited them since planting the church. But since then, he’s ended up in prison—most likely in Rome. Not only that, but it seems in this letter that he knows his death is imminent. This might be the last word they get from Paul.

This could be considered a missionary support letter. He is writing to those who currently support his work and help make it happen. Paul, in this letter, is fulfilling his end of the deal as the missionary-church planter.

He assures them of his prayers, updates them on his circumstances, reports on the gospel ministry in his area and what he’s done, offers encouragements, and expresses gratitude for their support in the ministry.

But others have called it, simply, a “friendship letter,” not written out of obligation or duty as much as it is written out of love for the recipient.

Paul’s love, we’ll see, is evident.

***He cares deeply for these people.***

J.B. Lightfoot says that, “The thanksgiving in this letter is more than usually earnest. The apostle dwells long and fondly on the subject.”

I’ve served in five churches in some ministerial capacity now, and if you ask me my favorite, I’d just say, “The one I’m serving right now.” Pastors don’t want to get into those comparison games.

But I think if you had asked Paul his favorite church, he would have said, without hesitation: “Philippi. 100%.” Paul, what about Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae, Corinth? “Philippi, 100%.”

I’ve wondered if there was some awkwardness when this letter possibly circulated to some of the other churches. Imagine the Galatians. Paul had just written to them, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ… O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (Galatians 1:6; 3:1)

And here he is telling Philippi, “I hold you in my heart… I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”

We have in these verses a clear thankfulness in Paul for these people. And why is he thankful? Why does he love them so much?

**CENTRAL IDEA OF THE TEXT**

**Central Idea of the Text:**

Paul loved the church in Philippi for three reasons: they were his pals, they were his partners, and they were fellow partakers of God’s grace.

So… I’ve creatively titled this sermon, “Pals, Partners, and Partakers.”

As pals, they had mutual love—a great affection for each other.

As partners, they had mutual activity—a great work with each other.

As fellow partakers, they had mutual grace from God, himself—the salvation only God can give.

Our fellowship and friendship with each other—brothers and sisters to other brothers and sisters in the faith… it exists for the same reasons. In the church, like nowhere else, we should have a mutual affection for one another because we’re pals, partners, and partakers.

**THE MEAT**

So, that’s where I plan to take us today—to see what it means to be each of these things… and what it might look like to be and do them well.

In the church, we’re pals, partners, and partakers. First, let’s look at what it means that…

**(1) We’re pals. (vv. 3-4, 6-8)**

These people make Paul *joyful*. Verses 3-4: “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy…”

Paul says that every time he remembers the Philippians, he thanks God. We don’t read this as in every single prayer Paul made, he was praying for the Philippians. Instead, it’s that every prayer he prays *for them*, Paul has *joy*.

***These people put a smile on his face.***

Hopefully, you have your “person” as well—one that brings you joy. And if you’re married, I’m not talking about your spouse and children, though I hope they do bring you joy.

I’m talking about the person on Sundays that you can’t wait to see, because it’s such a joy to be around them. The person who encourages and edifies you. The person who has stood by you. The person who loves you for you, not for what you might give them. The person who, if they’re not here, your day feels a little more cloudy.

It's a blessing from God to have people like that in our lives.

Like it did for Paul, if you have that person… let it produce prayer in your life. Do you see the cycle here?

1. Paul remembers them.

2. Paul thanks God for them.

3. Paul makes that prayer of thanks with joy.

4. Joy continues to swell in his heart.

5. That joy likely causes him to remember them again, which turns him right back to prayer.

It’s as Walter Hansen put it in that quote on the front of your bulletin:

“Every remembrance of his friends moves him to pray urgently for their needs. Every urgent request for them includes giving thanks to God for them. Giving thanks to God for his friends fills his heart with joy. Here we see a chain reaction in Paul’s spirituality: memory of friends leads immediately to urgent requests for their needs; these petitions prompt him to give thanks to God for his friends; thanksgiving to God lifts him to express joyful praise.”

It's a gift from God to have a friend like this. I sympathize with a job explanation I heard a few weeks ago. Asking someone what they do, he replied, “I’m a professional e-mailer.” I feel like that sometimes too. Always aiming to get my inbox to zero.

