

Let Your Life Be About Life

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Good morning, church. Welcome to everyone here today, and welcome to everyone who is joining us online today. May the peace of our risen Lord be with you.

So I wanted to share a few announcements with you this morning. First, we are still taking those reservations for Kathy's Retirement Party. They are due on Friday, and there will be a table set up outside after service if you want to make them in person.

You can make them online as well, but if you need to make them in person, you can make them today after service. DJ is sharing these cards with everyone because he is sponsoring a dinner through the missions ministry.

[1 : 41] And if you would like to know what you can donate, feel free to do so via these particular reminder flyers. So you can pick one up on your way out or talk to DJ as well.

D is also asking if you are sewing dresses for that particular mission for the shoeboxes. You can pick up pillowcases and tape after service from her in the back of the sanctuary as well.

So if you are interested in doing that sewing to be a part of that mission, make sure you CD. You can get some pillowcases after service as well. Other notices are with us in our bulletin, so please make sure that you take the time to read what's been published.

We are grateful for all that is happening. We are blessed to have so many opportunities to be the body of Christ for our neighbors. And now let's open our hearts as we prepare to praise God. Good morning, everybody.

And good morning to everyone online. We are celebrating All Saints Day today. So we're starting with an old familiar hymn for all the saints. But as we think about all of our loved ones that have come before us, that have probably influenced our faith, our second song is Let It Start With Me.

[3 : 09] Seems like Jesus was the first one to say, Let It Start With Me. And then you can count on all your descendants and your generational relatives that have continued to influence your faith.

And now it's our turn. So I'm going to invite you to stand for those two opening hymns. For all the saints who from their labors dress, who deep our faith be for the world confess.

Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Now in the darkness, cheer the world to light.

[4 : 41] Alleluia, Alleluia.

O blessed communion, fellowship divine. We deeply struggle, day in glory shine.

Yet on our world, in Thee for all are Thine. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia.

[6 : 10] Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

of the art of ötze, Of pledge on the rise from all descents. It's not that little of all that you do.

Good change, Lord, thank you, child, we're happy to be.

You've given us the order There's a place for everyone I don't want to miss my mission In the planet you've begun We promise you will win To the edge of the law We've given you the truth Let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Free my mind from all discharging Use my hand, lift the path and the feet Move my feet to follow after you Don't change the world and let it start with me Take my life All that I have told my own Everything I am is you to know

[8 : 05] Let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Free my mind from all distractions Use my hand, lift the path and see Take my faith to follow after you Don't change the world and let it start with me Open up my eyes Fill my heart with your compassion Clean up my heart with your compassion Take my faith to follow after you Open up my faith to follow after you In the future ■ Dada crux in the air

Good morning. And good morning to those who are watching online. We're glad that you are here. And I think about this series, which this is the last Sunday.

Open my eyes that I may see. Leading causes of life. Think about it. If we can open our eyes and see and look around, can we not see reasons to live?

Reasons to live fully. Look at the colors. Look at the sky. Look at each other. Because we not only live for ourselves, we live more for God and his glory.

And we get love and life and give love and life to one another. In this series, we started Deuteronomy 30, verse 19b.

[10 : 24] I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.

A season of saying yes. A season of saying yes to life. A season of saying yes to a life of faith. And so as we worship this morning, may we be reminded that sometimes, even when we're not sure what our life is about, God holds us and our lives always with purpose and hope and love.

Let's pray. O Lord, surely you have given us life within us. We live. We are alive by very definition.

And so in this time of praise and worship and hearing and praying, may we feel as though something gets sparked within us.

And remember, leading causes of life, you are number one, O God. And we give you thanks in Jesus' name.

[11 : 45] Amen. So leading causes of life.

God offers us so many opportunities to be in worship with him, to praise him, to be thankful for everything he's given us. So each week, through our offerings, we are able to give back a little bit of what he's given us.

