

Why Do People Suffer?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 April 2017

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] Could you imagine a world without malaria plaguing people all over the world? The United Methodist Church is very interested in working on this effort and have made great strides in diminishing the occurrences and instances of malaria in Africa and all over where we have been working on that.

They're working on things like draining standing water sources that just are breeding grounds for the mosquitoes and sending mosquito nets, where children and families are needing to be protected.

If the Lord puts it on your heart to contribute to this effort of the United Methodist Church, please feel free to do that and prayerfully consider it.

With these joys, Lord, the joy of the day, the joy of being able to help in such a wonderful effort, let's continue in our worship as we bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings.

Every day to us is Easter with its resurrection song.

[1 : 2 3] When in trouble move the faster to our God who rights the wrongs. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! See the power of heavenly throngs.

Fear of death can no more stop us from our pressing here below. For our Lord empowered us to triumph over every foe.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Unto victory now we go! Easter people, raise your voices!

Sounds of heaven in worship ring! Christ has brought us heavenly thronging! Christ has brought us heavenly choirs, heavenly music let it ring!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter people, let us sing!

[2 : 4 7] Alleluia!

Alleluia! Gary! V ■■■■o! Alleluia! He heavenly hosts Praise Father's love And hope is yours Amen Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day And that we may come and worship you Lord God, we lift up these gifts before you now Offering just a small portion of all the abundant blessings That you've poured out into our lives We ask that you would bless them, Lord Give us wisdom to know how to use them best for the furtherance of your kingdom Bless also the effort, Lord God, to eradicate malaria from our world That our children would be safe And grow to come to know you Lord God, we just pray a blessing on this offering In Jesus' name, Amen

Please be seated It's a beautiful day And we are rejoicing in God's presence Rejoicing in the beauty of the day And we also have some concerns to bring before the Lord I know you have many concerns in your heart as well These we're going to just bring out today For you to keep in mind throughout the week Alex Wisseau has had surgery on Friday for kidney stones And he's home now and he's recovering So that's a good thing But we want to keep him in our prayers Ron Elman is going to be evaluated for some treatment And determining what's going to be happening with him at Roswell this week Jim Phillips is having a surgical procedure on Friday Let me see And we want to keep the Hanischewski family in our prayers Little Jace, little baby Jace who had been born several weeks ago Is in hospice care now at this point So we want to keep the family in our prayers And Diana Fritz's father She usually attends the 1115 service

Her father has passed away this week So we want to keep that family in our prayers as well With these concerns and those concerns that are in your heart Either in your seats or at the rail You are welcome to join me As we turn to the Lord in prayer Heavenly Father What a blessing it is to be able to come before you All powerful God Creator of all of the universe And everything that is in it We are grateful That you call us to your side That you call us into your throne room To offer our prayers before you We are grateful that you hear And that you answer our prayers Lord, we lift up all of those who are sick and infirm now We ask that you would touch them with your healing power

That you would bring blessing into their lives And into the lives of their families, Lord We thank you That you have given doctors and nurses And other medical professionals And given them the expertise And the wisdom To be able to bring healing We pray that they would have wisdom Beyond their learning Beyond their experience Wisdom that comes From you in a very special way, Lord We pray for those who are taking care Of the sick and the infirm Those who are taking care of the elderly, Lord God We just pray in Jesus' name That you would give them special hearts Of compassion A special ability to be patient And to know What is needed At the various moments in time When they are present

[7 : 15] Lord God, we pray in Jesus' name For those who are Waiting Who are watching Knowing that the time is short For someone dear to them That they love We pray for comfort For those who are leaving this world We pray for your peace In their hearts And in their minds In their bodies In their spirits We pray for peace For those who will be losing someone That they love dearly We pray that your comfort Would come to them We pray for those who are Grieving losses, Lord God That they would be comforted And have wonderful memories Of time spent together That was blessed We pray that you give them The hope of the resurrection

