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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

February 24, 2013

Submit Yourself Therefore to God: Part II

James 4:7-10

**Prayer:** *Father, again we just thank you for your grace, we thank you that you are a holy God, who descended to an unholy earth in order to rescue an unholy people. And Father, we thank you for that gift, we thank you for the privilege that we have been given to know you as Lord and Savior. And Lord, again, we just want to grow in that knowledge and understanding. And this morning, Lord, as we look again into your word, I pray for your Holy Spirit's presence and power, guide us, strengthen us, give us the ability to understand your word and make it a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, our text this morning is James 4:6-10: *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.*

*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

Well, we started unpacking the scripture last week, and the primary place that we focused on, the place where submission starts is in our minds. I made the point last week that submission to God starts first and foremost inside our heads. Romans 12:1-2 says this: *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* I said it's one thing to believe that God's will is good, acceptable and perfect when things are going well. It's another thing entirely to believe that when life is bewildering and painful. It is then that you begin to realize that the greatest battle that takes place is the one that goes on inside your mind. Submission to God voluntarily places our thought life no longer under the authority of circumstance but under His authority regardless of circumstance. And here James is calling us to do just that. He's calling us to arrange our life, our spirit, and our minds under the authority of God. And what it is as an active, ongoing commitment to discipline our minds to choose the best about the God that we worship and to reject the worst that the world, the flesh, and the devil can dream up.

You see, ever since the Garden of Eden, it is the devil who has stood alternatively against God or against us. He's the accuser who accuses God before us, and he accuses us before God. Before Eve, he accused God of denying Adam and Eve the ability to be like God. He approached Eve, tempting her to eat of the forbidden fruit by saying in Genesis 3:5: *"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* And then before God, he accused Job of worshipping God only for what he could get. In Job 1:11 he said this to God, he said, *"But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."* You see, Satan is an equal opportunity accuser. And make no mistake about it, the devil hates both God and man. He hates God as the supreme authority who rules over him, and he hates man as the creature who bears God's very image. It is therefore no accident that James links humbling ourselves with submitting to God, and he links submitting to God with resisting the devil.

Let me just repeat our text this morning. *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your*

*hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turning to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

You see, what we have here is James is laying out a sweeping plan that begins with the word "humble." *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*, and it ends with the word "humble" in verse 10, *Humble yourselves therefore before the Lord, and he will exalt you*. And in between, in between lies the means that James gives us to achieve a humility that enables us to resist the devil. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*. Very simply put, James is laying out a process for appropriating God's grace for humbling ourselves. We submit therefore to God by resisting the devil. We resist the devil by drawing near to God, cleansing our hands, and purifying our hearts. We purify our hearts by mourning and weeping over our sin, and as we weep and mourn, we realize that since we have now been humbled by God, we are now in a position to be used mightily by him. So we go from *"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* to *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you,"* and it's all in this process that we call sanctification.

So starting out, I think it would be helpful to understand just

what James means here by the term "resisting the devil." To do that, we need to focus on one area of temptation from the three basic ones that are out there. Ephesians 2 tells us the three sources of temptation in our world are the world, the flesh, and the devil. And we know that the world has its own pull and its own systems as does the flesh. And what appears to be the realm of the devil, the place where he really seems to work is the realm of the mind. 2 Corinthians 10:3 says this: *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.* You see, it's in the mind, it's in the heart where arguments and opinions and knowledge and thoughts originate. It is there in the mind that submitting to God literally means to take every thought captive to obey Christ. But please notice, it is we who take our thoughts captive and not the devil. Satan cannot read your thoughts. He can't take them because he doesn't have access to them. He cannot read your mind. God can and does read our hearts and therefore our minds, and amazingly, God still loves us. But the devil can't read minds.

