

A Battle Within

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Date: 08 February 2015

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] If any of the kids want to come up and sing, they're welcome. Come up and join us now. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Love us, rejoice, and be glad in it. 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.

Good morning. Welcome to Pendleton Church. Fill out your friendship card so we can get to know you. We have a gift for our visitors here at the Connection site.

I hope you guys have a great day. Enjoy the service. On our clipboards, we have two opportunities. One that's just one clipboard going around the whole church is for if you'd like to donate the flowers or the bulletins for the church service.

[1 : 20] The other one, and there's a clipboard for everybody on this one, is for fish fries. They're coming in a couple of weeks, fish fries. If you can help out with that, we'd love to have you do that. In one week, a week from today, Sunday afternoon, if you'd like to, we're going to have a group of people get together and go down to the Harvard Center and skate on that new ice they have down there.

So if you'd like to join with the church congregation to go down there, they're going to be doing that next Sunday afternoon. You can look at the bulletin for details on that. Also, a week from this Wednesday, we have Ash Wednesday service, which is a special service for many people because it's the only time of the year that we do communion the old-fashioned Methodist way, on the knees, at the rail.

So we do invite and encourage you to come for that. And if you'd like to come for the prayer service, they canceled it last week because of the weather. So it's going to be held tomorrow night in the Labyrinth Room over by the Bathrooms and Prayer Theater.

So you're welcome to join in that. Shall we turn our hearts to the Lord and pray? Dear God, we thank you for the blessings you give to us, and we pray that your presence would be with us in this time as we worship you.

That you'd just touch us, Lord, and breathe into us the blessings of God in all that we do and all that we are. We pray this all in Jesus' holy name. Amen. The Lord be with you.

[2 : 41] And also with you. Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of the Spirit. Good morning.

What is this? It is a glass of water.

What's in this bag? Anybody know? Dirt. Yeah. I took some out. How much dirt would I have to put in this water to make it dirty? A whole bunch? A little?

Would that make it dirty? Does it need more dirt? Does that make it dirty? Some of you still say no. A little more? Now is it dirty water?

Who's going to drink it? Some of you will. I see that. It doesn't take a lot of dirt to make water dirty. It really doesn't. Just a little bit will do it.

- [4 : 0 5] Same thing with our bodies, you know. It doesn't take a whole lot of us doing wrong to make us do wrong. Any wrong we do is wrong, right? Even if we just do a little something wrong, it's wrong. It's not about doing not more wrong than somebody else, but it's about just doing what's right.
- Okay? So try to do what's right and ask God and he'll help you. He'll send an angel to help guide you to do the right thing. Okay? What do you guys thank you for this morning? Raise your hand if you want to share something. My mom and dad and my family.
- That might be a little bit better. My mom and dad and my family and my friends. My sisters. Mom, dad, family and friends.
- My grandma, my brother, and my mom. Everything. My family and friends. Everything.
- My mom and dad. Family and friends. Family and friends. Daddy and daddy.
- [5 : 1 1] All right. Okay, let's pray. Lord, we thank you for all the blessings in our lives, all the good people that help us, guide us, nurture, and care for us, and we thank you for you. Send angels to watch over us.
- In Jesus' name, amen. Praise God. Praise God.
- Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all the riches there below. Praise Him, among the heavenly ones.
- Praise God, His Son, and Holy Ghost. Praise God, amen.
- Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day and for the opportunity to worship you. We ask that you would bless these offerings, Lord God.
- [6 : 1 1] Bless all of the gifts that we offer up to you and give us wisdom to know how to best use them, to further your kingdom, draw many, many to yourself, Lord God, and give us the words we need as well to bring them to salvation in Jesus Christ.
- In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Please be seated. All kinds of blessings pouring out into our lives today, and we are thankful to God for all of that.
- We are also coming with things in our hearts that we need to lift up to God, trusting that God hears and answers our prayers. And among those are Lori Gondek's Aunt Rita, who passed away.
- We want to keep Lori and her family in our prayers. And Becky Heideman's husband, Tom, is going to be having surgery coming up soon, and Pat Drexler will be having foot surgery later this week.
- And we want to keep all those folks in our prayers. And as well, those who are just having troubles with them, recovering from respiratory illnesses. And we've got some folks I know who are having troubles with back injuries, just from minor to not so minor, as a result of all of the weather, really.
- [7 : 2 6] All the heavy shoveling and how heavy the snow has been. We have several folks in our community who are suffering with back injuries. So let's take these concerns and the concerns that are on your hearts to the Lord in prayer.
- Now, God in heaven, you are so good.
- And we just don't even begin to deserve anything that you give to us, any of the love that you pour out into our lives, any of the blessings. God in heaven, you are the creator of all things.
- But you want to be with us. You created us for the purpose of fellowship, being together and sharing together of the joys and the sorrows of this life.
- God, we are so grateful that you are not a God who is afar off and doesn't care about us, but that you are a God who wants to be with us in our lives, active and loving.