The hope of eternal life That they will be able to Come to a place Where they rejoice in you Knowing That you love and care For everyone In this world And In eternity Lord, we pray for those People now Who are suffering And who are in fear Of the flooding That's happening In our region We just ask for your protection Lord God We ask for wisdom For the people Who are dealing with these things Wisdom for Those who need to leave Who need to leave Where they are We just pray for peace In their hearts And their minds And their spirits Lord God

We pray that as your people You would give us the ability In whatever circumstance We find ourselves This week To share your great love And grace And mercy To bring a word Of encouragement To bring a word Of comfort To bring a word Of hope We pray that we may By our witness Draw many To believe in Jesus Christ As Savior and Lord Father as we continue In our worship Now as we hear Your word Spoken And as we sing Songs of praise And we listen To the message You have given To Pastor Tom For us this day Give us eyes To see And ears To hear And hearts And minds To understand And receive All that you have For us this day Help us To be transformed Into Christ likeness So that we can Minister in your world Bless the message

That you've given Pastor Tom And let it bless us And make all of our Worship to be a blessing To you Lord That is why we came In Jesus name we pray Amen Shall we hear from the word Of the Lord So that we are And we ■ Haize How to say This is how we move And we appreciate It is how we face You know The Lord And he has gotten And he found Jesus puppy And you En ■■■ Hurry Cuid And he woes While you And we Ay If And You Good morning.

Good morning. Our scripture this morning is from the book of John 16, 29 to 33. Then Jesus' disciples said, How you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.

[11 : 43] Now we can see that you know all things, and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.

Do you now believe, Jesus replied, A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone, yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Always in between you should take a nap.

I think that's good advice. If you could ask God one question, what would it be? We actually asked a couple of groups in our church that very thing, and we got a whole lot of questions.

[12 : 56] Some of them we're going to talk about in the next few weeks, and some of them we're not going to get to. But I do tell you that one of these days, somewhere probably this summer, early summer, I'm going to do one of those Ask the Pastor, where I just pull questions out of a hat.

So you get your opportunity to ask your question. We'll see what happens. This morning, I want to look at one of the most difficult questions that we have, and that is, why do people suffer?

If God is such a powerful God, as it talks about in here, if God knows all things, if God is so loving, why did little babies die in Syracuse, or Syria, not Syracuse, Syria from poison gas?

Why do people who are good, faithful Christian folk get cancer and struggle? Why do people have tragedies? I was even in a group one time with some people where someone was saying they wanted to praise God for keeping their loved one safe in a car accident.

Someone else said, well, what about the other Christians that die in the car accident? Does God not care about them? The disciples come to Jesus and say, now you're speaking clearly.

[14 : 14] Straight talk, without figures of speech. But sometimes, there's questions we have that we don't seem to have a straight answer on from God.

As we go through this series, I want to look at a couple of people from the Old Testament as examples. Today, I want to talk about a fellow who the Bible says God knew before he was born.

It even says that God called him while he was still in his mother's womb. When he was a little child, God spoke to him and said, when you grow up, you'll be a great prophet and speak for me.

But your life is going to be so miserable, you shouldn't have a wife or children. How many of you would like to have that message from God? And his life was miserable.

His name was Jeremiah. And his job was to tell his country that they were going to be destroyed by the Babylonians. While everyone else in the city was saying things were fine.

[15 : 17] In fact, all the other religious leaders were saying that there was peace. As Jeremiah said, where there was no peace. People didn't like what he said. He said that God would allow this to happen.

They said God couldn't allow this to happen. It would embarrass him if Israel was destroyed. So they threw him in a well. So own family turned against him. People talked about him everywhere he went.

And in chapter 12 of Jeremiah, he asked this question. You're always righteous, Lord, when I bring a case before you. But I would speak to you about your justice.

Why does the way of the wicked prosper? And why do all the faithless live at ease? Now to put this in an even clearer context. What Jeremiah was saying is.

