

# **“How Good and Pleasant”**

## **By Chris Ulrich**

### **Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

Amen. You may be seated. Good to see everyone this morning, and, like Parrish had mentioned earlier, quite the beautiful day. Very unexpected, yesterday, I think the forecast had been for, like, foggy and cloudy like it's been all like, but, all of the sudden, out of the blue, back came the sun, and it was like sixty degrees. It was like late April, so, I've got to say that was an unexpected blessing.

I'd like to ask Brent Havisto if he come. He's going to lead us in a prayer for the service this morning, so, if we could all bow our heads.

**Brent:** Lord Jesus, we just want to come before You today, God. We just want to bend our ear, bend our hearts, bend our souls, just open our hearts to hear Your voice, God. Lord, we just want to truly ask that You bless Chris, the messenger, God, and, Lord, we just want You to show us the way, God. You know the way home, and, Lord, Your Word is important, and, God, I just ask that You open all the hearts that are here, God, and let our heart and our ears and our mind hear what You have to say to the church. We just want to lift You up and give You praise, and thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Brent. So, this month, we've been covering some of the foundations of Christianity. And, the first week, Parrish shared, some of those, in order, but, I want to touch on the actual topics, here, a little bit: We talked about tithes and offerings; last week, Parrish brought the message about baptism and prayer, about some of the principles of baptism and prayer; and, our Scripture for the month has been from First Corinthians. I'm just going to read it:

**1 Corinthians 3:11** *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

And that's what we build our lives on. That's the rock. That's something that we go back, and we understand that this is what we've searched for, this is that truth that we've sought after. And, this morning, we're going to talk about fellowship. There's a couple of points I'm going to cover:

1. Friendship and Fellowship (Knowing the Similarities and Differences)
2. The Benefits of Fellowship

## **1st Point – Friendship and Fellowship (Knowing the Similarities & Differences)**

And I want to read a verse real quick—you don't have to turn with me to it—it's a fairly common verse, and I think a lot of us are probably familiar with this, but, it simply says:

**Proverbs 18:24** *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

I know we just talked about some of the—from the song, the lyrics: Friends don't treat me like they used to, since I laid my burdens down. And, I've got to say that it's kind of a mixed bag when you think about the friendships that we've had prior to coming to the knowledge of the Truth, and, some endure, some continue, and some don't. I don't want to dwell too long on just the definition of friendliness; I think we all have a pretty good idea what it means, I mean, and what it entails. It's not listed verbatim as one of the fruits of the Spirit, from Galatians five, but I would say that love,

gentleness, and goodness are pretty much similar characteristics, similar traits, so there's no doubt about it that friendliness is a trait that God wants us to have, that God expects us to have.

I know I have friends outside of the church, and I would think everyone in this room probably does too. But truthfully the people I'm closest to are in the faith. I think that has a lot to do with having a purpose, having a common goal. And that doesn't mean that we shun everybody on the outside, that doesn't mean that we deliberately terminate friendships. But, I want to spend some time there, because we have to understand that it's not always just one size fits all. It's not always a matter of, "Okay, well, friends don't treat me like they used to." Okay, how are we treating them? I know that might be a little bit different way of looking at it, but, are we giving them the friendliness and the respect—and I'm not talking about being accommodating to the point of compromising our testimony. I'm not talking about where, if, depending on what our activities, depending on what our behavior was, depending on what the source of that behavior was, and depending on what our common ground was, what it was we used to do together, well, a lot's going to depend on that. And, you know that's not just in this group, as far as me feeling like those are the people that I'm closest to, but, you know, as far as throughout our churches, throughout the United States, as far as throughout our different fellowships. But, I've got to say, that didn't happen overnight, either. In fact, it wasn't something that I knowingly set out to change either. In other words, when I got to the point of coming to the knowledge of the Truth, getting baptized in Jesus' name, being born again, like the Bible teaches us in John chapter three (John 3:3), like Parrish went into vast detail about last week, it just sort of occurred naturally over the course of time. Now, I want to say one more thing along those same lines: It may have a lot to do with our location. I know that a lot of us are from different parts of the United States, so we're not really in that same proximity that we were with the people that we grew up with. That's something that can affect that friendship; that's something that can affect that relationship. But, I know, for a lot of us that are from this area, it might be a little bit different. And it might have a lot to do with, well, what is that common goal? What is it that, say, we used to do, and, maybe we're not doing any more, or, again, it's not about just trying to end a relationship just for the sake of it, or just because now we believe something different. And that does matter, because time and distance has a way of separating us. But, if you're relatively new to this group, or a visitor, I would venture to say that none of your closest friends are in this room. And, I think that would make a lot of sense, because, you're not really acquainted with somebody here as much as somebody who's been here ten years, twenty years, thirty years, and so on. So, it does make a difference, and our expectations of what people are going to do or where they're at, it does vary from person to person.

