

November 15, 2015

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Date: 15 November 2015

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.

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Hi, welcome to our church. I'm Mike Maciejewski. And I'm Julie. Please fill out your friendship card to get on the mailing list, to sign up for any activities, any prayers or concerns, and any notes you want to send for the staff.

And if you're new to our church, please be sure and pick up a gift that we have for you in the back of the church at the connection site after worship. Thank you for coming today, and welcome to Pendleton Center Church.

[1 : 14] And we are glad to have you here this morning. A couple of things I wanted to mention. The clipboard ministry opportunities are for the turkeys at Seneca Street. We're going to feed a couple hundred people down in the city of Buffalo for Thanksgiving.

So if you can help with that with the turkey, we appreciate it. And the second one is for the hanging of the greens, not the Smiths or the Jones. We only hang the greens in our church. And it's on the last Sunday in November in the afternoon around 430.

We're going to decorate the church. We're going to have some children's things, a dinner. So sign up for someplace where you might enjoy that. This week is Mission Week. We've got activities for different ages on different days of the week.

And it's going to end by us collecting up all these shoe boxes. If you still want a shoe box, they've got some information about it in the fellowship hall. But they all need to be in here by next Sunday so that we can send them on their journey around the world.

If you want to order poinsettias, those need to be in by the end of the month. And I did want to mention that this afternoon at 2.30 at the Emanuel United Methodist Church, we will have our annual charge conference.

[2 : 14] This is our annual business meeting. And all the members of the church are invited and welcome and encouraged to come and attend. Shall we turn our hearts to the Lord in worship as we pray together?

Dear God, there are lots of things going on in our minds, lots of thoughts and concerns and ideas and things that just bounce around our head when we come into this place.

Pull away from us all the things but you, that we might focus on you, that we might worship you, that we might be here for you. We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.

I'd like to invite you to stand if you're able as we're going to sing together, Lift High the Cross. Lift High the Cross.

by What Spellies This triumphant sign, the Lord stumbles in unity combined.

[3 : 40] Lift high the cross above the Christ proclaim, till all the world adores His sacred name.

Each true servant of the crucified bears on the throne, the sick of Him who died.

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, till all the world adores His sacred name.

O Lord, what's with them on the glorious sweet land?

The highest progress from the world to Thee. Lift high the cross above the Christ
proclaim, till all the world adores His sacred name.

[5 : 11] The Lord be with you. Take a moment if you will and greet your neighbor with the peace of
the spirit. I'd like to invite the children to come up and join me now if they'd like to.

I got on a special ring today. Anybody know who that ring is for? The Bills. The Bills. Yeah,
the Bills.

The Buffalo Bills. What are they? Are they like a game or a football team? You ever watch
a game?

You ever go to the stadium and watch a game? Yeah, I have. Yeah. Yeah. Wow. What do
we call people who follow the Buffalo Bills?

Buffalonians? Actually, there's anybody who lives in Buffalo, but that's a good question.
Fans. We call them fans. Now, I got something else on. Let's see if I can get it out of here.

[6 : 20] That's not it. The collar's too tight. There we go. You know what this is? I guess what? It
is.

It's... You know what that is? A cross. What's a cross for? A cross. Yeah. That's for Jesus,
right?

You know what they call a fan of Jesus? A disciple. A Christian's good too. Yeah, that's
what we all want to be. Christian disciples, all right? People who follow Jesus as much as
we follow, in fact, more than we follow, the Buffalo Bills.

Yeah. Okay? What are you guys thankful for? Raise your hand if you want to share
something. My mom. Friends and family. Friends and family. My mom and dad.

The earth. My dad and brother. My sister and cat. My daddy. My dad and dad.

[7 : 23] My friends and family.

the dinosaurs my family my cat my mom and Ted dear God we thank you for all the
wonderful things in our lives our pets, our families, our toys even the dinosaurs bless us
Lord be with us love us into your eternity and help us always be your disciples in Jesus
name we pray amen okay you guys can all go out to church school all the kids can go to
church school now if they'd like to good morning good morning what a blessed day to be
gathered in the house of the Lord amen and do you see all those shoe boxes any chance
we could like double or triple them yeah we're grateful we're grateful for all of the
blessings God pours out into our lives and the blessings that we can pour into the lives of
others let's continue in our time of worship and bring our gifts, tithes and offerings before
the Lord purify my heart purify my heart let me be as gold and precious silver purify my
heart let me be as gold pure gold free fire fire my heart's one desire is to be holy set apart
for you

Lord I choose to be holy set apart for you my master ready to do your will purify my heart
cleanse me from within and make me holy purify my heart cleanse me from my sin deep
within deeper within deep within deep within brief biliars far my heart's one desire my
heart's one desire is to be holy set apart

Be holy, set apart for you, the lesser, ready to do your will.