I would take you to court and I would sue you over this thing you call justice. But you're God, so you win. Because you're always right. But it isn't fair.

[16 : 19] Bad people seem to have good things happening to them. How do you call that justice? It's not fair.

It doesn't seem right. God did answer Jeremiah, by the way. You know what he said? Listen, little man.

You think you've had problems so far? You haven't seen anything. You better buck up because you've got even worse stuff coming than what you've seen. That's the answer we all want to hear, right? Jeremiah.

Struggle and hurt. His disciples say to him, you know everything. You know all the answers. But sometimes we feel like we don't.

Most of us just want to have a life that doesn't have too many problems. Just wake up in the morning. Go through our daily living without having something break or mess up or blow up in our face.

[17 : 19] So, like, why can't they make a car that never breaks? You know what I'm talking about? I mean, are we not the most technologically advanced culture that has ever existed?

And yet, they make cars that always end up breaking. All of them. And they don't break in a convenient place like in your garage or when you're visiting your mechanic or something like that.

It's always in some back alley late at night when nobody's around to help you. I think that there's just something wrong about that. I know that they make these cars to break on purpose.

I know it's part of the design. Because if they made cars to last forever, we would stop buying cars. So, they're designed to break. Isn't that reassuring?

You know, in some ways, the problem of suffering is part of the design of the world. We studied a couple of months ago the book of Genesis, if you'll remember. And it said that when God created the world, he looked at everything he made and he said, it is good.

[18 : 28] So, how did it get so messed up? God made a world where there would be joy and peace and love. And he put us in a beautiful garden.

Yet, he also made us in his image. Which means that he gave us the capacity to love. He gave us the capacity to hope. He gave us the capacity to dream and to create.

And he gave us the capacity to choose. So, God gave us a real choice. He made a world that was perfect and good in every way. But he gave us a real choice to choose evil.

Now, he didn't believe in any way we'd be so foolish as to choose it. Because who would pick evil over good? That just doesn't make sense. But we did.

But we did. And so, the perfect creation broke. It broke because of choices made from the very beginning by every single person that's walked the face of the earth.

[19 : 29] Including you and me. We break our garden of obedience. By our sin. By our neglect. By our ignorance.

As part of this sermon series, we're looking for advice. You recognize this from the Snoopy cartoons? Today, we're going to ask advice about cars.

Because, you know, cars are a big piece of our life. So, if we know what to do with cars, they'll last longer. So, I brought a gentleman to help explain it to us. He doesn't seem to be able to speak.

With simple things like that. If you want to get better fuel economy, what you need to do is start by checking the air filter. Because if you're running with a dirty air filter, it can cost you as much as 10% of the fuel efficiency of the automobile.

And these are things that we all know about. I'm just reminding you of them. Simple things like the air pressure and the tires. If you're not checking that air pressure about every 90 days, you're losing one pound. And this is with everybody.

[20 : 27] One pound every month out of your air pressure of your tires. So, if you haven't checked that air pressure in four or five months, you're running five pounds down. What can not only be dangerous for you, it can also cost you in the fuel efficiency of the car.

And the tires are going to last. They're not going to last as long as they should. So, you can find the proper air pressure in the manual of the car. And it needs to be not on the side of the tire, but what it says in the owner's manual.

Because that's the specified amount by the manufacturer. So, don't go by on the side of the tire. Make sure you remember that. Another thing is to make sure that you use a quality branded motor oil.

Don't use low quality oils because they can actually void the warranty of your car. Use a quality branded motor oil like a Quaker State or a Pennzoil. And it will actually make your engine last longer.

And you can get as much as 2% better fuel economy. So, if you do simple things like this and have the car in proper tune, your engine is going to last longer. Your car is going to last longer. And you're going to get better fuel economy, which saves you in the long run.

[21 : 25] So, simple things and your car will run forever. Well, for a while longer. Now, I always thought that you got the air pressure off the side of the tire. You know, because like if my mechanic changes a tire, what good is the owner's manual that has a different...