So during this time, we ask you to be in prayer for full consideration. Lausanne Your love, O Lord, is strange to my soul Look for tomorrow, it won't let go Your presence is the joy of my life To you I lift my eyes As for me and my house

We will serve the Lord We will sing of your love forevermore As for me and my house We will serve the Lord We will serve the Lord Your word alone Is a life to my feet A life to my path As you're leading me Your way is the Lord A heart and mind To you I lift my eyes As for me and my house We will serve the Lord We will sustain the real life forevermore As for me and my house We will serve the Lord To you I lift my eyes to the Lord

Open up every door Open up every door Write it on every wall Sing it in every room Open up every door Write it on every wall Sing it in every room Jesus Open up every door Write it on every wall Sing it in every room Jesus Open up every door Write it on every wall Sing it in every room Jesus As for me and my house Sing it in every room Jesus As for me and my house

[15 : 22] We will serve the Lord We will sing of your love Forevermore As for me and my house We will serve you Lord Lord Send the Lord We will serve you Lord Microchial As for me and my house We will sail in the hall, sail in the hall.

Open up every door, write it on every wall, sing it in every room. Open up every door, sing it in every room.

We will sail in the hall, sail in the hall. We will sail in the hall, sail in the hall. We will sail in the hall, sail in the hall.

God, our creator, our sustainer, our redeemer, we thank you for the gift of life.

We thank you for every day that we get to choose you. We offer back just a little bit of what you offer us each and every day.

[17 : 15] In your name we pray, amen. As we come to our conversation with God this morning, there's a lot for which we give thanks, amen?

A lot we know that God is doing, a lot we know that God has already done. And in the midst of all of that praise, in the midst of that knowledge, we also know there are things for which we have to go to God because it's simply too much, amen?

The stuff that is just too heavy, the stuff that is just too hard. So as we come together and pray as God's people, let's be ready to lay those burdens down as well as lift those praises up as we go to God in prayer.

Let's pray together. Gracious and loving Lord, we are overwhelmed by grace, overwhelmed by beauty on this fall morning.

Lord God, we sense your presence in so many ways. In the shining of the sun, in the beauty of the colors, in the smiles and embraces of friends.

[18 : 26] In the songs that we sing, your spirit moves. We know you inhabit the praises of your people. And so our voices flow with so much energy and joy because you are with us.

Lord God, we come knowing that you see what we are living. There is no secret from you. So in those places that are hard, in those places that are weighing us down, in those places that we have wandered off the path, you see us and yet you still show up.

You pour out grace upon grace into our lives and we, your people, say thank you, Lord. Thank you for the ways in which you continue to make us know who you are.

So when we come to those times, those times when the body is not all we hoped it would be. The times we feel the pain or the sickness or the illness.

The times when we see it in others. Those we love. Those we know who are struggling mightily. We pray for those who not only feel it in the body but in the ways in which they see the world.

[19 : 39] Because it's present in their mind. We pray for those who are broken in spirit. For those who are hurting in some way because of the sin that shackles them. Pain and regret over things they may have done.

As well as the ways in which they know they have fallen short of the glory. Lord God, you continue to show up with grace upon grace. Beauty upon beauty.

And that's why we know that there are ways in which we feel those things that give life. Even in the midst of our trials. Lord God, we also know that in this world we look around and we see so many cries for justice.

So much need and so much anguish. Let us indeed be the body. Let your call be clear to us. We know that you have given us what we need to answer the call that you place on each heart.

So Lord God, help us to remove those things that are in our way. Let us hear your voice and respond. Let us follow with love and with faith. That the world around us may come to know what we know.

[20 : 45] That the world around us may come to understand what we have come to understand. That we may in fact hold you high for this broken and hurting world.

Because you and you alone are the one who makes the difference. This prayer we offer with all the love. With all the joy. With all our praise.

Because you are worthy. In the name of our most precious Jesus the Christ. We pray. Amen. It makes more sense for you to be in the middle.

We gather to remember the saints in our community, the saints in our lives.

And as we lift them up, we know that our list is not complete. So we hope and pray that you will lift those names, bring those people to the front of your hearts and minds as we remember those who have gone before us.

[22 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you. .

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[23 : 50]

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[24 : 57]

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.. Greg Tessler, Judy Tinkham, Jennifer Mason.

Norman Winkler, Marjorie Wurtenberger, Robert Wurtenberger. In this candle we light in honor of those who have died, those who died at tops, those who died of COVID, those who died of violence.

We remember those who have died protecting our country, those who have died by terrible diseases and accidents and injuries.

[26 : 29] We pray for those who have died by suicide and those who feel that their life is over even though they live.

