

First Chronicles 16:34 says:

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Aside from our salvation, this church is one of the greatest blessings that God has given us, and I believe that it is only right to give thanks to Him for it. One of the things that He has been showing me over my past four years of high school is not to take the church for granted.

All churches have problems, including ours, because every church is made up of a bunch of sinners. However, I am grateful that our pastors focus us back to the Gospel and sound doctrine every Sunday. I Thessalonians 5:21 says “but test everything; hold fast what is good.” Our pastors do this, and encourage us to do it as well. Their humility is displayed in they keep each other accountable in their personal lives.

Biblical fellowship is a big emphasis in this church; God has been showing me how invaluable this means of grace is. The freedom to confess my sin to my parents or friends, or to humbly bring a sin issue to a friend’s attention, as well as to encourage them in their walk with the Lord, is a value that I am grateful our church has. We have been taught to value fellowship and accountability, and I don’t want to take that lightly.

These are all amazing blessings, but one of the things I have come to love the most about our church, is the protection it brings us. This protection is something that I think many youth can struggle with. There is a lie that exists that tries to convince us that we need to taste of the world prior to going hard after God. This is a lie. In our sin, sometimes we want to find things out for ourselves. However, there are many things in this world that do not need to be experienced. God has placed our church (as well as our

parents and pastors) in our lives so that we can stay as far away from sin as we can, not get as close as we can without slipping.

The body of Christ is not just meant to nurture its own members, but to show those who are not believers what being found in Christ really means, and to share the Good News with others. Our church gives us the opportunity to serve our community together through ministry teams, and encourages and teaches us to do so individually as well.

I believe that when we, the youth, consider God's steadfast love in the gift of this church, it should cause us to eagerly seek to partner with Him and our fellow Christians to further the kingdom.