In 2 Chronicles 6:30, Solomon is praying for his people and he says this to God, he says: *"For you, you only, know the hearts of the*

*children of mankind, that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers." I mean, we know that God alone knows the hearts of the children of mankind because we saw Jesus repeatedly demonstrate an ability to read those hearts. In Matthew 9:3, it says: And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" In John 2:23, it says: Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. And then in Acts 1:23, it says: And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was called Justus and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship for which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."*

I think it's safe to say that we can say that God knows our hearts and he can read our thoughts. But you know, it's also safe to say that there's no indication anywhere in the Bible that the devil or his minions can do likewise. There's no doubt that the devil would love you to think that he can read your mind, and he'll present

plenty of evidence to suggest that he can. Because he's a liar and a deceiver, he will have you believing that he can read your mind, not because he can, but because he's been studying us from the very beginning. He knows how predictable we are and he is certainly capable of making highly educated guesses about how we will respond to a given situation or temptation. He can give the appearance of knowing our thoughts, but it is just an appearance. Satan can input his thoughts and temptations into our minds in the form of temptations but he cannot output the thoughts we are thinking. Remember, he was cast out of heaven and thrown down to earth. This is the place that he is stuck in. He spends all of his time studying the creatures that he hates. You know, when Satan appeared before God to discuss Job's fate, he made this statement in Job 1:6, it says: *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."* That's all he does. For thousands of years he's been prowling about our world studying us and he knows our ways and our weakness. He knows how to attack our thoughts.

Now, I had folks come to me overwhelmed by truly awful thoughts that come into their mind that somehow they feel responsible for.

Appalling thoughts. Evil thoughts. What I usually do in these cases, I ask people well, what do you think about these thoughts? You know, 100 percent of the time, folks say they're deeply troubled and frankly appalled by these thoughts, and I always say, "Well, if you're deeply troubled and appalled by them, what makes you think they came from you?" I mean, after all, if they came from you, you'd be quite comfortable with them, wouldn't you? And the fact that they're deeply troubling to you should be proof that they are in fact alien and not from you.

What is the source of appalling and alien thoughts? Well, more often than not, it is the devil. See the problem is not really with the thoughts that come into our minds, the problem is with what we do with them once they arrive. Do you entertain them or do you by God's grace dismiss them? You know, I believe it was Martin Luther who once said, "You can't stop the birds from flying over your head but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair." James says it, James 4:7, *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

So we dismiss awful thoughts out of hand, but what about the guilt? What about the guilt that the enemy brings? After all, his name is the accuser. So what do you do to resist the devil when those thoughts come into your head? And how do I distinguish a bad

thought from what might be a convicting thought from the Holy Spirit? Well, let me give you a general rule of thumb that I always go by. It's this: The guilt that the devil loves to lay on people, especially Christian people, it's a free floating, generic type of guilt that points nowhere in particular. The guilt of conviction that the Holy Spirit brings is extremely specific. It points towards a specific sin or attitude that God is convicting me of. The devil's guilt, it's designed to tell you that you are worthless, sinful, evil, and not even worth God's grace. It doesn't give any direction or point towards any resolution because it doesn't want you to go there. It simply tells us how bad we are. That's guilt that comes from the pit of hell. The Spirit's conviction, however, is designed to illuminate our sin and show us a pathway to repentance. Let me give you a simple rule of thumb example. The devil's guilt will tell me "Tom, you are a miserable husband." The Holy Spirit's conviction will say, "Tom, yesterday afternoon in that argument you had with your wife, you took a cheap shot when you complained about her cooking, and you know you owe her an apology." You see the difference? There's a huge difference between the devil's guilt and God's conviction. So when I get free floating generic guilt that is non-directed and non-specific, I just identify it as from the pit and I move on. When I get disturbing or evil thoughts -- and believe me, everybody gets disturbing and evil thoughts -- I either dismiss them or I go

right after the source. I identify the thought as alien, and I ask God to go specifically after whatever is the source of those thoughts. You know, if it's some low level two bit demon that's been assigned to harass me, I ask God to authorize an angel of greater authority to spiritually deal with it, to, as it were, kick its butt, whatever or whoever it might be. And I have to tell you, almost instantly those thoughts just disappear. Again, James says: *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Now, the flip side of that, something I don't want you to misunderstand is to think that we are some kind of spiritual cowboys capable all on our own of putting demons to flight. Remember how James introduces this scripture, in James 4:6, he says, *God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.* You see, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with incredibly powerful creatures who are far more resourceful than we are.