And actually, I got my own little gauge that has a little sweet spot that says that if it's between there, they're good. I don't know. You learn something new every day, don't you?

One time, I was down at the gas station and I found this gas called E85. Anybody ever see it? It was cheaper than the other gas. So, I put it in my car.

After about a quarter of a mile, my car went... And I was like, what? What do I do now?

What? Then I thought, it's that gas. But unfortunately, just like most of us, I filled the tank up. So, I got to get rid of some of it. How do you get rid of it? You drive it around.

[22 : 26] You drive it around. Until I got it down about a quarter of a tank, a third of a tank. And then I took it into the gas station and I bought the most expensive, you know, the stuff with the super high octane.

And I put that in there and after about a quarter of a mile, the car said, oh, this is good. I like this stuff. I saved nothing. I saved nothing. And I almost busted my car because I was greedy and I wanted to make a choice that wasn't a good choice.

Sometimes we make choices in this broken world and sometimes suffering is because of what we choose to do. Sometimes it's a choice of other people.

The people in Syria living there, when the bombs fell down on them, they didn't choose for those bombs to fall. Someone else made a choice that brought that evil upon them. Sometimes we think it's actually funny, like this guy.

Why does he keep trying to kick the ball? And why does she keep pulling it out? There's something inside of people that sometimes causes them to be hurtful.

[23 : 38] Especially when they hurt, they want other people to hurt with them. And so some of the suffering we feel is caused by people making choices.

And when we make these choices, they break the world in a way that only God can fix it. In the eighth chapter of Romans, it says to us that all of creation is groaning and struggling, waiting for the day it'll be restored.

Waiting for the day that the children of God will choose. And they can go back to the garden and no longer live in decay. God, we'll fix the broken world.

But the problem is, is when he fixes the broken world, it means everything we live in and all the people with it are gone. And the day of judgment comes. And as much as I look forward to the restoration of a perfect world, I'm not ready for it today.

Amen? Amen? Don't say amen. That's not good. We're all ready for it today, right? But are our friends? Are we living in such a life that we know everything we want to have happen will have happened?

[24 : 52] Suffering comes sometimes simply by the way the world was made. There was a man named Job. And Job also asked the question. He had been a wealthy man. He had a wonderful family.

And somewhere along the line, all that was taken from him. And he said to God, why? Why? And God said, can you make a world? Can you measure off the ends of it?

Do you know how to make a crocodile? Do you know how to separate the oceans from the land? When you can make a universe, you come talk to me about mine, little man. Because I made it the only way I knew how.

And that means he gave you and I choices. And our choices sometimes lead to brokenness and lead to suffering. Sometimes what we call suffering is really misnamed.

We can perceive we're suffering when we're really not. I was visiting a friend the other day. And he was complaining because his 97-year-old mother-in-law had not gone to be with the Lord yet.

[25 : 57] You know, don't you think it's about time? We had plans for our life. And now we find ourselves taking care of her. And we don't get to do what we want to do in our lives. I understand it.

I sympathized with his frustration. But in my heart I thought, I was orphaned a few years ago and I wish I had one of them back. I'd be fine to take care of them if I could have that opportunity again.

People complain about their children to folks who can't have children. People complain about their job to people who don't have a job. People complain about having to take care of all their stuff.

To people who don't have any stuff. Sometimes what we call suffering is just our inability to choose between the good things in life.

So we've so overcomplicated and so overpiled our lives. We don't have room for everything. That's why they've got all these storage places all over the country. The fastest growing industry around. You, by the way, don't have to keep it in storage.

[26 : 59] You can bring it here during the week and the ladies will sell it for you this Saturday. Don't tell me I didn't give you ladies a plug. Sometimes the suffering really is something good and we just don't receive it.

Sometimes suffering is just to help us to live the right way. I read a rabbi who was talking about this and said that if we really felt that there was a legitimate reason for the suffering, maybe we wouldn't care so much.