Oh Lord, hold all of those we have named and those who have gone unnamed. We trust you in love and care and remembrance.

We trust you that in our memories and storytelling of those saints in our lives, that they may stay alive here with us just as they are alive with you.

In Jesus' saving name we pray. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

There are two scripture readings today, first of which comes from Daniel chapter 4, verse 10 through 12.

[27 : 57] This is what I saw as I was stretched out on my bed. I saw a big towering tree at the center of the world. As I watched, the tree grew huge and strong.

Its top reached the sky and it could be seen from the four corners of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, enough food for everyone.

Wild animals found shelter under it. Birds nested in its branches. Everything living was fed and sheltered by it. The second reading comes from Ephesians chapter 1, verse 18 through 19.

I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call. What is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers?

And what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers? This power is conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength.

[29 : 03] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. I want to go back over.

I needed to go back over to the beginning of this series and be reminded of these leading causes of life.

Week 1, Pastor Scott preached on Luke 24, 5. Why do you look for the living among the dead? Thinking about how we look.

You know, if you have the need for glasses, if your eyes aren't perfect, there are certain things you can't change. But we can change the way we look at things.

Do we see life or death? Do we see good or bad? Do we see positive or negative? Why do you look for the living among the dead?

[30 : 20] Because God invites us to look for life in the midst of that giant tree in which there is life for everyone. Week 2, connection.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Places of connection, like church. Become places of healing when people come and they are reminded, you are not alone.

You do not have to walk this road alone. That, while we don't do it perfectly, this and all churches were meant to be places of connection and healing.

Pastor Scott, at the end of September, preached on purpose and meaning.

[31 : 20] When God called, when Jesus called the 12 together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons, to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick.

How our lives are changed when we know what our purpose is. When we know what the plan is. And sometimes, oh my goodness, sometimes we can't find it.

So we go back to the week before. Sometimes it's in community of faith. It's in small group Bible study that we are reminded what our purpose is in this life.

Pastor Jen, in the beginning of October, do this in remembrance of me. And she preached on that word agency that we don't get because we think about agencies that are organizations.

And what is agency? It's the power to do what you have the ability to do. Which means I do not have the power to reach very high.

[32 : 23] So that is not the power that I have. I have the power to reach out and down. Do what you have the power to do.

That is what agency means. October 9th and 10th, generations of love. From the fullness of his grace, we have received one blessing after another from the beginning of the gospel of John.

And reminding us that blessing is just not just a nice thing to say. That blessing means to give life.

It's generative. It gives energy. It gives love. It gives understanding. And it helps someone to know that they've been seen. Blessing is about opening the channels of love.

I lost week six. Two, I can count. This is the life of a pastor.

[33 : 35] You lose a page. Week six. Pastor Scott, sorry. Be strong and take heart, all of you who hope in the Lord from Psalm 31.

We have the capacity to imagine the future. We do. Even if you're not imaginative, we are given the power to see some bit of the future.

Sometimes it's just the right, the next step. It's not all of the future. It's just the next step. And then this morning, let your life be about life.

We all know that sometimes our lives feel like they're about living, and sometimes it feels as though they're about some kind of dying.

There are times when we feel fraught with the weight of the world, and we don't really even want to get out of bed in the morning.

[34 : 42] And some live in the spirit of optimism and jump out of bed. I remember in college. Now, if you remember living in a dorm in college, you know college.

And my roommate was standing over me, taking my picture, and saying, good morning, wake up. And I was like, what are you doing? Except that we were new roommates, so I didn't really say that.

I just smiled and said, good morning. And she said, why do you look like that in the morning? Look like what? She was complimenting how my 17-year-old self looked in the morning when I just popped my eyes open.

Oh, how nice. I was one of those pop-out-of-bed people. Did you hear that? Was. Now I like to linger a little bit longer. Because during the time when my children were young, I prayed for the day, prayed for the day when I would wake up on my own accord.

Life, though, the life that we've been given is not always a storybook.

[35 : 59] Sometimes it resembles the words that we find in Scripture. Sometimes our lives and our stories aren't that different from some of what we read in Scripture.

And if you read the Bible from front all the way to the end, you know that there's some really tough places in there, really hard experiences, people who had to walk hundreds and hundreds of miles just to survive.