We find a spark, my heart's one desire, is to be holy.

[11 : 33] Set apart for you, Lord, I choose to be holy.

Set apart for you, my master, ready to do your will.

Ready to do your will.

Ready to do your will.

Ready to do your will.

[13 : 27] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm particularly thankful. I didn't share this in the early service. It's a little...

Two weeks ago, my daughter and a group of her friends were in Paris. And she's home. She's home and she's safe and she's not there.

She wasn't there this week. But she was and I'm grateful to God that I'm not grateful for what happened. But I am grateful that she wasn't there.

I know you all have things in your hearts that you are grateful for and that you are concerned about. We share in concern with the McDonald family.

[14 : 25] Ed's brother Joe died on Wednesday. So we want to keep his family in our prayers. Anna Kay Anderson had surgery on Friday. And Gretchen Push had surgery last week as well.

And we want to keep Jim Phillips and his family lifted up. He is having some health concerns. And we just need, you know, strength and prayer for that. I know that you have many things on your heart as well.

So let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Lord God, we are so grateful that we can come to you.

Creator of all that is and you want to be with us.

You want us to desire to be with you. We thank you that you hear and answer our prayers. We thank you that you are with us no matter what we may be going through in our lives.

[15 : 32] Father, we pray for all of the people in this world who are having their lives turned upside down because of the actions of others.

We pray, Lord, for those who are boldly sharing your message, who are boldly preaching the gospel and are in trouble because of it.

We know they're not in trouble with you, Lord. We pray that you will continue to bless them, that you will keep them safe, that you will draw them close to yourself and be with them no matter what their circumstances are.

We pray for the families of all of those people who have been victims of violence. We pray for those who know you that they'll continue to share the message.

We pray for those who don't know you that they will come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord God, for those people who see fit to do harm to others, who think that the only way to get their message across, the only way to make things the way they think they should be is by causing harm and destruction and violence.

[17 : 09] We ask that you continue to draw them by your Spirit, Lord. Draw them to yourself. Help them come to know you.

Replace their hearts of hatred with hearts of love. We pray for all those, Lord, who are displaced, who are looking for somewhere to be where they can be safe.

We pray that you will put them in a place where they can find peace and rest. We are so grateful that you have given us a place where we can live peacefully together, a place where we can gather to worship you.

Lord God, we lift up all of those folks, those we have named and those who are in our hearts, who are sick and infirm, who are in need of healing.

We ask that you touch them from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet and their spirits, their souls, and their bodies. Please let them have relief. We pray for wisdom and compassion for their caregivers and their doctors and their nurses.

[18 : 42] We ask that you would make them well, Lord. Make us well. We pray for those who are grieving losses, that they would be comforted by your Spirit.

In all things, Father, we pray that you would make us to be vessels through which you can deliver your comfort and your peace, your love, and your grace.

As we hear your word this morning, let it wash over us and transform us, make us to be those loving, compassionate, caring people who can deliver your message wherever they go, wherever we go.

Help us to be the light in dark places. Be with Pastor Tom as he delivers the message you've given to him for us.

Anoint him, Lord. Let it be a blessing to him and a blessing to us. Lord, make all of our worship to be a blessing to you. We set aside this time to fix our eyes on Jesus, to be filled anew with your Holy Spirit and with power.

[20 : 07] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Good morning.

Good morning. Today's scripture reading comes from Luke chapter 14 verses 25 through 33. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them he said, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him saying, This fellow began to build, was not able to finish. Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king.

Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with 10,000 men to oppose the one coming against him with 20,000? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

[21 : 57] In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. This is the word of our Lord. Thank you, Paul.

So do any of you follow the Buffalo Bills? I mean, how about that Thursday night game? I know some of you are colorblind and couldn't see it, but for the rest of us, it was a pretty weird experience watching these red and green guys running around the stadium.