And to do that, I have to weed through e-mails pretending to be personal that are not. You know the ones: “Dear Mr. Moore.” Or “Dear [Insert Name],” if the automations don’t kick in.

And then a few paragraphs of why I matter so much to them, just to ask for my money or for me to buy some product or make some new subscription.

We don’t want false affections… pretend friendships. We don’t want to be pandered to. We want the real thing. And that’s what Paul and the Philippians have.

How wonderful to be the kind of person of whom it can be said, “I thank my God every time I think of you.” We get that in the church.

These people make Paul joyful, and he loves them for it. These people also give Paul confidence—and that makes them even truer friends.

Verse 6: “I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Where the ESV says “sure” in verse 6, the NASB more helpfully says “confident.” Paul is confident that God is at work in the Philippians’ lives, and he is going to see them through to the end.

A true believer can have many friends, family members, acquaintances, co-workers, neighbors, etc. But it’s other believers who are our truest friends because it is believers who share the greatest thing in common with us—salvation now and eternal life later.

C.S. Lewis said friendships are discovered when you say, ‘What, you too?! I thought I was the only one.’ Friendships are typically based on something we have in common.

Tony Merida says that, “Gospel friendships are much deeper because there is a ‘You too!?’ that’s radically deeper. We share in a common Savior, are united by the same Spirit, and are headed for glory together.”

Guys, how sweet is that friendship with our friends who believe and live in such a way that we can be confident of their future? We know, “This is someone I’ll have on the other side of eternity.” ***And our hearts ache for those that we can’t say this about.***

Paul is assured that they’ll make it. They are not a perfect church, as we’ll see in just a few chapters. But they are a healthy church. And that makes Paul all the more glad to call them his pals… his friends.

It’s no wonder, then, that Paul longs to be with them in person.

These people are *with* Paul. Verse 7: “It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart…”

He wants to see them face to face. But in the meantime, he writes, “I hold you in my heart.” This would be better translated as, “I have you in my heart,” or, “There is a special place in my heart for you.”

We were made for community. The only thing “not good” in the garden of Eden was that Adam was alone. Like our triune God—one God in three persons—we need community.

As I worked on this sermon, one song got stuck in my head: Phil Collins’ “You’ll Be in My Heart.”

As an aside, Phil Collins went way harder on that soundtrack than anyone ever expected for a cartoon movie about a man raised by apes. Listen to it. As the kids say, it’s fire.

Here’s an excerpt from “You’ll Be in My Heart.”

“Don't listen to them cause what do they know?

We need each other, to have, to hold.

They’ll see in time, I know…

When destiny calls you, you must be strong.

I may not be with you, but you’ve got to hold on.

They’ll see in time, I know.

We’ll show them together… cause you’ll be in my heart.”

Phil Collins knew—people need each other… physical embodied presence… to have and to hold, and that when we can’t—at least—to be in one another’s hearts was a good substitute.

Sweet lyrics—but they don’t even touch the extent to which Paul and the Philippians cared for one another.

Even though physically apart, Paul felt he and they were actually together. That’s how much they meant to him.

R.P. Martin says here that Paul was “vividly conscious of being present with his converts even when he was physically separated from them” and that “this metaphor *I have you in my heart*… is the most imaginative in all his writings.”

It’s this phrase matched with “partaker of grace” that is so astonishing—there’s a deep sense of oneness even though distance separates them.

And even more than his desire to be with them… Paul’s affection… his love… for them is beyond measure.

These people, Paul *loves*.

To express how much he cares for his friends, he uses the name of God in verse 8: “For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”

Paul appeals to God’s name as confirmation for how much he loved them. That’s not something you do unless you really mean it.

***Paul really did love these people.***

***He wanted to be with them.***

When Paul says “yearning,” what he’s trying to convey is that he misses this church.

In Paul’s eyes, they are “easy to love.” When he thinks of his love for them, it’s comparable even to the the affection of Christ Jesus for his people. Paul says that’s the root of his love.