- [8 : 44] Thank you for the opportunity to pray. Lord God, we lift up all of those folks who are in need of healing.
- We pray that you will heal them from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. Touch them with your healing power. That their spirits, their souls, and their bodies would have relief.
- Would be in health. Lord God, we pray for all of those who are grieving losses of all kinds. Loved ones in their lives who are gone from this world.
- Troubles with relationships, Lord God. Losses of jobs. It becomes so difficult and so frightening to wonder where.
- Things are coming from that we need and that our families need. Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would provide all that we need.
- [9 : 56] That you would give us wisdom to know how to allocate the resources that you have given us. Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would come into our hearts in a way that allows us, inspires us, empowers us.
- To be your vessels of love for a broken world. So many are hurting, Lord God, for all kinds of reasons.
- And we carry within us everything that you want to give them. Help us, Lord.
- We are not perfect and we're not going to be. Not until we see you. Help us to keep pressing on. Lord God, let this time of worship be a time of changing and renewing and transforming for us.
- Help us to be ready to receive all that you have for us today. Let your word wash over us as it's read. Let him, Lord. Let him, Lord, let the words that you've given Pastor Tom for today.
- [11 : 26] Bless us and encourage us. Let them be a blessing to him as well. And, Lord, let all of our worship today, those things that we speak, those things we meditate on in our hearts, let them be a blessing to you.
- In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Good morning. Good morning. The scripture this morning is from Romans, chapter 7 and 8, verses 14 through 1.
- We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate to do.
- And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.
- I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.
- [12 : 36] For what I do is not the good I want to do. No, the evil I do not want to do. This I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.
- So I find this law at work. When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being, I delight in God's law. But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.
- What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature, a slave to the law of sin.
- Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Do-be-do-be-do.

Do-do-do-do-do. Do-be-do-be-do. The thing that I would do, I don't do, but it's the thing that I do not want to do that I do. What is this that makes me do this thing that I don't want to do that I shouldn't do because I shouldn't be doing the thing that I should do?

[14 : 01] Wow! Confusing! Make you crazy! We're in the book of Romans. If you aren't aware of it, we've been studying the whole book of Romans. We started out with the nature of God.

Then we talked about the nature of humanity and our sinfulness. Then last week, you heard about grace and how God can take that sinfulness out of our lives. Now we're going to talk about the struggle that we have.

Even though we have God's salvation, why do we still struggle with sin? We've also been talking about people who were friends of Paul.

Paul wrote the book of Romans, and he had a friend by the name of Mark. Mark was a young man. He wandered around with the apostles. You ever see one of those like teenagers that somehow is hanging around with a bunch of grown men?

Well, that's Mark. He's probably about 13 or 14 at the most during Jesus' days. And he's going with the apostles everywhere. Can you imagine? He walks with Jesus. Not where Jesus walked.

[14 : 58] He walks with Jesus. He's experiencing everything. The miracles. The powerful resurrection of Jesus. He's experiencing all these amazing things.

And I had to touch his very soul. He touched me. Oh, he touched me. And oh, the joy that floods my soul.

You can almost feel it, can't you? A young man filled with all sorts of energy and passion. And he's had the opportunity to experience the living, breathing, walking God.