It was weird. You know, I've got to be honest, I missed most of the game. I was flipping through the channels and I had seen this Despicable Me movie and I hadn't seen the second one, so it was on.

So I'm watching Despicable Me and it's getting towards the end of the movie and my wife comes in and says, how's the game going? Game? Game? Game? Oh, there's a game on!

That's the end of Despicable Me. I don't know how it ended. That's okay. I know how the Buffalo Bills game ended, right? That last 30 minutes was like a rollercoaster. Are they going to win? Oh, they're going to lose. They're going to fall.

[23 : 02] They won! Yeah! Do you follow the Buffalo Bills? Do you follow Jesus? What does it mean to follow Jesus?

What does Jesus want from you? What does Jesus want from me? It says that a large crowd was traveling around with Jesus and he turned to them and he pushed them and he said these words that seemed really, really harsh.

anyone who follows, comes after me and doesn't hate their father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even their own life can't be my disciple.

Wow! How am I supposed to accept that? Now what we call that is hyperbole. Obviously, if God wanted you to hate your families, he wouldn't put it in your heart to love your families as we all naturally do.

What he's trying to say is there should be nothing in our lives that we love more than God and compared to our relationship with God, everything should be way down on the list.

[24 : 08] But it's still not easy to hear, is it? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? He says that we need to take up our cross and carry him.

Now, for us, the cross is like something we wear around our neck like jewelry or we have them in the churches. It's a symbol, a magnificent symbol of our faith to us Christians. But in that day and age, the cross was the way they executed criminals.

So if we were to put this into modern terms, Jesus would be saying, unless you're willing to take up your electric chair and drag it around with you, you can't be my disciples.

Unless you're willing to carry your lethal injection with you. just picture wearing, you know, little lethal injections or electric chairs around our necks and what people would think of us.

That's what they thought about Christians then. Unless you're willing to die for Christ. You aren't his disciples.

[25 : 13] A couple nights ago, I was watching this thing with France. Just another one. Somebody said to me, they're not talking about it. I said, well, yeah, because it's just getting to be like one after another after another.

We don't even know how to respond anymore. But this one, what kind of troubled me a little bit, and I wasn't there, I don't know what really happened, but I didn't see the heroes. You know?

Like that story of those, that terrorist on the train and those guys that tackled them and stopped them or we got the people running into the burning buildings on 9-11.

You know, or the guy in that school shooting who was at the door taking the shots through the door so that the students could get out another door of the room. Here we have people just hiding.

So worried that their lives wouldn't go on, that they just cowered in fear. It seems there were no heroes and some more even died still.

[26 : 20] What does it mean to die? Or to be willing to die? Would we be willing to die? I often ask myself that question. I don't know. I've not been in a situation like that.

Most likely we won't, but you never know. And it's not just about dying. In Acts chapter 16, we've read this now three weeks in a row, Jesus, they said, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.

Paul tells us we need to believe in the Lord Jesus or as I've said before, that really means to be living. Be living, not just willing to die, but be willing to live in this life for him.

I used to believe more in the Buffalo Bills. I really did. When I was a kid, my dad had season tickets. We got to go to a football game at the Rock Pile once a year.

Anybody remember the Rock Pile? The place was like a war zone. For those of you who don't know about this, they would literally throw beer bottles at the players. They left their helmets on.

[27 : 26] Sometimes you'd get hit with one. Rocks, beer bottles, cans. The place was dangerous. It was even dangerous just to get in and out of that place. But we went as fans.

We sat on newspapers on those hard seats to watch our Buffalo Bills. Sestak and McGuire, Cookie Gilchrist, Jack Kemp, who could fade back 50 yards, throw a bomb for 60 yards and make 10.

Amazing quarterback. Daryl LaMonica, the electric company, turning the juice loose. I believed in the Buffalo Bills at one point in time.

I kind of knew everything about them. I followed them. I knew not only their record. I knew all the statistics. I knew every player's name, even the ones who'd been traded away. And I played football myself.

So I didn't just know it as a spectator. I actually knew it as a participant. I even knew what the referee's calls were, except for that one. Does anybody remember it, that giving them the business call?

[28 : 35] I thought that was the greatest call ever that a referee did. He's not giving them the business. Only in the Buffalo Bills. I believed in the Buffalo Bills.