**1 John 1:1-7** *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

That's our legacy and that's our testimony of what fellowship means. It's about being born-again, it's about continuing in the faith, setting our sights on things above and not on things of this world. It's about striving to live a holy life, and to evangelize the Word of God; striving to have a well-rounded testimony with God and with people. And it's about being with like-minded people who have a

made-up mind to live a godly life; not shunning outsiders, but, again, not changing or compromising what we believe, and what we strive for, and the testimony that we need to keep to uphold that, to be able to continue in the faith.

So what's the big difference between friendship and fellowship? Is there an overlap from one to the other, or vice-versa? Does it really even matter? We can be friends with anybody but we can't have fellowship with anybody. And that's one of those things that we don't have to declare, I mean, "I can't have fellowship with you!" I mean, that's just an honest-to-God fact! But, we just have to know it, and we have to live it. People will get it, I mean, people will understand. It's not a matter of, even hinting at it. But, I think, Christ talked about being wise as serpents and harmless as doves. So, we have to use that judgment. And that's something that comes up along the way. In other words, we can associate with friends or co-workers, or acquaintances, or these different people that we've developed relationships with over the years, and chances are very high that a lot of them aren't Christians at all. And a lot of them really don't want to have anything to do with it, but it's a matter of taking it case by case. It's a matter of understanding that, as we get that wisdom from God, and, as we learn, and, as we grow in grace, and, as we grow in the faith, it's a matter of praying to God for that opportunity, but, it really comes down to—we've all heard this—an open door, praying for an open door. The Bible talks about it, it alludes to it. And it's not always going to come as plain and as simple as, you know, writing on the wall. I mean, it's not always going to be something where it's like, "Here's the open door!" absolutely cut and dried. It's going to be a matter of God speaking to us and saying, "You know what? Take it this far," or, "Don't say that," or, "Hold off on this," or, "Go ahead and share." And, sometimes, it just comes right down to just having faith and taking a chance. I know a lot of us, we'll share with people that, we'll pray and we'll seek for those opportunities. Like, they have in the customer service field what they call, "cold-calling," where they'll just randomly call people and, I know that, like, you can get any kind of reaction, like, "Click!" or swearing at you—I mean, that's just an honest-to-God fact that these things exist in life. But, sometimes it could be, "Well, yeah, okay, yeah, I have a little bit of interest," and that's kind of like evangelizing. And, I know this subject today isn't about evangelizing, but it's a component of fellowship. It's a component of understanding that we're talking about the friendships and fellowships that we have, and understanding what some of the similarities are and what some of the differences are. Does that mean that we're going to end up in big arguments with people, or, as we used to hear the expression, "Well, I blew him out of the water!" and I'm going to have to say, that kind of always turned me off, because it was like, "What? What is the point of that?" It was like, "Yeah, I feel really good about myself; I was able to blast him to smithereens, and just show them how wrong they are." I mean, that's not the goal, that's not the goal. But, there's times when, if somebody really confronts us, or, as they say, "get up in our grill," and I'm talking about doctrinal issues, you know, there's times we have to bark back. There's times we have to say, "Look, I'm not going to put up with that. This is what the Word of God teaches." It doesn't mean we go around picking spiritual fights, but, again, Christ said to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. Occasionally we're going to have a heated disagreement, that's just the truth of the matter. And we can't always predict everything; we can't always know how each day is going to unfold. We can only plan so much, I mean, we're still living in a world where the world keeps growing, and the number of people, and the number of beliefs, and so on and so forth. And, the unexpected just happens. And, the funny thing is, you think about technology, and how advanced it's gotten, but, it's still blows me away sometimes to think, "Well, I can't get this to work," or, "I can't fix that," or, "I can't..." Even with vehicles, now, all the electronics, it's just gotten so complicated to where, you know, the average person just can't work on his own car. And, I know I'm going a little far on that, but...