If we could say that the suffering of those little children led to something that was a greater good, would we stop caring that the little children were suffering? After all, Jesus died on a cross to save our sins, so it's okay that he died on the cross and we're not so bad with it.

Right? If we understood all the suffering in the world, would we stop caring? Maybe some of this is just a test to see whether we will care.

And suffering makes us stronger. No pain, no gain. Romans chapter 5 says it this way. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance and perseverance character.

[28 : 17] And character hope, and then hope doesn't put us to shame. Because we grow stronger from the struggle. And we can look forward. Forward to the glory that God will give us.

And suffering proves our faith. Is it really faith if we only believe in God when everything's going well? See, that was the whole point of the story of Job.

It says that Satan went to visit God, and God said, have you seen my servant Job? Isn't he a great guy? Look at how loyal he is and wonderful and faithful he is. And Satan says, yeah, take away all the good pennies you're giving him, and then let's see what his faith will be like.

Can we love God when things are broken? Or only when things are good. We actually have churches that preach a prosperity religion that say, if you love God, God will give you everything good.

The people that find out that that's not true, people that find out that even good people run into brokenness and end up in the Methodist church. Because we know that God can and will and does bless us, but that sometimes the suffering runs into our lives anyways.

[29 : 42] There are reasons for suffering. It's part of creation. Some of it's actually good for us. Some of us actually isn't suffering. Some of it's our fault. But you know, the question of why we suffer is not really the question that needs to be asked.

Jesus speaks to it in this chapter from John. He says, you will have troubles. But that's not the question. He said, do you believe?

Do you believe? Or in other words, what is the beginning point of your life in deciding all of these things in the first place?

Does our faith determine our worldview? Do we begin with God? Or does the culture around us make that decision?

What if all your friends and even the people of the country voted that something was right that you knew in your heart God said is wrong? What if, on the other hand, everybody around you said something was wrong that you knew God said was right?

[30 : 51] Which way would you choose? And what would you say to your friends? Where do we begin? Is something bad because we don't like it?

The 15th chapter of Job, he said, even if God killed me, I would still serve him. To Job, it wasn't about what kind of benefits he could get out of life, how easy his life was.

Jeremiah wasn't faithful just because everything went well. He was faithful. Jeremiah's life was so bad that towards the end of it, the whole kingdom of Israel fell. Everything he feared happened.

And he decided to retire to a little plot of land he bought outside of Jerusalem. And he got there to settle down as a farmer. Some people came along and kidnapped him and took him to Egypt and he died in obscurity.

Really? Really? Really? Where do we begin? Do we begin with what's comfortable to us? Or do we begin with God?

[31 : 56] Jesus says, do you believe? A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered each to your own home. You'll leave me all alone. Do we abandon God when things are difficult?

Do we abandon God for our own self-preservation? Do we abandon God for popularity? Or for success? Or for our comfort? Or because we can't get our head around what God is thinking?

Do we judge God or do we let God judge us? In the book of Mark, some guy came up to Jesus and said, good teacher.

And Jesus said to him, good. Only God is good. And God is good. And all the time. Except when he messes with my comfort and my life, right?

And my people, most of all. Is God good all the time even if on our mind we can't understand it?

[33 : 09] I hear people say to me, well, my God would never. Well, my God, he's not your God. He's the God of the universe. You don't own him. You don't define him. You don't determine him. It's not your place to decide who and what God is and whether God's right or wrong.

That would make you God. Or me God. We don't understand everything about God. The real question is, do we believe in him anyways?

As Jesus said, do you believe in God as much as Job did? Because God has not given up.

God has not gone away. God is still in control of this universe. And if we seek out God, we can find that peace and that strength and that hope in God that gives us the ability to overcome the suffering, to get through the struggle, to walk through the dark, shadowy valleys of life.

Jesus said, I'm not alone even if you abandon me for my Father is with me. And I told you these things so that in me you may have peace.

