

Discernment

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Date: 25 November 2018

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] Music . .

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. Hello!

Hi, welcome to Pendleton Center Church. We are the Menahem. If this is your first time here, be sure to pick up a welcome bag at the connection site or the Welcome and Information Desk. I hope everyone will put their name on the friendship card that is in their bulletin.

If you would like to receive the church newsletter or need to update any information, be sure to fill out your address and phone number. On the back, you can write prayer concerns, blessings, or notes to the staff.

[1 : 2 1] Please enjoy the service and have a good day. Good morning, everybody. Good morning. It's finally above sub-zero. Pretty cool. 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. Let 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.

Shall we pray together? Dear God in heaven, pour out your Holy Spirit. Just pour it into our lives, into our hearts. Touch us. Shape us into what you want us to be, Lord. That we might be here to gather and feel and experience all that you want us to have.

For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'd like to invite you, if you're able, to stand as we're going to sing together, Be Thou My Vision. Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my Heart.

[3 : 0 9] Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my Heart. Not be all else to me, save that Thou art.

Thou my blessed thought by day or by night. Waking or sleeping, Thou presence my life.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true Word. Thou ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord.

Thou and Thou hold, be first in my heart. Great God of heaven, I treasure Thou art.

Great God of heaven, my victory won. May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun.

[4 : 2 2] Heart of my own heart, whatever befall. Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

The Lord be with you. And also with you. Please be seated. This morning you'll find in your bulletin a blue card. And what this is, is this is a commitment card. Once a year we ask you to prayerfully consider what you want to do with God.

And there's an opportunity for a variety of different ways you can respond to God. So if you want you can put your name on it. If you want you can just put it in anonymously. This is really a tool for you. That every once a year at least we need to consider what do we think we should be doing in our faith commitment to God.

If you want the church to track any of that, then you can put your name on that and we'll do that for you. Okay, thank you. Pastor Lisa. Good morning. Good morning. A couple of things that I want to just bless you all with today.

Okay. Hanging of the greens is happening happening later on. That's always a joyful and wonderful time for families to come in. Get the sanctuary decorated in the fellowship hall. Share a nice potluck supper.

[5 : 36] Everybody bring good stuff. Okay. And, and just have some, have some time of worship together with Pastor Tom. It's going to be a wonderful time. And, and our Sunday study in between the two services starting at 1030 is we're beginning our Advent study.

It's a four week study on Advent carols and what the message of the Advent carols is for us. What joys do you have to share this morning? You must have some.

Judy. Wonderful time with family over Thanksgiving. How many of you share in that joy? Amen. Amen. All right.

Any other joys this morning? Melissa. Amen. Melissa's new job is going great. That's awesome, Melissa. Any other joys to share? Do you have a joy? What's your joy?

Yes. No. Yes. I'm going to ask you to share your attention. We're gonna see you on the show. Amen. Her dad feels better.

[6 : 39] It's Tim Lukasik who is, who is in the hospital and he's doing much better. He's home now and we'll bring him up in the concerns too, cause we need to keep praying for him. But that is a joy that he's home with you again, isn't it?

Wonderful. Other joys? One more. Yes. June is here. Amen. June is here. Blessings. Blessings to you, June. God bless you. So glad you're here with these. Yes, Carol.

Sister-in-law from Florida, that is a wonderful thing too. It's always such a blessing to be with family, especially family we don't see often. Welcome. Thank you. Yes. You had two sleepovers in a row with your cousin?

That is awesome. I want to have two sleepovers in a row with my cousin. You wish you could do it more, but two is good, huh? Excellent. All right. Well, with these joys and the joys that remain in your heart, let's share some of that joy with the Lord in thanksgiving for all the blessings he has poured out into our lives.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater. He sendeth more strength when the labors increased.

[8 : 19] His grace has no measure. His power has no boundary. known unto men.