The book of Jude tells us that even the Archangel Michael would not even making a railing accusation of the devil but instead called on the Lord to rebuke him. Acts 19 tells us a very sobering tale, it says this in Acts 19:13, it says: *Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise*

*you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so they fled out of that house naked and wounded. You know, you go it alone on your own with your own power against this enemy, and you can expect to wind up naked and wounded as well.*

The principle involved in dealing with the enemy here is that our strength is made perfect in our weakness. We acknowledge our weakness and we hide behind the overwhelming strength of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, time and again we are shown in scripture that every confrontation Jesus has ever had with demons, has them begging Jesus for mercy. You know, in Matthew 8:28, it says this, it says: *When he had come to the other side to the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you Jesus, you son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"* Okay. Already we know that they know that their time is limited. We also know that they know that Jesus is quite capable of tormenting them. It goes on to say, *Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged*

him, saying, "If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine and suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. You see, if you ever find yourself fearful of the devil, just remember what he is fearful of, and it is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That's what we hide behind. We never resist the devil on our own.

Last week, I said we do three things to resist the devil with his incoming thoughts: We identify, we isolate, and we inoculate them with the word of God. We have to first identify the thought, because the enemy's goal is to get us to hate God, hate our neighbor, and hate ourselves and the thoughts designed to produce that hatred are not going to identify themselves. James has already given us a means to identify them. It's right there in James 4:6, he says: *But he gives more grace.* See, God's grace and God's wisdom is there for us as long as we humbly ask for it. Ask God for the grace to identify these thoughts and you will find a brand new skill set developing in your thought life. You will begin to see these thoughts for what they really are.

And secondly, we want to isolate each thought. You know, last week I mentioned that Jesus spoke of the way evil spirits cluster and

confuse. Our thoughts do the very same thing. We don't just think an isolated thought, we think God has rejected me, God hates me, I'm going to lose my job, my health, my life, my property, my sanity. These thoughts come in bunches because the enemy just wants to overwhelm us. So we isolate each thought and identify it and examine it in the light of God's grace, and finally we inoculate it with the scripture.

Like I said last week, we attack it with a series of "if.., then" protocols. And what we do essentially is through the scripture, we call Satan's bluff. You know, if the thoughts in my mind is that God really does hate me, well then if God really hates me, why did he then say in Romans 5:8: *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.* If my anxiety is proof to me that God has rejected me, then why would he say in 1 Peter 5:7: *Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you?* You see, for every evil thought the enemy can muster inside your head, God has a scriptural response. But here's the problem. To do that, you have to be familiar with scripture. There is no other way to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God without growing in our knowledge of the scripture.

James says in 4:8, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.* Fair question to that might be, "Okay, how do I do that?" Well,

Jesus said this in John 15, he said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.*" Okay. Again, another fair question is how then do we abide in Jesus? You know, I've often said the street translation of that text is simple, Jesus is saying the more you hang out with me, the more like me you are going to become.

So how do we draw near, how do we abide, how do we just even hang out with God without growing in our knowledge of the Bible? The fact is we can't. You know, I don't like to use the word "magical" because of all the bad connotations that that word brings up, but the fact is, the Bible is as close to a magical book as you and I will ever get and you can still get it for a buck at the dollar store. Hebrews 4:12 says: *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* You see, our ability to identify, isolate and inoculate our thought life is directly related to our understanding of the scripture. God describes it as a spiritual sword, and you can't resist the devil without the sword of the Lord. Ephesians 6:16 says: *Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of*

*salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

You see, drawing near to God through the sword of the Lord in your mind and your heart and therefore in your spirit is as powerful a weapon there is, and the enemy greatly fears it. The sword of the Lord gathering dust on your book shelf is a weapon the enemy can laugh at. James 4 again says: *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* One thing about the sword of the Lord according Hebrews 4:12 is that it is double-edged. That means that it cuts both ways. Again, Hebrews 4:12: *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

You know, everything I have ever learned about my own sin and my own folly I have learned from the word of God. James is speaking here about cleansing our hands and purifying our hearts. He's speaking about what we call our walkie-talkie. Our walk has got to match our talk, and to the extent that it doesn't is the extent to which you and I are hypocrites. And so the word of God cleanses our walk and our talk, our hands and our heart.