But the problem is, is oftentimes what we start out to do in life, what we start out to do during the day, doesn't end up being what we end up doing, does it?

How many of you have kept your New Year's resolutions? Oh yeah, lots of hands going up. I see one or two here or there. Yeah, usually the way you keep your resolutions is by making sure your resolutions aren't that hard, right?

[15 : 55] Typically you get past about a week or so. I'm not going to eat those desserts, but those brownies look good. Right? It's hard. It's hard to keep on the right path.

Mark was a young man filled with passions, but filled with fears and emotions and all sorts of things going on in his heart and his life. The problem is, Mark also failed.

Paul took Mark on a missionary journey with the other apostle Barnabas. And while they were away, there was a problem. So when they went to go again, this is the story we hear about in the book of Acts.

Sometimes later, Paul said to Barnabas, let's go back and visit the brothers in the towns where we preach the word of the Lord and see how they're doing. Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them.

But Paul didn't think it wise to take him because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.

[16 : 57] Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus and Paul chose Silas and left. I want nothing to do with that young man. We were counting on him. We depended on him and he deserted us.

He wasn't there when we needed him. We can't rely on Mark. He's a bum. He's a loser. Anybody ever have a struggle with sin?

Have any of you ever done something that not only disappointed someone else but disappointed yourself? It's hard. Especially hard for teenagers, by the way.

Mark was a teenager and we like to make jokes about teenagers and we like to laugh about them, but you know, teenagers need an extra measure of grace. Their parents need two extra measures of grace.

not because of the teenagers but because it's hard to be a teenager so it's hard for parents to know how to be parents to teenagers. It's difficult.

[17 : 59] They're changing all the time. They wake up one day and they look at themselves and say, what happened to me? I'm physically different. I feel different. Different emotions.

Different things going on. All sorts of things welling up inside of them. Their souls are changing. Their very being is different. They struggle with these emotions.

Some turn out very good and we have great passions and amazing things happen because of young people. We also have terrible things. I was reading about this ISIS group the other day.

Do you know most of them are teenagers? Just acting on pent-up rage. We even have teenagers from our culture going over there because they're so angry.

It's hard. It's hard to go through a time in your life when just when you want to be a child they treat you like an adult and just when you want to be an adult they treat you like a child.

[18 : 57] I know a lot of times we look back on it with fond memories but I'll tell you right now if you really ask most adults they would say they never want to be a teenager again because it's difficult.

And Mark was a teenager and he struggled. He struggled with temptations. He struggled like these people struggled with and even in the midst of the most incredible spiritual journey you could imagine walking with the living Jesus he even writes about it.

You know he wrote the Gospel of Mark. He failed. He failed. And that's not unusual. Actually in the book of Luke it talks about Jesus and it says right after his baptism Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit.

He returned from the Jordan was led by the Spirit of the desert where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. Seriously when you're full of the Holy Spirit when you're doing exactly what God wants believe it or not that's when the temptations come to heart.

Because the devil doesn't like it when you're doing the right thing. So he whispers in our ears all the things that we shouldn't hear. And we find ourselves like this.

[20 : 06] I don't understand what I do what I want to do I do not do but what I have shouldn't do that's what I do and if I do what I do and I want to do it's a struggle.

It's a battle deep down within our soul. Sometimes we lose or I do not do the good I want to do but the evil I don't want to do this I keep on doing.

Can Christians sin? when I was 14 years old I experienced the living God in my heart. Probably the most transformational experience I've ever had.

It changed the direction of my life. I actually read the whole Bible when I was in 8th grade. Some of you have never read any of the Bible. You're going to read five books by the way this is one of them.

Genesis, Exodus, Luke, Acts, and Romans. But she'd read the whole book. I had powerful experiences with God on retreats, in church, at rallies, and gatherings.

[21 : 16] But yet I'd get up the next day and I'd do something completely wrong. You know by the time I was 16 I was so afraid that I was a total alcoholic I had to quit drinking. I was only 16.

We'd drink every day before school. I wish it was just drinking. We struggle with all sorts of temptations, don't we?