People whose life came crashing down. Wait a minute. I think we know what that feels like. Anybody know what it feels like to feel like life kind of falls?

A little? A lot? Hello? Hello? I think we do. We know what that feels like because not one of us was born into this life immune from the struggles of losing a friend, losing a spouse, losing a marriage, losing a home, losing a job, losing a friendship.

So if life is that hard, then how is it that we do this? How do we do this remembering, God wants me to have a life that is life, not death?

[37 : 34] Sometimes people wonder if they have faith at all. And I am reminded of a story in Scripture that speaks about the teeniest, tiniest spice in its wholeness in your spice cabinet.

Do you know what it might be? A mustard seed. Do you have mustard seeds? I don't have mustard seeds anymore. So if you don't have mustard seeds, you probably have poppy seeds or what's another seed?

Sesame seeds. Good. Don't get into caraway seeds because, no, they're too big. A spice that you can put on the end of your finger.

The Bible tells us that that much faith is all you need. So in the dark nights of the soul, in the spaces where we wonder, God, what in the heck are you thinking?

When we look at our lives and wonder, oh my gosh, what happened? only that much faith.

[38 : 45] Only that much faith to be reminded that God made us, God believes in us, and therefore, with that much faith, I can open my eyes for another day and find hope.

Maybe just a little. Someone spoke last night about a pastor who preached on the mustard seed and then flung a whole bottle of mustard seeds all over the sanctuary.

Somebody didn't think that was very funny because they were the ones that had to clean up all those mustard seeds and those little suckers are hard to find. Sometimes, we simply give up on ourselves.

And I was talking with Pastor Mike, we were talking about Elijah, who Elijah's been on on Pastor Mike's mind lately, and I then was thinking about Elijah.

Elijah, who served the Lord faithfully, came to a point in his life when he was like, I'm going to be killed, I'm going to be murdered, I'm running for my life.

[40 : 04] I'm not standing up to these people, I'm running. I'm done with the fight. And so he ran, and he ran, and he ran, and he didn't eat, and he didn't drink, and he ran, and he ran, and he was exhausted, kind of like some people run their lives.

They may not be thinking they're at the end of their life, but they run, and run, and run, and run, and run, because if we keep it busy, busy, busy enough, then we don't have to stop. So, Elijah stopped, because he could go no further under a tree that was provided by God.

And an angel brought him water, and food, and he then woke up, fed, watered, back to sleep, eventually got up, and carried on.

We are sometimes discouraged. I thought COVID was gone.

My husband has COVID. It's not gone, and I'm not anywhere near him. Don't worry. We think, we look around the world, and we think, how could it get like this?

[41 : 30] Whose world is this? And part of what we are reminded in Scripture, and we are reminded in Ephesians. I took out my marker.

from Paul, an apostle of Christ, Jesus, by God's will, to the holy and faithful people in Christ Jesus in Ephesus.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. and then this blessing is offered. Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven. God chose us. God chose us. In Christ, to be holy and blameless in God's presence before the creation of the world, destined us to be adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love.

Because of his love, not ours. Because of his love, first. To honor his glorious grace that he has given to us freely through the Son whom he loves.

[42 : 49] We have been ransomed through his Son's blood and we have forgiveness for our failures. Forgiveness for our failures in his overflowing grace which he poured over us with wisdom and understanding.

God revealed his hidden design to us which is according to his good will and the plan he intended to accomplish through his Son.

And then, Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, this is the reason that I don't stop giving thanks for you.

When I remember you in my prayers, I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you.

God's power is working among us believers. The power conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength.

[43 : 56] God was at work in Christ and Christ in you. We are called to be people of the light.

And sometimes I think if that cross was freestanding, which I know is kind of a hard thing, there are times when all I want to do is go up and just put my arms around the cross.

I just want to put my arms around the cross and let the energy come, let the forgiveness come, let the hope come, let the faith come.

So, you can't do that here. but we each can find ways to do that in our own life. God, give me a place, an opportunity.

Remind me all the days of my life, even when I've worked all day or two days at a rummage sale, even when I've worked at a mission site, or even when I've worked and even when I've worked or even when my body is hardly working, give me a source of life.

[45 : 26] And God says, through our faith, I've given you each other. I've given you life. I've given you the light of Elizabeth's smile, the light of how happy we are to see one another gathered on this morning, the light of one who might take a hand, because they know that the reading of the names and the honoring of those who have died is hard.