[34 : 32] peace. Not the absence of war, not the absence of struggle. In fact, sometimes we need to struggle. Sometimes we need to argue to find the truth. Not the absence of suffering.

Peace comes with the presence of God. Just before Jesus left the earth, after his resurrection, in Matthew, in verse 28, he said, go and make disciples of all nations.

baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And then he says this wonderful verse, and by the way, I am with you even to the end of time.

God is with us. And in the midst of the brokenness, 80% of overcoming it is having somebody to walk through it with us. God is always with us.

And there's peace that comes with that. Jeremiah lived a life that was what we would call broken. They call him the suffering prophet. They say he was a precursor to Jesus suffering on the cross.

[35 : 48] Yet God says about him, I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not harm you. Plans to give you hope.

Hope and a future. Because God can overcome all the struggle. He ends this passage by saying, take heart, I have overcome the world.

You'll have troubles in this world, but God is greater than all of creation and someday God will end all the suffering. God will make a new creation. A creation that will be perfect.

We won't be floating around in some clouds or something like that. That's just Hollywood. We're going to live in a real world, a real creation, back to the garden where everything is good and God will accept our decision to no longer have evil.

He will give us the choice to choose good and choose God and no longer have evil. Now many of us would say, let's bring it on right now, amen?

[36 : 57] God, let's get going. God, I'd like to see that. What are you waiting for? Peter answered that. He says, God, nope, that's not it.

We'll get to that. That's good though. Thanks, Adrian. I skipped that part. Let's go to the next one. He says, the Lord is not slow in keeping his promises. Some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone, everyone, your brothers, your sisters, your parents, your cousins, the people at work, you and me, to turn back to God.

Then he'll be ready for the day. The day when there'll be no more sorrow or pain or struggle or suffering as it says in the book of Revelations. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, look, God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them.

They will be his people and God, he himself will be with them and be their God and he'll wipe every tear from their eyes. There'll be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things will have passed away.

Come Lord Jesus, but not quite yet. Because we have things to do. We have things to do that matter. What are those things?

[38 : 11] In Corinthians, they said, faith, hope, and love. These three remain. These three. What are we going to do? You see, the world has suffering and struggles, but we have choices to make.

We can ignore the suffering. We can pretend it's not there. Or we can lean into it with faith, hope, and love and overcoming. Because ignoring it doesn't make it go away.

That's true about life. It's true about cars, too. Your check engine light is on. Mm-hmm. Typically, that's an indicator to, you know, check your engine.

It's fine. It's been on for like a month. Well, actually, that would be all the more reason to, you know, check your engine. Sheldon, it's fine.

If it were fine, the light wouldn't be on. That's why the manufacturer installed that light, to let you know it's not fine. I don't know. Maybe the light's broken. Is there a check the check engine light light?

[39 : 19] Thank you for driving me back to my hotel. That was not a problem. I was going to ask Leonard to do it, but he seemed a bit emotionally unstable, and you don't want someone like that operating heavy machinery.

No, you do not. Your check engine light is on. Yeah, I gotta put a sticker over that. Thanks again for taking me to the pharmacy.

Oh, it's no problem. Is everything okay? Oh, I'm fine. It's just some stomach medication for my trip. There's a remote, yet distinct possibility that I may end up in South America.

Remember the old days when I would have said something dumb like, why? Why? Uh, that doesn't sound good.

Remember the old days when I used to point out that your check engine light was on? Yes. Get ready to stroll down memory lane. Penny, your check engine... Yeah, I know! It's on, Sheldon!

[40 : 20] Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I cannot afford this right now. Maybe it's just something minor. Oh, good news.

The light just went out. Even in the midst of the worst of things, there's always something bright to look at. But you know what God wants to know is, what are you doing about the suffering?

We have some answers to why there's suffering. Ultimately, it's incomplete. People have been asking that for thousands of years. But the question we can answer is, what are you going to do about it?