And here's the thing. I'm not just talking about when I was a teenager. I'm talking about throughout my life I see something that doesn't belong to me I want to take it. I see a pretty woman.

Well, I won't tell you what I'm thinking then. Greed, pride, anger, discouragement. All these things that just come into my mind and my heart.

And I know I shouldn't tell you this because I'm your pastor and I'm supposed to be the living example of God but I'm not perfect and you know what I'm talking about. Amen? Because none of us are.

[22 : 15] Paul, the great apostle Paul, the great apostle Paul is the one who wrote this. The very thing that I would do I don't do but the thing that I don't want to do that's what I keep on doing what's the matter with me?

It's a battle in our soul. Talk about it. For in my inner being I delight in God's work. If I see another law at work it will be waging war against the law of my mind.

Evil whipping me apart. Part of me ruled by God and loving God. Part of me overwhelmed with a sinful nature. Like I got an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other.

I know you're seeing angel wings in both aren't you? Because Lucifer the devil is an angel. He's an archangel. And evil brought him down. So now he wants to bring both of us all of us down.

Sometimes it feels that way doesn't it? On one shoulder we got an angel whispering in our ear and on the other we got the devil whispering. That can happen at times you just wouldn't expect like this guy.

[23 : 29] Okay, that'll be 385 out of 10. There you go. Whoa! That guy gave me way too much change. Sweet!

Oops! Who are you? I'm your shoulder angel James. Now if you just take a knee here. I...

Yep. There you go. Yeah. Excuse me. I will.

That was a lot easier. Yeah, right? Now James, you need to return that money. Isn't your integrity worth more than a few extra dollars? Oh man!

I dropped the burger. Can I still serve it? Poof!

[24 : 31] Oh no. Oh yes, Jason. I'm your shoulder devil. Here, allow me to just... bite Kentucky son !

How's it gū■ Sph! Look at him! I'm your shoulder and you're not Scrape. Give me shit! Duh... Come on, as well. So... Jason, nobody saw what you did. You're safe.

Put the McDouble on the tray and pretend like it never happened. All right, I'll do it. What? All right, I'll do it. What? I knew this day would come.

Hold on, James. Someone else needs my help. Hold on, Jason. Someone else needs my evilness. Excuse me. Pardon me. Pardon me. Explain it.

Must say I'm surprised to see, Where's the usual guy? It's his day off. Good, I never liked him anyway. Gonna need that arm back, Kevin.

[26 : 07] There it is. Now, Jason, Jason, Jason, you shouldn't serve this food.

But I only dropped it for a second. What? I don't care that you dropped it. I'm just saying you shouldn't serve this food. It's incredibly unhealthy. James, just take the money and go. It's not your fault, Mr. Incompetent.

They gave you the wrong change. Hey! Sorry, I didn't realize you could hear me. Okay, I'll do it. Good. Wait, what? Uh, you're the worst.

Coming back, Jason. It's a struggle.

Real struggle. Especially if you try to lift that devil. You know, there's a battle going on. And unfortunately, sometimes we're just plain losing.

[27 : 21] For in the inner being, I delight in God's love. But I see another law at work and be waging war against the law of my mind, making me a prisoner of the law of sin.

It's feelings. It's temptations. It's confusing. We don't know which way to go. We've got an angel on one shoulder and the devil on the other. Make the world go away.

Get it off of my shoulders. Say the things you used to say. And make the world go away.

I had a teenager at the other the other day to me, I wish I was a kid again. I said, me too. Amen? How sweet, you know, being about this big, don't care, whatever. Whatever.

The angels seem to leave them alone, you know? They got the special protection. I have to deal with this struggle, this wrestling match, this problem. Somehow, it's just removed.

[28 : 22] We want that stuff to go away. But I'm going to tell you, it doesn't. It doesn't. We're stuck in this world, in this life, in the midst of having one foot in evil and one fit in heaven.

And we need an internal God. To fill us up so much with God that we listen more to what's good. Sin is bad.