I'm going to ask if you could turn with me to First Corinthians chapter six, because this is going to go into more detail about the positions that we need to take, and where we need to stand, and

having an understanding of where that separation occurs, but, we're going to talk a little bit more about the separation. Paul speaking:

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

So, that's not necessarily an easy pill to swallow, if you think about, like, the infidel? I know a lot of us have heard that's what, in the Islamic faith, they're calling everybody else, "The infidel." Well, where do you think they got it from? They got it from there, but I'm not going to sit here and joust with that belief; I'm not going to sit here and badmouth every other religion or every other belief, because Christ said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me." It's about lifting up the Word of God, and, yeah, there's such a thing as being diplomatic, and having that understanding that we're not here to just blast people to smithereens, but, understanding that, sometimes that's going to happen. It just is. Sometimes those friendships are going to have to be terminated, but, maybe they'll be rekindled. And we're going to touch on that a little bit more, about restoration. About there's times when we're talking about restoration, and how it's needed. I've seen that happen, to where—I remember, one time, shortly after I got baptized, and I have a cousin of mine, she's about my age, from Connecticut, we were real close, growing up, and her brother, as well, but, about a year after I'd gotten baptized, I remember, I was down there visiting, and I remember her telling me, just flat out, "I like how you used to be." And I was like, "Thanks. I appreciate that a lot." I didn't, I mean... But, I've got to say, there's been restoration. There's been, like, kind of, rekindling of that friendship over the years, and I'm not saying that, at that point, I was so upset that I was like, "Oh, I'll never talk to you again." It wasn't anything like that; it just was a matter of, like, "Okay. I can take that." I mean, we have to have broad shoulders. We have to be able to, sometimes, take a little criticism, and, if it's for the Gospel's sake... I mean, you look at some of the examples in the Book of Acts, it's like, this is a hard pill to swallow: They were gladly beaten for the name of the Lord? (Acts 5:40-41) I mean, think about that for a minute. That's not the kind of thing that I'd say, "Oh, that's great!" But, how sold out am I to the Gospel?

And this is where the separation occurs, but, again, this is more about us separating ourselves as opposed to, like, separating people from us. It's about separating ourselves from the influences of the world, as opposed to us ostracizing people, as opposed to, like, outcasting people, or getting everyone else to change. I'm not saying we can't effect change, I'm just saying that the course of this world is set on destruction. I mean, knowing the Bible, we have to understand that, and we have to save ourselves from it. People on the outside may not always like it, and they may not always understand it, but chances are they'll respect it because they're going to see for themselves that there's blessings of God that we're receiving. They're going to see that that difference-maker is that God's blessed our life in such a way that they see the blessing, they see the sobriety, they see the stability, they see whatever it is, and I don't want to start getting into, like, it's not about riches and wealth, or, like, accumulation of possessions. Because then somebody says, well, you look at, like, the Bible talks about Lazarus and the rich man, and it talks about that guy was a beggar. I mean, here's a guy that, basically was below dirt-poor, I mean, the guy had absolutely nothing, but he was of the seed of Abraham, and he was saved, as opposed of the rich man. So, I'm not looking at it like—people are going to see the blessings in your life, and it may not always be something that's tangible. It may not, "Oh,

they've got a nice house!" "Oh, they got the promotion at work!" Maybe you do, maybe you don't. That's not always going to be the case.

## 2nd Point – The Benefits of Fellowship

I'm going to read another verse real quick; you don't have to turn with me on this...