Are you going to ignore it? Put a sticker over it and maybe it'll go away if you don't see the suffering and the hurt in the world. Or we can lean into it with love and hope and faith.

The other day, I had somebody who came up to me and they needed money for rent and I'm thinking, I don't have that kind of money on me. You know, I mean, rent's expensive, right? So I'm kind of scrounging around trying to figure out what to do.

[41 : 32] I said, how much do you really need? He says, I'm \$10 short. I said, oh, seriously, I've got that? You know? Sometimes we don't even realize how easy it is to overcome the suffering.

When I worked for Camelon, I used to take care of this one lady's lawn. She was blind, so I'd go in and she'd have me make out the check, which I always thought was kind of interesting. I could have made out the check for anything to anyone and she'd just make it out.

And I took care of her lawn for a little while until all of a sudden I got thinking one day as I was walking around the lawn because, you know, I've got lots of time to think doing that job. And I thought, why does a blind lady have Camelon anyways?

She can't see the lawn. Well, she care what's in the lawn. Then it dawned on me, she doesn't care about the lawn. She pays to have lawn care service so that four times a year some young guy will come in and talk to her.

So I started to arrange 20 minutes to half an hour just to go and visit with this lady who would give me a check to take care of a lawn she couldn't see. It's not as hard as you might think.

[42 : 43] You see somebody who's buying regular plain groceries and they don't have enough money, what is it going to hurt you if you pay for those? You see somebody struggling to mow the lawn or shovel their driveway and you know you can do it because you're a lot healthier than me.

Go out and help them. You see somebody who's lonely or sad, maybe you could be love and just talk with them.

Lean in with love. Lean in with hope. With hope. Trusting that God will bring an end to the suffering in this life and in the life to come.

Truly believe that God cares about you and this world. In Romans chapter 8 Paul says, I know that in all things God works for good.

In all things God works for good for those who love him and have been called according to his purpose. If we follow God, even if our life is like Jeremiah's, we know there is hope because we have hope not just in this world but beyond this world.

[43 : 54] Can God overcome your suffering in this world? Yes, does he? He can and will. But we know we always have the final victory. But most of all, lean in with faith.

believe. Believe. Believe in a God that will fill your soul. That will give you peace even when things seem troubled. That will give you the strength of God even when you're feeling broken.

The apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote the book of Philippians. And in the fourth chapter, these are the words he writes in chains in prison. Rejoice in the Lord always.

In case you didn't get it, he'll say it again. Rejoice always. Let your gentleness be evident to all because the Lord is near. So don't be anxious about anything because the Lord is near.

In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And this is the best part. And the peace of God, the Holy Spirit, which transcends all the things that you can understand and can't understand, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[45 : 03] Yes, there's brokenness. Sometimes you wonder whether God's even here. Sometimes we feel alone. Sometimes we feel like all we're doing is living in the struggle. But God has promised.

God has promised that if we turn to Him, He will overcome it. And we can be part of it through faith, hope, and love. God has promised to Him, and we can be part of it.

And we can be part of it. And we can be part of it. And we can be part of it. Lord, it seems so far away, a million miles, oh Lord, it feels today.

though I have lost my faith.

Though I haven't lost my faith, I must confess right now And it's hard for me to pray But I don't know what to say And I don't know where to start But as you give the grace With all that's in my heart I will sing, I will praise Even in the darkness now Through the sorrow and the pain I will sing, I will praise

[47 : 12] Lift my hands to honor you Because your word is true I will sing Lord, it's hard for me to see All the thoughts and plans You have for me But I will talk my trust in you Knowing how to die And set me free But I don't know what to say And I don't know where to start

I will sing, I will praise With all that's in my heart I will sing, I will praise Even in my darkness now Through the sorrow and the pain I will sing, I will praise Lift my hands to honor you Because your word is true I will sing, I will praise I will sing You know, God wants to step into the brokenness

That is us And make it better And he said that if we confess our sin And believe in our heart He will take all that brokenness All that sin away And at least the part of the suffering That we've caused Can be taken from us So pray with me, will you?