It hurts us. It hurts God. And it hurts the people around us. It's brokenness. Part of our problem is, many of us nowadays can't even figure out what sin is.

Who do we listen to? What's right? What's wrong? Should we listen to our parents? Should we listen to our friends? Should we listen to the government? Should we listen to our teachers? Should we listen to our boss?

Should we listen to our spouses? Do we listen to our kids? What's the rules? How does it work? I was talking to somebody the other day about drinking. You know, when I was in high school, in high school, I could legally go drinking.

[29 : 28] At the age of 18, we could drink. But we weren't allowed to vote. Now, you can vote when you're 18. But you can't drink. What's the rules? How does it work?

You know, messed up that makes me. I can't figure out why they keep changing the rules. There are rules that our society sets that have nothing to do with God.

They have to do with keeping our order. And there are rules that our society sets that are all about God. How do we know which are which? Well, we can start out with this book. We know that the law is spiritual.

We know that the scripture has the word of God. Christians believe that this Bible contains the word of God. If we have God in our lives, it points us to the book. It helps us to understand.

We have a church full of people to help us walk through understanding it, to read this together, to try and understand it as a community. And we have prayer where we can turn to God himself and ask him to open up our hearts and our minds and believe it or not, God speaks to us.

[30 : 35] Most of us just don't listen anymore. How much do you pray a day? When you're struggling with something difficult, how often do you turn to God? How many of you really don't?

I want to see you raise your hand. Because I don't want to embarrass the most of the half. How many really have read the book? They say 80% of Christians have never read the Bible. Wow. You're counting on me to give you the right word.

Think about that. We don't live in God's understanding and so we live in sin. The law is good.

But only if we understand it. What you put in your life matters. If you spend more time with God, if you spend more time in prayer, if you spend more time in the Bible, if you spend more time in church, you will have more understanding of what's good in your life and you will do more good.

That's just the way it works. If you keep putting the wrong stuff in, how can you expect to get good out? Garbage in? Garbage out. You all know how this works. And if you turn to God more, you won't have to listen to that guy's voice as much.

[31 : 50] There was a comedian years ago. Anybody remember him? Cliff Wilson? The devil made me do it. Remember that? But you see, here's the problem. When you're standing between those two angels and they're both speaking to you, is the devil the one that actually made you do something?

How many of you think I should drink this water? With the dirt in it. Anybody? How many of you think I shouldn't drink the dirt?

A lot of you. Yeah. Did you make me drink the water? Could you stop me from drinking the water?

No. I drank the water. I made the choice. I made the decision. I pay the penalty. And that's how it works. You can't blame other people.

You can't blame someone else. You can't even blame the devil. All he's doing is whispering in your ear. You have to make the decision. And the question is, how much are you letting God be in your life?

[32 : 53] Because it's not just what you put in your life. A lot of Christians make that mistake. And so they get all kinds of Christian information, but they don't get enough Christian inspiration. We need to put more of God in our lives.

Verse 17 says, As it is, it's no longer myself who does it, but sin living in me. We're broken people because of sin.

Let me tell you something about sin. Sin is so powerful that it brought down Lucifer. You know Lucifer is the angel of light. Are you aware of that?

That's Satan's original title. The angel of light. And yet sin corrupted him. Broke him. Broke him down.

From glory. So if sin can break down in our angel. Imagine what sin can do to just people like Lucifer. Who we put in our lives. Matters as much as what we put in our lives.

[33 : 59] We have to put the power of God in our lives. And that's hard. That's hard because in the... I'm getting the message that my microphone is wrong.

I'm the dad. What you put in your microphone makes as much difference as what kind of microphone you have. And if your microphone is dead and has no battery, you have no power.

And if you have no God in you, you have no power either. And if I turned it off, it wouldn't have made that noise as Adrian pointed out to me and I didn't listen to him either.

Don't blame him. My fault. The truth is, we need the power of God. But we don't. We don't do it. You know why? Because we've been raised with this idea of rugged American individualism.

If you want a job done right, do it. Yeah, well let me tell you what. Sometimes you can't do it all. Sometimes you don't have the skill. You don't have the time.