God tells us in 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* I love that Greek word for "confess." It's the word "homologeō." The word "homo" means same; "logeō" means speak. And I said this many, many times before, a great way to understand what God means by the word "confession" is that when we confess, we same speak with God. We are speaking the same language. We are agreeing with his Spirit. We are on the same wavelength. His Spirit convicts us of sin. Specific sin, not the generalized guilt-ridden darkness that the devil brings but a specific sin with a path to repentance as well. When God gives us more grace, as James puts it, we want nothing more than to cleanse our hands as sinners and purify our hearts as double-minded.

Consider this confession. Consider the confession of David when the Spirit through the Prophet Nathan had convicted him of his sin with Bathsheba. He wrote this in Psalm 51. *A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O, God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your*

*judgment.*

You see, the wonder and the grace of confession is that we are same speaking with God. *For I know my transgressions and I my sin is ever before me.* We are agreeing with the God who has already known every sin we will ever commit before we were ever even born. There are no surprises when it comes to our sin and our God. You know, David's sin with Bathsheba was far more of a shock to David than it ever was to God. At the very height of David's great faith when he stood before Goliath himself, God knew there would come a day when David would descend into a wickedness that included adultery and murder. Not only did God know where David would descend to, he also knew precisely what that sin would cost his Son. He also knew that David could never pay the price of that sin, that God himself would have to assume human flesh, live out a perfect life, and then take that perfection to the cross, substituting it for the sin that David had committed. So Jesus Christ went to the cross bearing David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba along with your sins and mine. Cleansing our hands and purifying our hearts is simply being willing to agree with the Holy Spirit when he is convicting us of the sin he saw before we were even born. Again, James 4:6 says: *But he gives us more grace.* You see, the fact is, without the Spirit of God within us, we would never be moved by our sin.

Now, I once heard somebody describe Christianity as a karmic ripoff. He said, you know, I get this Christianity thing. You guys get to do all the sinning and then somebody else picks up the tab. Well, you know, on one level what he's saying is true, that's exactly what happens. We do the sinning and Jesus does the paying for that sin. But that's not what faith in Christ is. You see, what he didn't get, what he didn't understand is there's a vital part missing from that formula. You see, if you are truly one of Christ's own sheep, you have the Spirit of the living God living inside you. Christ himself is indwelling you, giving you a spirit of obedience, changing you into his very image so that you can bring glory to his Father. That's why Jesus could say in John 10:27: *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* Now, the spirit of Jesus within us is what responds to the spirit's conviction of sin. That is the difference between a believer and a false believer. Romans 8:9 says: *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* It doesn't get more plain than that. And so Jesus takes great pains to warn us of the danger of false conversion. He also said when he comes in his glory, he's going to separate the sheep from the goats and the wheat from the tares, the falsely converted from those who truly belonged to him.

So the big question for all of us is, okay, how do we know who is who? Well, those who belong to him have his spirit within him. And because of that Spirit, they grieve the sin that grieves him. You see, if you are one of his, then these words of James makes perfect sense. James 4:9: *Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.* You know, we all know there's many different types of mournings and weepings, many different kinds of sorrows, but I think we would all agree, perhaps the hardest grief to bear is the sorrow of seeing a loved one who is in agony. Anyone who has cared for a child or a parent of any loved one suffering any great pain knows that feeling of helplessness and sorrow that accompanies that kind of care. Well, there is a deeper sorrow still and it's a sorrow that takes place in the Spirit of believers. It is the knowledge that my sin has caused my Lord's grief. It's the knowledge that I am the source of his pain. You know, Paul tells us that in this life we see through a glass darkly, that is, we get this distorted and highly opaque view of the reality of the kingdom of God. I would suggest that we also feel through a glass darkly, that is we are only capable of scratching the very surface of what it is feeling wise that Jesus did for us. And all of us who have the Spirit of God within us to some extent enter into the grief and sorrow of what our sin did to our God and our Savior. You know, Peter denied Christ and in Luke 22, he says, *he went out and he wept bitterly.*