But the good news is that God loves us even when we are not “easy to love.” Thankfully, his love isn’t circumstantial or dependent on us. Paul might even call the Philippians fools one day (like he did the Galatians), because his love is only human.

***But God’s love will never fail.***

So, as we come to understand Paul’s joy for… his confidence in… his desire to be together… and his affection for this people—it points to the one who does it better than anyone else—God, himself.

He is our truest friend… and our friendship with him is the one that every good, earthly friendship points to.

Practically, how might you be a better friend to others? How might you move beyond surface-level fellowship to the real thing—something that makes you talk like Paul

talks here?

**Don’t just be a pal; be a pen pal.** There’s perhaps nothing more joyful than opening a mailbox to get a handwritten letter from someone you care about—someone who took the time needed to do such a thing to show you they care. Like Paul, write your friends letters.

**Practice hospitality.** Since we’re not prohibited as Paul was… be with others face-to-face. And as you do it, learn their stories. Ask them to share their testimonies. It’s hard to be thankful and to have joy for what you don’t know. And it’s hard to have that “You too!?” moment that C.S. Lewis talks about until we talk to each other this way.

**Be here.** You’re here now; that’s good. But really, be *all in* here. Go out of your way to be with God’s people; and take time to get to know God’s people. Come early; stay late. Find true fellowship in the church.

**Depend on and hold one another accountable.** Dig deeper. Plant yourself here. Get rooted. Don’t walk through life alone.

If you’ve been considering membership but haven’t taken that next step, let me encourage you that—on earth—there’s probably nothing better for your spiritual health than to covenant with and care for God’s people in church membership.

**T.S.:** The fellowship and friendship that Paul and the Philippians share is multiplied by our next two points—they were so close because they were also partners in the work of the gospel.

**(2) We’re partners. (vv. 5, 7)**

From the beginning “until now,” these people have partnered with Paul. Verse 5: “…your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now…”

The Greek word used for “partnership” is one you may have heard before: *koinonia*. It’s most often translated as “fellowship.” The older I get, the more and more churches I see that are calling themselves “Koinonia Church” to emphasize the centrality of fellowship in the Christian life. But what is true Christian “fellowship?”

When Paul uses this word, he’s trying to say that there’s something “shared” about what they’re doing “in the gospel.” It’s a term that conveys “a sense of commonality, solidarity, and shared responsibility.”

The persistence of their partnership cannot be taken too lightly. Paul makes a point to highlight that this partnership has existed “from the first day until now.”

He thinks back on when they first believed in Acts 16. We won’t take time to go and read that chapter, but I encourage you to do so sometime this week. The Spirit led Paul to Philippi and, through him, worked saving miracles in the lives of Lydia and the Philippian jailer. They believed the gospel, and there is thanks given to God for that.

And like Paul, they’re likely spreading the gospel—this was the first church in Europe and surely a hub for further gospel proclamation.

Almost immediately after she believed, Lydia offered the hospitality of her home, and the jailer washed his prisoners’ wounds—they got to work, and they were still working.

But it becomes clear, later in Philippians, that their partnership comes *primarily* in financial support for Paul. This is confirmed in Philippians 4:15-16: “And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.”

They had clearly continued to support Paul in his ongoing work. How amazing is it that Paul considers them partners because of this?

***Have you thought about your missions giving in such a way? That it makes you a partner in the gospel.***

***You should.***

Paul’s language of “partnership” here implies experiencing the difficulty with Paul. He’s saying, “If I labor, so are you. If I’ve suffered, so have you. If I’m in chains, so are you.”

They are “participators with Paul” in his experience of defending and confirming the gospel, as well as being imprisoned for doing so.

They are committed, together, to make sure the gospel—the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Messiah—gets to the masses.

They did this not out of wealth, but out of sacrifice. This partnership costs them. Second Corinthians 8:2 says, “Their extreme poverty [has] overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.”

Not only have they continued to partner with Paul, but they did it through “thick and thin.” Verse 7: “…both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel…”

They did not forget Paul in his imprisonment. When it was hardest to partner, they pressed on.

They stood with Paul through his ministry to “defend and confirm,” as he states it in verse 7. Paul’s ministry was one of both defending against the false gospels of that day and confirming the one true gospel.