**Proverbs 27:17** *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

One of my goals today is to elaborate on the benefits of fellowship, which, I believe, are many. I don't know that there is necessarily an order of importance as to what those benefits are, exactly, but looking at it, like, keeping ourselves in the faith. But let's just start with that previous verse and work our way out.

We're talking about iron sharpeneth iron. Now, it's kind of interesting, because it talks about, and this is something I feel like was kind of highlighted, I feel like God kind of pointed this out, 'sharpeneth the countenance of his friend;' it doesn't say, 'sharpeneth the countenance of his fellowship-co-laborer.' Which leads me to believe, we can encourage people on the outside. We can encourage ourselves. It's not a matter of looking at it like, "Well, I'm only going to be able to uplift, or exhort, or be able to do something for somebody else that's in the faith; we're talking about sharpening the countenance of a friend. You know, when you think about how those blessings will spill over, and people on the outside, to see that benefit, and see that righteousness of God. If they didn't, then how would they ever understand, or why would they ever want to be a part of it? The Bible says that it is not God's will that any would perish but that all would come to the knowledge of the Truth, to repentance and the knowledge of the Truth. That's God's will, that everybody in the world would be saved. I'm talking about from the very beginning until right now. But, when we look around and we see the corruption, we see the tragedy, we see the violence, we see so many things that are ungodly, just flat-out ungodly, we know that that's not the will of God. That's not the way God intended it from the beginning. But, I appreciate even what you shared, Jesse Gulley, the one point when you were up here that really hit me was, "I want to live." It's a simple statement, but, when you're going through some of the stuff that you've experienced over the last year, it's the kind of thing where it's heart-felt because it's like, you could have just as easily said, "You know what? Take me, God, right now. I don't want to put up with the rest of this; I don't want to live the rest of my life with amputated legs." Because that's the reality of it. But, that's encouraging, because it's like—I know we're talking about the benefits of fellowship, and I know we're in a service, but, there's overlap. It's not like—just cause we're in here doesn't mean we can't have fellowship. And I'm going to touch on that, more, later on, about, like, the opportunities that we have for fellowship, about the places where we could do it.

But, I want to ask for some participation, now, because I think it's healthy to hear from other people's point of view, about fellowship. And I want to ask you to just raise your hand and just tell us what it is that you feel like, "What are the benefits of fellowship?" Anybody? Brent?

**Brent:** It's just a place to gain strength from your brothers and sisters, just to hear them going through something, you're going through something; we'll all support each other.

Yeah. Mike, I think you had your hand up?

**Mike A.** It makes you realize that you're not the only one. You're not the only one going through whatever it is you're going through.

Amen. Amen. Alex?

**Alex:** Encouragement.

Encouragement. Greg?

**Greg:** Confirmation.

Confirmation. Ed Howes?

**Ed H.** One thing is that you can learn a lot from somebody. You can get wisdom from the Scriptures from somebody.

Amen. And then, Maria?

**Maria:** Wholesome and godly communication.

Wholesome and godly communication. Donna?

**Donna:** Gain strength.

Gain strength. Jim Martin?

**Jim:** It pleases God.

Pleases God. Sonia?

**Sonia:** Unity.

Unity. Mike K.?

**Mike K.:** Healing.

Healing. Alex, again?

**Alex:** Help in times of adversity.

Yeah. I agree with that, absolutely, absolutely. William?

**William:** Being a good listener.

Being a good listener. Beverly?