It wasn't just a free game on a Sunday afternoon to watch on TV. We often talk about how grace is free as Christians.

It's not something that we can buy or earn, that if you want to be forgiven by God, you have to ask Him and trust that He will do it for you because you can't do it yourself.

You can't make a claim on God. And you've heard me say that before, again and again. But Jesus says that there's a cost. There's a cost to following Him.

And sometimes that cost starts to feel overwhelming. Pastor, I have so much coming at me every single day. I feel overwhelmed.

[29 : 40] You know what the ones who drive me crazy is you retired people who say to me, you know, I'm busier now than when I work. Oh, really? Make us working people feel real good when you say that, you know?

We're looking forward to an easy doubt just a little bit. Oh, you know, I'm busier now. We just want something to ease up a little bit.

Something to be a little simpler because life feels like you're facing this. Well, not that.

I don't know what that was. I don't know what that was.

Christianity, but we're afraid that if we take the shortcut, we might find ourselves on the wrong side of the wall. Right? It's hard.

[30 : 59] It's hard. Is there a shortcut? Is there an easy button that we can just push and make our faith simpler? The guy by the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bonhoeffer.

He was a pastor in Germany in the 1930s. And when Hitler came to power, little by little, he came to realize there was a problem, a serious problem.

And he actually became a part of the inner circle of the leadership of Germany and began to plot with other people the assassination of his nation's leader.

And he was a Christian pastor. But he decided he had to do this because millions would die if he didn't. He was actually unsuccessful.

He ended up dying himself. He once said, salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life.

[31 : 54] People want cheap grace. They want forgiveness without repentance. They want baptism without the church. They want communion without confession.

They want absolution without contrition. People want an easy button. They want a simple way, a shortcut.

People call me up sometimes on the phone and they say, I want to get my kid done. I really am tempted to say medium well, rare, what would you like? I know I shouldn't be that way, but that's what I think.

And I have to talk to him. What is it when we make a commitment, when we make a vow before God himself? We're actually standing before God and promising that we will keep this vow.

And a vow to God means, and if we don't, we want you to punish us severely. I have to explain to people, I don't really want to participate in an experience of knowingly lying to God.

[32 : 56] Are you serious about your commitment? Because it would be better off not to make it than to make it and mess up. Better off not to go to war. Better off not to build the tower than to mess up.

In this passage, it talks about the crowd, the followers, and the disciples. And I thought I could get you off on a technicality. I know the crowd are just the people that come and watch and participate wherever it feels good.

They want a free fish sandwich or a miracle from Jesus. So I know you can't be the crowd. But I thought maybe I could get you off as followers, sort of kind of Christians, until I looked up the Greek word for follower and it said see disciple.

Okay. There's a cost. There's a difference between being in the crowd and being one of the disciples. There are people that follow the Buffalo Bills and that they watch the game sometimes or they watch it from the comfort of their home.

And then there's people who are invested in their commitment to the Buffalo Bills. My father, I figured out what it would have cost, roughly, if we were still getting those tickets today.

[34 : 08] Two tickets, two season tickets to the Buffalo Bills and going to the games would have cost approximately about \$2,500 a year. Now for a guy who was a Buffalo firefighter making a working class income, that was a serious commitment to football.

It wasn't a passing occasional thing. My dad was a follower of the Buffalo Bills regardless of how they made out.

And I'm sure he had to think about that cost every year. No one goes to war with an enemy who's got an overwhelming numbers advantage without considering whether they could win.

And we shouldn't be going to war with the devil who is a powerful foe without knowing how to win. Discipleship gives us the victory.

But discipleship costs us everything. Jesus says in the same way those of you who do not give up, everything you have cannot be my disciples.

[35 : 15] That's strong words, isn't it? A disciple, you see, is not the same as somebody who just talks about Jesus occasionally.

Disciples look the same on the outside, but they're different on the inside. A follower is someone who's living.

In their whole life for God, with a changed life focus, we call it sanctification, the process where we receive the Holy Spirit into our lives and God himself changes us.

Sanctification is what is the technical term, which just means to become closer, more like Jesus every day. If we're disciples, we're going to change what we care about, what we do, our life goals, our behavior, our ethical values will become different.

In Galatians, in chapter 5, Paul writes, live by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, of God, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature, for the sinful nature desires what's contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what's contrary to the sinful nature.