[35 : 13] You don't have the patience. You are not the person. You need help. I found that in life. I couldn't possibly do everything that needs to happen in this church.

Hundreds of people literally go into making this ministry work. You have to learn sometimes to just say, I can't do it. I need some help.

And that's what we need to do with God. We need to let God do what only he can do. Verse 25. Verse 25. Verse 25. Paul says, well actually in 24, it says, What a wretched man I am who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death.

Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord. We don't have to do it alone. We don't have to do it alone. In 1 John it says, Greater is the one who is in you than the one that is in the world.

We have the ability and the power through God to listen to the angel and not to the devil. We have the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.

[36 : 25] So just as important as it is what we put in, it's important who we put in. I'm sorry if I hurt you. I'll make it up day by day.

Just say you love me like you used to. And make the world go away. Make the world go away. Get it off of my shoulders.

Good news. That's what Jesus will do for you. He'll make all that brokenness, all that sin, all that guilt, all that evil go away.

What a blessing. That's the foundation of the Christian faith is that we don't have to do it. We can't do it, but God will do it for us. 1 John says it this way. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

God will take away the brokenness. God will take away the pain. God will take away the sinfulness. If we give him our lives to do it. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 says we have a brand new start.

[37 : 38] Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone and the new is come. And that's a fabulous, wonderful thing. But you know what the problem is?

Even though I know I'm a new creation in Christ. Even though I know God doesn't hold any of these sins against me. I still know what I've done. I still know what I've done. And that matters.

God forgives me, but I still know the pain that I caused. I still know the brokenness that I made towards God. I still know how I hurt other people. You know, sometimes I get up here and I confess some of my sins and some of my faults.

There's some you'll never hear. There's some I will ever, ever, ever tell you. Not because I'm worried that somehow you won't accept me.

But because they would hurt someone else. They're bad and they're wrong. And the things I carry around inside me that are dark, painful.

[38 : 47] And I know who I've been and what I've done. And just how much evil I've caused. See, at this point in my sermon, I'm supposed to tell you one of those. I'm supposed to share with you one of these truly poignant stories of pain and hurt.

But I'm not going to do it. Because I'm not telling you that stuff. So instead I want you to do it. Oh no, you don't have to tell me.

Every one of you has got a few of those things. Probably one or two particular that stand out in your mind and your heart. That just make you feel like you're broken, you're messed up, you're really vain.

Those things don't make us feel good, do they? They make us feel broken, they make us feel dirty, they make us feel wrong.

The truth is, it does make a difference what we choose. You can choose the angel or you can choose the devil. Now if you watch that video, which one of you wants the devil on your shoulder? Seriously?

[39 : 57] Guy is really rough. Given a choice? I'll tell you, absolutely I want that. Well, that's a different temptation. All the devil gives us is pain and hurt and suffering.

God gives us the possibility of renewal, reconciliation, not just with him, but with others. See that passage in 2 Corinthians goes on.

It says this, If anyone is in Christ, they're a new creation. The old is gone, the new is coming. All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. You see, it's not just that God reconciles us to himself.

He wants us to reconcile ourselves to the world, the broken world, where we put pain into it and start making it better. My wife reminded me that this Friday, February 13th, is Friday the 13th.

[41 : 07] Now that doesn't mean anything to you all. But February 13th, on Friday the 13th, I proposed to my wife. I couldn't wait until Valentine's Day. So Friday the 13th and February is an important day to me.

I have no idea how many Fridays the 13th there have been. But that's 39 years since I proposed to her. 39 years. I know a lot of you don't even believe I'm old enough to... 39 years I've been married to my wife.

Sometimes I look back at the man I was 39 years ago. I couldn't imagine why she said yes. As a man my age, looking back at who I was, there's no way I'd want my daughter to marry me.

I know who I was. What a bum, what a loser. My in-laws hated me for 20 years. It took me 30 years to understand why.

That's good reason. But you know, they only hated me for 20 years, not all of our lives. And quite honestly, I've been married 39 years. And if I was still that man that I was 39 years ago, I wouldn't be.