Paul's sin drove him to say in Romans 7:24: *O, wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* David said again in Psalm 51: *Against you, and you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight -- that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge.* See, all these men in their sin, they also sought for and received the grace of God and the gift of repentance, and David described it as a gift in Psalm 51:17, he said: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart -- these O, God, you will not despise.* Contrast that with Judas, and whether he refused God's grace or it was never to offered to him in the first place, I don't know, but we know this, he saw the extent of the sin and the grief he had caused, without God's grace, what he did was he put a noose around his neck and he leapt directly into hell. I'm thankful that James says in James 4:6: *He gives us more grace, because it is grace that causes us to "be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turning to mourning and your joy to gloom."*

You see, someday along with that grace of God, we will gain a full measure of the grief our sin has caused our Savior. Zechariah 12:10 contains a prophetic statement. It says this: *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his*

*only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."* I submit to you that we have no idea what that will be like even for believers. You see, we have a one dimensional idea of heaven, it's a place of exquisite bliss and joy, and that's true. But even for his sheep, there will come a time when we have to fully come to grips with what Jesus had to do to purchase that joy for us. We will be, according to Hebrews 12:2: *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* What a privilege it will be for us to realize that we were the joy that was set before him, that for us he was willing to endure the cross, despising the shame. But that joy has a two-edged sword attached to it. Revelation 7:17 says: *For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.* Our great hope is that God will wipe away every tear in heaven, but if heaven is a place of absolute bliss, where do these tears come from in the first place? Perhaps the great sorrow creating these tears will be the full knowledge of the price of our sin. Perhaps it will be that we no longer feel Christ's pain through a glass darkly.

You know, God says sometimes his prophets wrote down words that they didn't really understand. Isaiah had to have done that when

he wrote Isaiah 53. I know we spent months attempting, by God's grace, to enter into what he was describing, and I'd be the first one to tell you that we barely, barely scratched the surface, but it speaks precisely to what that pain was all about. Isaiah, describing Jesus, said: *He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we did not esteem him. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Like I said, right here and right now we still feel, as it were, through a glass darkly. The full impact of Isaiah's words can only penetrate so far. We don't have the grace, we don't have the capacity to fully understand them, but until then, by his grace, we have some measure of grief.

*Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turning to mourning and your joy to gloom* on some level makes perfect sense. The ability to feel that pain is a good thing. It's a sign of life. You see, by God's grace, he humbles us. He teaches us to organize our lives under his authority. He gives more grace to

resist the devil in the battlefield that takes place in our mind, he equips us by his word to identify, to isolate, and inoculate with his word the thoughts the devil sends us to destroy us. He gives more grace as he cleanses our hands and purifies our heart. The word of God cleanses our walk and our talk, our hands and our heart by giving us the grace to confess our sins, to same speak with him as he leads us towards repentance, and he gives more grace by turning our laughter into mourning, our joy into gloom, when he gives us the ability to enter into in some small measure what it cost him to purchase salvation for us. And so we say with confidence that it's all good, because it's all part of a process. Our strength in him is made perfect in our weakness in ourselves. He makes us little to make us great. And now we are in the position to be used mightily by him.

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. Let's pray.*

*Father God, I do praise you and thank you, because you give more grace, and you give more grace, and you give more grace, and without that grace we are hopelessly and completely lost. Father God, I thank you for the gift of your Son, I thank you for the gift of your word, I thank you for the gift of these words, hard as they are, that we've seen this morning, Lord, they are a sign of life, they are a sign that you love us and care for us and are continuing that process of sanctifying us, turning us into the very image of your Son. Thank you for that gift. I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.*