[36 : 33] They're in conflict with each other, so that you don't know what you want. If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law, there's a battle.

There's a war going on inside us between the old man and Adam and the new man and Christ, a struggle for our very soul and our eternal life. And the temptations that are out there that draw on us and cause us to desire to go in a different direction than God are powerful.

And Jesus knows that unless we are truly committed to this, we're probably not going to win this battle. Discipleship means we're going to closely align our lives with God's plan for our life.

Not somebody else's plan, not what our parents told us or our teachers told us or our friends tell us or anybody else says. Not that they're bad, but they're not God.

Because to do otherwise is to lose. Did you know that there's one sin in the Bible that's listed as unforgivable? Are you aware there's one sin that cannot be forgiven?

[37 : 48] They talk about it in Mark. I tell you the truth, all sins and blasphemies of people will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.

They're guilty of an eternal sin. Serious business, isn't it? What is the one thing that you cannot be forgiven for except turning your back on God who's trying to work in your own heart?

God is willing to do the heavy lifting for you and help shape and mold you and change you into what He desires you to be. but if we turn our back on Him, if we refuse to let Him work in our lives, there's nothing He can do.

It's unforgivable because we refuse to follow God. What does a disciple look like?

I know what a disciple of a football team looks like. I was in getting my hair cut the other day and this guy came in and he took off his jacket and he had a Buffalo Bills jersey on.

[38 : 57] And I was about, where I was sitting and waiting was about six feet away from where he was getting his hair cut. So I could hear what he was saying because he couldn't help but hear what he was saying. And all he was talking about was constant, nonstop chatter about the Buffalo Bills.

I don't know if the woman cutting his hair was a Bills fan or not because mostly what she said was, hmm, oh, yeah, oh, hi, hmm, hmm. That was about it.

As he told her about how Rex Ryan is making the same mistake he made in New York City, he's fired the coaches, he's destroyed the defense, they're going to have a 9-7 winning record when it should be 10-6 because of this back and that backer and what they've done here and what they've done there and he's just going on and on and on with all this stuff and all the way up to the register he's still chattering, chattering and chattering and chattering about the Buffalo Bills.

He's obviously a Buffalo Bills fan. There was no mistaking him. All right? He wore it and spoke it and was it proudly. Is that what God wants us to be?

Does God want us to be such disciples of him that it's so obvious that we don't even notice what other people are thinking? Sometimes we think that we have to somehow give up really everything.

[40 : 18] I talked last week about quitting my job and selling my home and going and becoming a pastor. Are you expected to quit your job and sell your home? Are you expected to truly hate your family?

Because if so, this is going to be pretty hard for most people. Are you expected to be one of these biblical scholars that can quote Bible verse and passage every single verse in the Bible? Are you expected to be someone who lives in such a perfect way that no one can accuse you of doing anything wrong?

Sometimes when we get a picture of a disciple, we put it up as such a high expectation that it becomes near impossible for anybody to assume that that's what God wants or what we could possibly do.

And there are some people like that. There are some biblical heroes. There are some people who have given up a great deal for God and maybe God is calling you to do that. But I don't think for most people that's what God is calling.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul says, there's different kinds of gifts but the same spirit. There's different kinds of service but the same Lord. There's different kinds of working but the same God working all of them and all people.

[41 : 28] The spirit of God is going to call you to what God needs and wants of you. And I'm going to tell you most people, he wants you to live in your own world doing things with people in your life to transform this world we live in.

He will call a few to something special but even then, it's only for a certain chapter of their lives. becoming a disciple for most people doesn't mean they have to leave their home or give away everything they have or become absolutely the most intelligent biblical scholar there is.

It means that you'll do what God wants you to do, what God made you to do. And when the Holy Spirit whispers into your heart that you should be doing something that you will do it and not deny it and not turn your back to it and not pretend that God is not speaking to you.

What does Jesus want? He wants you to be living for God. Now you should know because whenever you come into church you see what God wants.

We've talked about it so much that you should have it memorized by now. What does Jesus expect? To love the Lord your God. Good.

[42 : 49] Good. You got it down. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. That's what God wants. God wants you to love Him with your whole being.

With your heart. Who do you love? Who do you make your relationships with? Do you have anybody in your life that you could speak to about God if you needed to? Do you have people that support you in your Christian faith?