Yet, it was doing this that so often put Paul behind bars.

So, the Philippians chose to stand with him through his time in prison—which too remained a defense and confirmation ministry, as Paul later says that, even in chains, “in every way… Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice” (1:18).

Whether Paul is in prison or out in public making his defense of the gospel, the Philippians have remained by his side.

The fact that they’ve remembered him in his hardest moment only strengthened the extent of their friendship… and it strengthened Paul’s thankfulness that he could count them as friends.

Their partnership was not just one of attitude but one of action. They didn’t just tell Paul they were with him; they actually did things to show that they were with him.

Paul commends them here not for some kind of abstract support—platitudes about how they’re “with him” in his darkest days.

***He’s commending them because they’ve tangibly remained by his side.***

Our fellowship with one another must move beyond mere socialization. Fellowship isn’t just drinking coffee or playing golf together. We fellowship in the common mission of making the gospel known to the world. Through Christ, we are friends and coworkers with other believers.

Perhaps you can consider how you might more clearly partner with gospel workers around the world—not in attitude only but also in action… not giving only out of wealth but even being willing to give out of poverty.

Just a few weeks ago, I was encouraged by a member of ours who asked me if I knew of any missionaries or Christian families currently directly impacted by the war in Gaza and Israel right now. This member said he had been seeing and hearing of some horrible accounts and wanted to do something more than pray; he wanted to help a little bit financially. Out of all the online fundraisers, he just wanted to know the best one—so he could tangibly partner with missionaries working in a difficult situation.

I’d love to get ten more texts like that this week.

Do what you can to partner with other believing workers around the world. And in that, your Christian friendships can grow.

**T.S.:** Before they could become pals and partners, though, they had to each become partakers of divine grace, and Paul ends on this note, as should we.

**(3) We’re partakers. (vv. 1-2, 6-7, 9-11)**

We are fellow partakers of God’s grace. Another way of putting it is that we are “recipients of God’s grace.” That grace is experienced in a multitude of ways.

We are primarily partakers of God’s special grace. Verse 7: “…you are all partakers with me of grace.”

God has saved us. Paul and the Philippians share the special favor of God. As Ephesians 2:4-5 puts it, “God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

The grace and peace, that come only from God, are theirs; so, Paul identifies them as “the saints… who are at Philippi” at the beginning of this book.

The grace they are partakers of… is the grace that comes only from God. This is a letter written for the saints of God—holy ones—who have been recipients of God’s grace and have peace and reconciliation with him.

This is the “Amazing Grace” that we sing of… that God might “save a wretch like me.” Every membership class, we teach through our church’s confession of faith, which is adapted from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith from 1853. In the article, “Of God’s Purpose of Grace,” it says that our election in Christ “is a most glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy.”

***We can’t remind ourselves enough of this saving grace in our lives.***

***We’re partakers of divine grace.***

Paul also prays that, as partakers, that their “partaking” may increase—that the grace that saved them will continue to produce that which is good in them.

So, saving grace is also sanctifying grace. In Verses 9-11, that’s what Paul is trying to show us.

This is Paul’s prayer—what he’s been joyfully praying for his dear friends.

He wants their love to “abound more and more,” love for God and love for one another, as Jesus summarized it in Matthew 22. This love would be accompanied by “knowledge and discernment.” Not only would their knowledge grow, but their ability to apply that knowledge would grow as well. Paul wanted them to be able to “discern”—to have the “depth of insight” required to live for the Lord.

In doing this, they would be more and more able to “approve what is excellent.” They’d be able to determine what matters most in this life.

As we grow old, our partaking in God’s grace is revealed and confirmed as we increasingly affirm and practice that which is excellent. We start to let go of the things that don’t matter as life goes on, so that we can grip tightly to the things that do.

The thought here is if they do the first things, then this will follow. If love is growing, the prayer is that knowledge and discernment would accompany it. If your love is growing in knowledge and discernment, Paul says it will lead you to “approve [and do] what is excellent.”

Philippians 4:8 came to my mind as I read this, which we’ll study later this summer. There, Paul writes: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

This is how the Christian life is marked—a pursuit of that which is excellent.