[42 : 15] Because when you're married to someone, you change. They change you, you change them, you adjust, you grow closer to each other. And if you grow closer to God, it draws you closer together as well.

So if that works for marriage, don't you think that works for life? You're not supposed to stay the same. It's not just, I got saved, now I can go out and do everything I've always been, and do everything I've always wanted to, and live in sin and brokenness and hurt people.

I've been changed by God, now I'm going to change. I'm not going to be that guy I was. The good parts I'll keep. The bad parts I need to toss away.

You know, Luke never tells us what Mark did. He was a teenager, we know that. But we don't know what he did wrong that Paul was so mad at him. And Paul wrote so many letters in the Bible, you'd think Paul would tell us, but Paul never told us either.

Which is something to remember by the way, if you love somebody, you don't bring up the junk from before, right? Doesn't 1 Corinthians 13 say, love keeps no record of the wrongs? Read it. It's in there.

[43 : 27] But they do tell us what happened. Not directly. This is the way it goes. When Paul was at the end of his life, and he's in prison, and he's hurting and struggling, he says, only Luke is with me.

Get Mark and bring him with you, because he's helpful to me and my ministry. Somehow, Mark redeemed himself in Paul's eyes. Somehow, Mark went from being useless to being useful.

Somehow, people like Barnabas the encourager helped Mark along and guided him on the journey and didn't give up on him. And somehow, Mark became the man that Paul wanted him to be.

And we can do that too. They need to accept Jesus, and the grace he brings that changes our lives. But we also need to receive him, and let his power transform us, and keep us from the evil one.

Not just save our souls, but protect our souls. For now. Forever. Isn't it a wonder that in the midst of all that we do and all that we live in, God invites us to come and share.

[44 : 42] To be together with one another, and to be together with God. To be blessed beyond measure. You are welcome at the table this morning.

Everyone is welcome. If you love God, earnestly repent of your sin, and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are welcome at this table this morning.

So come. Receive all the blessing God has for you this day. Allow God to pour it all into you. So you can pour it out and be a blessing wherever you go.

Come to the table. The Lord be with you. And also be with you. Lift up your hearts. With the mountains of the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks to Christ. It is right, and a good and a joyful thing always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

[45 : 46] Before the mountains were brought forth, for you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting. You alone are God. You created light out of darkness, and brought forth life on the 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, and spoke to us through your prophets.

And so with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join there in ending 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, in whom you have revealed yourself.

Our light and our salvation. In his baptism and in table fellowship, he took his place with sinners. Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

[47 : 12] 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 the 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, eat.

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

This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new covenant, poured out for you, 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.

- [48 : 35] 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.
- 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.
- Shall we pray together as disciples of Jesus Christ, the prayer that 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.
- [49 : 45] 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. So why did I drink water with dirt in it? Poor Pastor Gene was all worried about me drinking the dirty water. You know, my mother said, you gotta eat a peck of dirt before you die.
- Then she said, yeah, but that's miracle grow, there's chemicals in there. What did I do for eight years? Seriously, man, I got all this stuff living in me. You know why I drank this dirty water? Because I thought you'd figure that was funny and clever, and a good example.
- So you know what that means? I did it so that you'd like me. Talk about your insecurities. I mean, seriously. But isn't that exactly what the problem is?
- We're so worried about what somebody's gonna say, what somebody's gonna think. Will they love us? Will they like us? Will they accept us? And it leads to brokenness and pain and hurt.
- [50 : 50] It really doesn't help us at all. You don't want that ugly old devil on your shoulder. Given a choice, I'd take that pretty angel. Amen. Believe me, I would.
- Sorry, Lord. God will bless you if you open your hearts and let go and let him do it. You don't even need to do it yourself. Just let him do it.
- Now, in the name of Jesus Christ, may all the demons be cast out of your lies, cast out of this room, taken away from you. May you face no brokenness or pain, but may that be stripped from your life.
- May God pull out your regrets and fill you with new life and new possibilities. And may God cause you to walk in his ways, the ways of joys, peace, and love and wonder, now into eternity.
- God is peace. Amen. Amen.