Do you have people that you can share with? I'm sure that this young man has a whole crew of people that he can get together with and talk about Buffalo Bills football. You have people, a crew of people you can get together with and talk about Jesus.

I've got in the same place a woman who cuts my hair on a regular basis. Every time I go in there she talks to me like I'm a pastor.

She knows I'm a pastor. I am her pastor. She doesn't come to this church yet. But she waits once a month to share some of the heaviest stuff in her life.

[43 : 56] The other day I was talking to her and I said, well you know, I know we don't know each other that well. She says, I think you know me about as well as anybody does. The girl cuts my hair.

Because she's waiting to have somebody to talk to about life, about God, about a world. Do you have people in your life? Do you love God with your heart relationships?

That doesn't just mean having a feeling about God. It means do you really make your relationships and your life around you what you love and what you're a part of something that supports who and what you are as a Christian.

Do you love God with your whole soul? When we come to worship God, are you excited about it? I mean, I don't mean we're going to do the wave, you know, and going all kinds of crazy stuff here, all right?

But do you like go, all right, it's Sunday morning. I get to go to church today. This is going to be great. Because you're here to meet with the living God.

[45 : 00] Holy kids, it can't get any better than that. Amen? Do you just look forward to the opportunity to come and be with God as much as you would as if somebody said to you, I got tickets for the game.

You want to go with me? Do we idolize and worship God? Are there other things that are just more important?

We're more excited about it. We want to spend more time with it. People will tell me, but Sunday's my family day, pastor, unless you hate your family compared to your love for God. You see?

If it's your family day, bring them here. How's that sound? We got stuff for them. This is God's day. Do we love God with our whole mind?

You know, I read an interesting statistic that the people who call themselves Christians, more than 80% of them have never read the Bible in any way. Ever. Ever.

[46 : 06] So, if you happen to be one of those people, I'm going to give you the crib notes. This is the easy button version, okay? I'm going to give you the way that you could read and understand 60% of the Christian faith, which is not all of it.

There's still a lot left. But you can get 60% down with only having to read four or five of those little books in the Bible. And by the way, that's like 30 pages. You can do it. Really, you can. I know it's an old book, a little hard to understand.

30 pages. You can do it. Read Genesis, Exodus, Luke, Acts, and Romans.

Genesis, Exodus, Luke, Acts, and Romans. Now, three services. I've had two services, rather. I've had somebody come out and ask me again. So, ready? Genesis, Exodus, Luke, Acts, and Romans.

Now, I'm not going to say you'll understand everything. I'm just saying you'll get the crib notes. You'll probably be able to pass a test. I think you should read the whole book.

[47 : 07] But you have to be perfect. No. Just know something about God. Know as much about God as you know about Jesus, about the football game, right? I bet you most of us, how many of you know, what's the last name of our quarterback?

Come on, I know you know it. You're just pretending you don't. Yes, you do. Of course you know a way to add. Of course we do. Can you name the disciples? Can you name the stories? Do you understand what's going on?

Do you get the basic understanding of it? And strength. What's your life goal? Really, what are you doing with your life?

What do you want to accomplish in this life? And is it all going to end in this world, or does it go on to another world? What's your purpose? What are you gifted by God to do?

And are you using those gifts for God? We're supposed to be so sold out that we don't care what anybody else thinks. The best sign ever held up at a football game was on the fourth Super Bowl that the Buffalo Bills went to.

[48 : 15] Anybody remember this? Somebody held up a sign that said, we're back, America. Deal with it. I loved it. Yeah. Yeah. We don't care if we lose. We're Bills fans.

Deal with it. I don't care what people say about me. I follow Jesus. Deal with it. That doesn't give you an excuse to be obnoxious, by the way, or rude, or somehow inappropriate.

It just means that it doesn't really matter whether we get the fish sandwich, the church, the miracle, everything going perfect in life.

God is our God anyways. Can we do that? Can we live up to the expectations of God? You know, it's embarrassing if you make goals and you don't keep them, especially if you make them public.

Many of you have made membership vows to God. Many of you have made a decision for Christ. Do we live into it? I had these friends and they decided to remodel their house.

[49 : 21] Now I've remodeled a lot of houses and when you live in the house that you're remodeling, you remodel one room at a time. One room at a time. Tear it apart, fix it all up, and then you go on to the next one.