God gave us each other leading causes of life behind us, above us, before us, and within us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we give thanks. Amen. the Lord be with you.

And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

[47 : 12] Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, take and eat.

This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this all of you.

This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

- [48 : 18] And so in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice.
- In union with Christ's offering for us, we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
- Pour out your Holy Spirit on those gathered here and on these gifts of the bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood.
- By your spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
- Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.
- [49 : 19] And now with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray the prayer we were taught. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
- Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
- For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.
- Christ's table is open to all.
- [50 : 50] We invite you to come and eat. We ask that the servers come first. We ask that the servers come first.
- We ask that the servers come first.
- We ask that the servers come first.
- You're invited to Christ's table. Come and eat and be blessed. The gluten-free will be over on this side if you need gluten-free. Please come. Amazing grace.
- Amazing grace. How sweet the sound. Amazing love.
- [53 : 16] Now flowing down. Hands and feet.
- That were nailed to the tree. Grace flows down.
- It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me.
- It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me.
- It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me.
- [54 : 15] It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. It covers me.
- It covers me. It covers me. It covers me. grace how sweet the sun amazing love now flowing down hands and feet never nailed to a tree grace flows down and covers his knee covers me covers me covers me it covers me it covers me it covers me amazing amazing grace how sweet the sound amazing grace amazing amazing love now flowing down from hands and feet that were nailed to the tree to the tree to the tree grace to the tree grace flows down and covers me should so
- And colors me And colors me And colors me And clouds me And colors me And sky As you look now There's something really powerful about that communion song in terms of just feeling that grace flowing down.

And I felt the same today as I did last night. I said to the Saturday congregation, okay, I'm going to give you a minute to shift gears because we're in this moment where we know that God enters our lives.

And the beautiful recap that Pastor Kathy did of all of the reasons for choosing life, we know that life's going to throw things at us and we're going to deal with hardship and we're going to deal with loss, but we always have moments where we can participate in joy.

[58 : 41] So sometimes it's a duality, and I have heard that Phil will be mourning the lack of the O-O-Os in our final song of Today is the Day, but we are rejoicing in the fact that we have Matt Ash with us this morning on electric guitar.

So I'm going to invite you to stand, and we're going to lift up our praise by saying today is the day that we choose life. I'm leaving my past behind.

I'm setting my heart and mind, I'm leaving my past behind. I'm setting my heart and mind, I'm leaving my past behind. I'm leaving my past behind.

I'm setting my heart and mind on you, Jesus. I'm reaching my hands to yours, believing there's so much more, knowing that all you have is your for me.

It's good. It's good. It's good. It's good. Today is the day you have prayed. I will rejoice to be mine in it.

[60 : 00] Today is the day you have made. I will rejoice to be mine in it. Today is the day you have made.

I won't worry about you, no, no. Trust everyone you have said today. Today is the day. Today is the day.

Today is the day. I'm leaving my doubts behind. I'm leaving my hopes and dreams to you, Jesus.

I am yours. I'm leaving there's so much more, knowing that all you have is your for me.

And I will be in it. I will be in it. You do. You do. Today is the day I've made. I will rejoice to be mine in it.

[61 : 06] Today is the day you have made. I will rejoice to be mine in it. And I won't worry about tomorrow.

Nothing what you say. Today is the day. Today is the day. I will stand upon your truth.

I will stand upon your truth. All my days I live for you. All my days I live for you.

I will stand upon your truth. I will stand upon your truth. All my days I live for you.

All my days I live for you. Today is the day you have made. And I will rejoice to be mine in it. Today is the day you have made.

[62 : 26] I will rejoice to be mine in it. Today is the day you have made. And I will rejoice to be mine in it.

And I won't worry about tomorrow Giving you my feelings all over Where you need me, I will follow Trust me, we want to say Today is the day Today is the day Today is the day Today is the day Today is the day It is the day of life It's the day that God gave you to be alive You are alive Thank God So may we feel it

May we know it And when we can't find it May we touch the shoulder or hand of someone near us That we may find it from one another Let us go alive In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Amen Thank you Thanks Sorry Let's do it.

Let's do it.

Let's do it.

[65 : 40] Let's do it.