Dear God in heaven I have sinned I've hurt you I've hurt others I've been part of the problem And not part of the solution Forgive me, Lord Teach me to love Teach me to have hope Teach me to step into the brokenness And believe in you When it's hard to believe In Jesus' name we pray Amen God has made a decision To fix the brokenness in your life In your heart In your world You've come to him And now he's decided to change you In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen Amen

I will bless the Lord forever Amen I will bless the Lord forever I will bless the Lord forever I will trust him at all times He has delivered me from all fear He has set my feet upon the rock I will bless the Lord And I will bless the Lord

[51 : 41] And I'll say, O Lord Lord, you are my shield My strength, my portion Deliverer My shelter, strong tower My very presence, you can climb on me Who have I met and bought you There's love I desire beside you And you have made me glad And I'll say, O Lord And I'll say, O Lord

You are my shield, my strength My portion, never My portion, never My portion, never My portion, never My shelter, strong tower My very present help, you are my shield My strength, my portion Delivered by shelter, strong tower My very present help, you tie on me My very present help in time on me My very present help in time on me

The splendor of the King Gloved in majesty Let all the earth rejoice All the earth rejoice He wraps himself in light And darkness tries to hide And trumbles at his voice And trumbles at his voice Our great is our God Sing with me Our great is our God

And all will sing our great How great is our God Age to age he stands And time is in his hands Beginning and the end Beginning and the end Beginning and the end The God and three in one Father, spirit, son The light and the land The light and the land The light and the land How great is our God Sing with me How great is our God

And all will sing How great is our God And all will sing our great How great is our God How great is our God Name above all names You are worthy of all praise You are worthy of all praise You are worthy of all praise You are worthy of all praise And all heart will sing our great And all will sing our great We are worthy of all praise How great is our God And how great is our God

[56 : 54] How great, how great is our God Amen, please be seated.

Our God is so good. You know, he emptied himself of everything, everything, so that he could come and be with us.

Jesus, knowing everything that we suffer, knowing everything that we rejoice in. It's a wonder to know that God knows everything that we're dealing with.

Amen? And that's what we come to celebrate at the table this morning. We come to celebrate what God has done in our lives in being with us and in making a way for us to be with him, for us to be the people who can bring transformation into the world.

Everyone is welcome at the table. Everyone is welcome to come and receive all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. If you love God, repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ who wants to bring that change into the world, come and meet with him.

[58 : 29] You are welcome. Even if it's your first time here. If you're seeking God, you are welcome at this table this morning. The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life.

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.

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.

[59 : 49] 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.

By your great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

On that night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread and he gave thanks to you. He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, and he gave you thanks and praise. He gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you.

[61 : 01] This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

On the night you raised him from the dead, he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread. And in the power of your Holy Spirit, your church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

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, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here. And on these gifts of bread and wine, 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.

[62 : 19] Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit and your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

Shall we pray together the prayer Jesus taught us? Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

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 and ever. Amen. Will those who are serving please come forward.

Amen. Amen.

[64 : 20] Amen. Amen.

Amen. God invites anyone who seeks after him to come to the table.

This is God's table, not ours. You're welcome to join us as we come to the table. We receive God himself into our lives. You may pause at the rail for anointing, for prayers for healing, or to light a candle.

Come and join us with the Lord. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[67 : 01] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Now I'd like to invite you to stand if you're able as we're going to sing together, Christ is risen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. I love that line in the song, tell those demons, get you gone.

[70 : 48] Get you gone, the pain and the brokenness and the hurt. Get you gone, the struggle and the depression and the suffering. Fill your life with the power of God.

Go out and proclaim the good news. Preach it to the nations. Teach the commandments of God. And remember that in all things, in every situation, good, bad or indifferent, God is with you from now and even to the end of the age.

Go in his peace. Amen.