They went into their house, tore all the plaster off of all the walls and ceilings of the entire house and ran out of money. We go to visit their house for like two years and what will we find?

We find, no, there's no, I mean, you're sitting in the living room and there's the bedroom. I mean, you know, there's no plaster on any of the walls. It's all gone. All of it. Because they didn't have any money to put plaster on the walls.

Today I'll be saying, hey guys, come on, we're going to go fix these guys' house, right? You know? Crazy. Embarrassing. We don't want to be embarrassing to God.

We don't want to be an embarrassment to God in that we claim to be Christians and we live like we're not. There's a verse in the Bible that I really don't like, but it's there.

[50 : 27] And from time to time we need to remember it. It's in Matthew and it sounds like this. Enter through the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction. Many enter through it.

Small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life. And I don't like these words. And only a few find it. I want to believe that God is going to save every single soul.

I wanted to come here this morning and say to you, well there's the crowd, they're losers, don't be part of the crowd. There's the disciples, the super committed ones. But you don't have to do that. You can find the easy butt in Christianity and I'll tell you what it is.

I couldn't find it here. God is calling us to something a little more than an easy button. Okay? I'm going to share with you some blasphemy.

I hope you won't throw things at me now. I don't know all the names of the Buffalo Bills anymore. I know enough of them to carry on a conversation for the most part, but when they start getting into details, I really don't know.

[51 : 32] I really don't even watch all the football games anymore. Sometimes I turn it on for the last 20 minutes like I did the other day because I've just gotten tired of the you know?

And I found out there's other things you can do on a Sunday afternoon. I know this is blasphemy. I've already admitted that. You know? I don't generally go to the Buffalo Bills game. I've got nothing against them.

I think it's a great entertainment and I'm not criticizing any of you that are fans of the Bills. That's not the point. I'm just telling you myself. I'm just not. I'm just not that into it as I used to be.

I'm not. I love it when they win. I really do. I enjoy that. But I know this comes as a surprise to you. When they lose, the sun still comes up the next day for me.

My world doesn't go into dark and deep depression and I walk around feeling like life has come to an end. It's a football game. If you don't follow the Buffalo Bills very closely, you'll find yourself in conversations where people will be talking about stuff and you don't know what they're talking about.

[52 : 37] They'll be saying names and you won't quite understand the names. They'll be doing things that will make you feel even a little uncomfortable. But if you stop following Jesus, that's a little bigger problem.

Because Jesus makes a difference. When we're feeling like life is about to run us over, Jesus gives us peace and a calmness. He puts love in our hearts, not just from Him, but from other people as well.

He gives us a purpose and a reason for living in this life and something to do and make of our lives. He gives us hope. He gives us life here and eternally.

And He gives us courage because our focus isn't stuck in this little world alone. I was watching the reports from France and they had a woman on and she was talking about how she was in that theater and she knew where the exits were because she says, I always check that when I go in.

Good idea, right? I always don't know where the exits are. And she says, and people were actually being shot around me, but I got out. She said, I must have had the universe on my side.

[53 : 51] And I thought, I don't want the universe on my side. I want the God who holds the universe in His hand and creates it all on my side. Amen? I want a God that can take me from this life to the next life on my side.

I want a God that can give me a courage that if I need to, I'll be willing to die in this world. if it's going to help my neighbor, if it's going to do what God needs from me.

And I know, I've already said it, not very many of us really will probably face a situation like that. Thank God, especially for this country that way.

No matter what party you're a part of, thank God there's people out there keeping us safe from this country. but you will walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

You will face it down. You don't want to do that alone. I know because I face this regularly. A lot more than most of you do. I'll have a family call or a person call or I'll go to see somebody and they'll want to hear from me.

[55 : 03] Is there really a life after life? Is it really okay for me to let go of this? And you know, as Christians, I can say, it's okay.

It's okay to let go because we don't live for this life. We've already given that up. We're already living into the next life in the hope that God promises.