**Beverly:** Comfort.

Comfort. Okay, I appreciate that. It's good to hear that, because a lot of our state as human beings has to do with what and who we're influenced by. And I'm not just talking about being positive

or negative. I mean, it's true those behaviors exist, but does anybody here want to take a guess about how many times the word "positive" or "negative" are in the Bible? It's zero. It's zero. I mean, you hear, like, "Oh, they're positive," "Oh, they're negative," I mean, it's like—I'm not crossing over into psychoanalyst or psychology of society, or any of that, but, it just seems to me, that, sometimes, again, they're terms used to describe a certain behavior, I get it, but, I think everybody has a little bit of both. Now, I would have to say, as a Christian, you should be more positive; I have to say that. But, the truth of the matter is, I've been negative at times. But, I have to say this much, too, I had to get over that, because it was a behavior that—what's it really going to get me? What good is going to really do? I want to share something real quick. I forget if I've shared this before—I know I have with a few different people—there was something that—and I don't remember if I read it or I saw it in an interview. This was probably twenty-five years ago. There was an interviewer talking to a father of a Viet Nam vet who was a casualty during the war. So, at that time, the father was probably in his sixties, maybe his late sixties, but, I remember the part that really stood with me was about the interviewer asking the father, "Are you bitter?" and the way he responded, the way that father responded—now, you're talking probably twenty years after the death of his son—and I'm not going to use the exact language; it was a coarse language—he said, "You'd better believe I'm bitter about it." And it was the kind of thing that got me to thinking, "There's thing I think that happen to all of us that I think we feel like, if we're bitter about it—" and I'm not talking about, the Bible talks about having a root of bitterness, by which many shall be defiled. But, there are times that we might get bitter about something, and feel like we have a right to be bitter about it, whatever the situation is. Whether it's something where it's like dealing with a job loss, whether it's like dealing with a medical procedure, whether it's dealing with like a tragedy that's happened—and I'm talking about a tragedy like a child being killed in a car accident, that kind of thing—where we feel we have a right to feel bitter. But, do you want to dwell there? And that's the big separation. It's like, I think everybody has a right to be bitter about something. Everybody. But, do you want to live there your whole life? Do you want to live that life to where it just eats you alive? To where it's like, every waking moment, it's just consuming? And it's the kind of thing where it's like you can't even see straight? I mean, I think that's the expression I'd have to use as far as that goes.

We're going to read from James, but, before that, I just want to make one last point in this section about the influences that we have, as far as what we read, what we hear, what we see, it can send us in different directions if we allow it. Are we getting as much godly influence as we can?

**James 3:13-18** *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

So, I know that this might not sound like too much of a "fellowship" type passage, but wholesome fellowship is like the wisdom from above. It's peaceful, it's gentle, it's easy to be entreated, it's full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and hypocrisy. And, when that wisdom from God is introduced into our fellowship, we're going to have unity, we're going to have peace, we're going to have an enjoyable atmosphere.

God gives us the power and ability to choose where to go, what we say, what we do, and who we choose to associate with. We can set the scene, and I'm not talking about trying to be forceful or controlling in that sense, or insufferable and overbearing to the point where it's like nobody wants to be around you. I'm talking about being able to bring a good spirit into a different situation.