Whatever we do in life, whatever we give ourselves to… may we be able to say that it’s that which is “true… honorable… just… pure… lovely… commendable… excellent… worthy of praise.” It wouldn’t be a bad practice to just assess your life right now, determine those things that do not fit into one of these categories, and work to rid yourself of them.

In this, Paul prays that they might be “pure” and “blameless.” He wanted them to be found in Christ and, thus, without offense when the Lord returned.

The idea here is that of the “inner” and “outer” life. It’s character (who you are when no one is watching) and reputation (who you are when others are watching). We don’t divorce these two—we aim for both.

And this will lead to “the fruit of righteousness.” It will lead to the fruit of salvation… rooted in Christ, we’ll produce what is expected for Christians to produce.

It’s a fruit of righteousness… because it proceeds from the righteousness that is given to us in salvation—it’s not that the fruit is what gives us a righteous standing before God... or what makes us righteous.

Don’t confuse this.

This is a request for Christ himself, as it is “through him,” that we get this fruit.

***And thus, all glory and praise would go to God.***

The “fruit of the Spirit” song is a popular one in my house right now thanks to Vacation Bible School. I’m glad, because now my kids know the fruit of the Spirit’s not a banana, watermelon, coconut, or grape. It’s love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control-ol-ol.

When J.D. was teaching on the fruit of the Spirit during VBS, I thought he used a fitting illustration. He brought out some sticks from his yard with different fruits duck taped to them to prove a point about what fruit trees do *not* look like.

Unfortunately, the Christian life sometimes looks like this—or some try to make it that way. They think the goal is to simply add all the fruit of the Spirit to our lives like duck taping lemons to a stick.

But that’s not the key. If you’re an unbeliever with us today, then I especially want you to hear this! The fruit of righteousness is not a checklist… what Paul’s doing here is not giving us a to-do list.

The key is to abide in the Savior, Jesus Christ, and then the fruit will come… the fruit of righteousness that only comes from union with the king of righteousness.

What Paul’s praying for here is not instantaneous; however, it is increasing… it is progressive.

This is why we’re referred to as spiritual babies and children in Scripture. Have you ever watched a child try to learn to walk… to talk… to become self-sufficient. I’ve been watching for five years now. It’s not like gazelles and giraffes that are running 10 minutes after they exit the womb.

Human babies have to grow up slowly, over time, and with much patience.

That’s the Christian life; it’s not instantaneous, but Lord willing, it’s increasing and progressive.

So, we can’t be too hard on ourselves or others. The question is not, “Have I arrived?” You’ll never arrive in this lifetime. The question is, instead, “Am I progressing?” Am I being “conformed to the image of his Son?” (Romans 8:29)

As partakers of grace, Paul confirms that God will see us through. He will keep his people and hold them fast. Remember, Paul is confident of this very thing. Verse 6: “…he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Not only have they been solid partners from the first day until now, but here, Paul looks into the future and is assured (and is assuring them) that they will have this work of grace completed at the day of Christ.

God will do it. He will keep them in his grip and bring the work to a completion.

**CONCLUSION**

If you think Paul loves these people, think about how much more the Lord loves them.

If you have have a friend who loves you this way, think about how much more the Lord loves you… and how much more he loves them.

We often sing the song, “He Will Hold Me Fast” here at Grace Bible Church. If I had the foresight, I could’ve worked to make it a part of today’s service. Still, I think these lyrics—even if just read—can be an encouragement to us and what God is doing… and will do… in our lives.

“Those He saves are His delight

Christ will hold me fast

Precious in His holy sight

He will hold me fast

He’ll not let my soul be lost

His promises shall last

Bought by Him at such a cost

He will hold me fast”

One day, church, the work will finally be finished.

Our confidence in this comes from God, who finishes what he starts and does not leave us to fend for ourselves.

Be thankful, church, that here—among God’s people—that this will happen for you… and be thankful that you have pals, partners, and partakers to go with you.

And do whatever you can to abide in Christ, ensuring that you’ll continue in this way for the rest of your earthly life.

Let’s pray.

*Pray.*