He went through the cross. and when we take up our cross, we go there too. we're all at peace.

the... we are here are I'd thought why it's my soul My soul Remember Redemption's
Where your blood was spilled For my rest Everything I was held in I come to all The rest of
us Lead me to the cross Where your blood was spilled Bring me to my knees

Lord, I lay me down With me and myself I belong to you Oh, lead me Lead me to the cross
You were as I Temptive and proud Human For me And for my sin And for your reason
Everything I want

[57 : 52] I count it all As lost Lead me to the cross Where your love poured out Bring me to my
knees Lord, I lay me down Bring me and myself I belong to you Oh, lead me to you Lead
me to the cross To your heart To your heart To your heart Lead me to your heart Lead me
to your heart

Lead me to the cross Lead me to the cross Where your love poured out Bring me to my
knees Lord, I lay me down Bring me and myself I belong to you Oh, lead me to the cross
Where your love poured out Bring me to my knees Lord, I lay me down Rid me and myself
I belong to you Oh, lead me Lead me to the cross Peter Kronhofer said Salvation is free
But discipleship will cost you

Your life Cheap grace Forgiveness without repentance Baptism without the church
Communion without confession Absolution Without contrition And so we come To the
table But first we confess Every week Someone said that When you sing a song It's like
praying twice Once with the words And once with the music This is our prayer of
confession This morning Jesus I've forgotten The words that you have spoken Promises
that burn within My heart have now grown deep

With a doubting heart I follow The paths of earthly wisdom Give me all my unbelief Bring
me the fire again For the faith that giveth Lord have mercy Lord have mercy Lord have
mercy I have mercy God have mercy Lord have mercy Christ have mercy Christ, have
mercy, Lord, have mercy on me.

I've built an altar where I worship things of man. I've taken journeys that have drawn me
far from abuse.

[62 : 10] Now I am printed in, dear mercies ever-blowing. Pardon my transgressions, help me love
you again.

Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

On me. Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy on me. I have longed to know you and your tender mercies.

Like a river of forgiveness ever-flowing without end. So I bow my heart before you in the
goodness of your presence.

[63 : 27] It breaks forever shining like a beacon in the night. Lord, have mercy on me.

Lord, have mercy on me.

Lord, have mercy on me. Christ, have mercy on me.

Lord, have mercy on me. Jesus said, if you confess with your mouth and believe in your
heart that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins
are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[64 : 37] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Come and fill our homes with your presence You alone are
worthy of our reverence As for me and my arms We will serve the Lord as for me and my
arms We will serve the Lord as for me and my arms We will serve the Lord We will serve
the Lord

Lord, we vow to live for me In bowing our knees to you only As for me and my arms We
will serve the Lord as for me and my arms We will serve the Lord as for me and my arms
We will serve the Lord We will serve the Lord Staying together Staying together May be
strong, weak and weathers

We need each other, mothers and mothers, sisters and brothers, in harmony and love.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

We will serve the Lord. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

[67 : 32] We will serve the Lord. We will serve the Lord.

Please be seated. Amen. As we come to the table, we come seeking God.

We come near to God. And I pray that when you come to the table this morning, you will
come nearer to God than you have ever been before.

That God will share with you a great love and a great compassion, as you have never
known, drawing you into God's presence.

Everyone is welcome. Everyone. Everyone. Everyone. Whether you've been coming here
your whole life, or this is your first time in the church, you are welcome at the table.

[68 : 37] If you love God, earnestly repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as disciples, disciples of Jesus Christ.

You are welcome at the table. So come. Come expecting that God will meet you and that you will be blessed like you've never been blessed before.

The Lord be with you. The Lord be with you. The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. The Lord be with you. 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.

By your appointment, the seasons come and go. You bring forth bread from the earth and create the fruit of the vine. You formed us in your image and made us stewards of your world.

Earth has yielded its treasure and from your hand we have received blessing on blessing. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

[69 : 49] 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. Though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor. When hungry and tempted, he refused to make bread for himself, that he might be the bread of life for others.

When the multitudes were hungry, they fed him. He broke bread with the outcast but drove the greedy from the temple. 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. And on that night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus took bread and he gave thanks to you.

And he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and he said, Take, take, eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

[71 : 05] And when the supper was over, he took the cup and he gave you thanks and praise and he gave it to his disciples saying, Drink from this, all of you.

This is the cup of my blood. The blood of the new covenant poured out for you. It's poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sin.

Do this as often as you drink it. In remembrance of me. 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.

[72 : 28] 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.

Amen. Now shall we pray together, as disciples of Jesus Christ, the prayer he 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 serving please come forward? Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[74 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[77 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[79 : 48] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.