A lot of fellowship is about finding the opportunity, and not waiting for it to happen, or being told it needs to happen. And I get that we have gatherings that are planned, and I believe that's all well and good and it's needful. But there's a lot to be said for, like, spontaneous and unexpected gatherings, and being able to spend time together. And I'm not talking about just sitting around agreeing with each other. I mean, there's got to be discussion as far as, like, heart-felt seeking of God, and not just, "Do you believe it?" "Yeah, I believe it." "I believe the same thing." "I believe that same thing, too." "Oh, well, then. That's enough." It's not about trying to rush through it, but it's, you look at it in Romans eleven, it talks about the depth and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out (Romans 11: 33). So, there's always something. I've shared this before, and I'd like to share it again because it just, it really caught my attention one time, and this was a—myself and Tom Hansen were out walking, this was probably five or six years ago, we were on the Des Plaines trail, and we were just walking along, and, I don't know how, like, this tiny little toad was, like, jumping across the trail, and it was like, it caught our attention. We're, like, looking down at it, and it was like, hoping he'd make it to the other side. But, it was like, one of those things where it's like, that's part of God's creation. That's part of God's creation. And it was like, what fellowship was there in that moment in observing a little toad? Some would say, "None. There was absolutely no fellowship." I happen to believe there was. I happen to believe there was, because it was, like, there was a lot of talk along the way, and I know that there's a lot of things that we're able to do that, it might not always be that we're sitting in a room. I mean, I'm talking about, like, going out to restaurants, I'm talking about the picnics we have. I'm talking about, like, camping or biking or fishing or biking or traveling. I know a lot of you in this room I've done road trips with, and, not everybody's into the same thing. Not everybody's always looking at it like... But I know that, just in the past couple of weeks, I know myself and Ed Howes and Mike Hooks, and Laygoze were over at Laygoze's, and he and Lorraine cooked up quite a bit for us. But, I appreciate, at halftime, Mike was like, "You know what? I've got some questions I want to ask," and so we talked for, like, a good half an hour. And it was stuff like that that was kind of spontaneous, it's like, yeah, it's in the midst of the game, and, yeah, we're, you know, yeah, going crazy, but the thing about it was, that's something that you set the scene for, that's something you incorporate, that's the pre-eminent purpose. It's not like the game—yeah, that's something. Or, if you go walking or you go biking or you go fishing, yeah, you want to catch some fish, you want to have a good time. Or, if you have a picnic, you want to make sure everybody's well-fed, but, it's like, there has to be a good camaraderie, there has to be a good fellowship, there has to be unity. I know somebody had mentioned about that, unity. I mean, if there's just division and arguments and fights and people going off and flipping out, what good is that? I mean, I'm sure all of us have seen situations like that, or maybe been in them, you know, in the previous life, or whatever. But, that's not the kind of thing that we're hoping for. That's not the kind of, like, charade, or, like, hi-jinks that we're talking about.

I'd like to address one last thought, that I think is necessary to talk about, and I'm closing shortly. What about those who've walked away? You know, like any organization, people come and go. I mean, this is not a business. We're not here to make money; this is not a profit-making organization, and it's not like, "Next man up!" I mean, that's not about it at all. But I know that when we talked about the friendships that we have with people on the outside, I think we have to understand that you have to take it on a case-by-case basis. I think a lot of it has to do with, well, how close were you to that person? Because, I think a lot of us would be surprised to hear that—and I'm not talking about those that are really railing, or going on-line, and just, like, making mincemeat out of people or the organization or the pastors. They always target the pastors, but, then they'll start going off on other people, too. I'm not talking about reconnecting with them, until they settle down, until they have some repentance. But, I'm talking about some of them who have just gotten discouraged, or maybe just bummed out, or maybe just tired. You know, the Bible says, "Be not weary in well doing." (Galatians 6:9) And, we have to deal with it on a case-by-case basis. And it's a touchy subject. It's something where it might be easy for



somebody like, say, Malcolm to go visit with somebody and not for Pete. Or it might be easy for Pete to go visit somebody, but not for Mike. Whereas it might be easy to go—or Amy, to depend on that relationship that you had, because, once people depart, we always have to look at—and this is where I wanted to revisit, was about that restoration. We had a prayer meeting the other night, and Parrish had asked me, just, about praying for people, as far as restoration. Because, we do come in contact with a lot of people, and, I remember, I was driving back from my cousin's down in North Carolina, back in April, and, just driving along through the Smoky Mountains, and I just started thinking about a lot of the different people I've known in the ministry, over the years. Different couples, different kids, different seniors, different individuals, different people that have left, and I'm not talking about they died in the faith, I'm talking about they just, at some point in time, they just got weary in well doing. And, I would even have to go so far as to say it was numerous. I mean, it was like these people were coming to mind, just on and on and on and on and on, and yet, I also have to look at it like, some people come and go, some people come and stay. But we also have to look at it like some people go and come back. So, what's our fellowship with them in those situations? Because, a lot of times, they're going to look at it like, "You mean you don't like me any more?" or, "I'm not your friend any more?" And, if we give them that impression, they're going to be thinking, "Well, I don't want to have anything to do with your church any more, anyway." Because, that's their association, and maybe we're just that one last connection to the ministry, and to knowing the truth of God, and that's a pretty heavy responsibility. But it's also a matter of getting back to, pray for that wisdom of God. Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. And we've got to always remember this next verse:

***Psalm 133:1-3*** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Thank you, and God bless.