For out of his infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance. When our strength has failed, ere the day is half done. When we reach the end of our foreign resources, our Father's grace, our Father's full giving has only begun. For his love has no limit.

His grace has no limit. His grace has no limit. His grace has no limit. His power has no boundary. known unto men. For out of his infinite riches in Jesus, Any whoots Television carries 06 Titus 5, N.

19, O Lord of other powers coats of Christ and the ■■■■ Whileim Joker wears them 16, O Lord of other powers ■ training καλ■W When I am gone ■■■■■■ Praise the Lord, who all blessings come.

[11 : 04] Praise Him, the creatures here below. Praise Him, the love of the heavenly host.

Praise the Lord, who all blessings come. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day, for the opportunity to gather together in worship and to bless you with this offering. We pray in Jesus' name that you would find it to be a blessing, and that you would indeed return and bless and multiply it for the furtherance of your kingdom.

Give us wisdom to know how to use it well. Give us wisdom to know how to reach out and share your love and grace with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen. Please be seated. And we do have some concerns to share with you. Many of these are health concerns.

[12 : 14] In fact, most of them are health concerns. Linda Knudela has ongoing concerns, as does Dick Anderson. Jan Gertz, we want to keep her in our prayers and lift it up.

Kelly Jessie's mom, Judy, is in need of prayer as well. Amy Yurden had surgery this past week, and we want to keep Tim Lukasik in our prayers. It's going to be a long recovery.

Family is blessed because he's home, but there's going to be, it's going to be a long haul before he's 100% again. So let's keep him in our prayers, along with all of these folks that we've mentioned.

What concerns would you like to bring before the Lord this morning? Yes, Carol. I'm sorry, Carol, that Homeland Security has been deployed to the border, and we're asking for safety and protection for all of them, and that there is no conflict.

Amen, amen. Their son, Gary, has been deployed with Homeland Security to the border, and so there's an awful lot of folks who are going to be needing our prayers for protection on all sides.

[13 : 13] Amen? Amen. Any other concerns that we want to lift up today? Yes. My daughter, April from South Carolina is on her way home.

Yes. April is on her way home. That is a blessing. That is a blessing. That is a blessing. There's a blessing that she is here. Yes. And so traveling mercies, yes, traveling mercies for all of those who are heading home, and you know, this is the season to pray, especially for traveling mercies as people are going back and forth throughout the holidays.

Other concerns this morning. Yes. All the college students are here. Yes, and seminary students. College students. And all of us, all of our students who are finishing up this term, those who are home over the Thanksgiving holiday who are traveling back to buckle down and finish those last couple of weeks, and we pray that all would be well with them.

Yes, Tom. I just want to thank the great change of the church. Amen. Amen. Thank the outflowing others that are praying for us.

Yes. Yes. Kidney failure. So Jan has gone into kidney failure? Yes. Okay. Jan has gone into kidney failure, and Tom is just saying thank you to all of those, especially on the prayer chain, but all of those who have been and continue in prayer.

[14 : 41] Thank you, Tom. Thank you, Tom. Any other concerns? We know we all have things to lift up before the Lord, so with these concerns that we've said out loud, and those you're holding in your heart, you're welcome to join me at the rail, or in your seat, as we turn to the Lord in prayer.

God of all creation, you love us with an everlasting love, and you pour out your mercies and your grace and your blessings, as we heard in song today again and again and again.

God of all, we are grateful, Lord, and we know that we can come to you with our concerns, that you hear us, that you answer us, that you provide all that we need for the well-being of our spirits, our souls, and our bodies.

We thank you for those promises. Father, we thank you for those who are always with us. Father, we lift up those who are sick and infirm, those who are recovering from surgeries, those who are having failures in their bodies.

Things are just not working the way that they should. We pray, Father, in Jesus' name, for your hand of healing to be upon them, that you would touch them, and in all the ways that you know they need your help to bring healing into their lives.

[16 : 21] We pray for their doctors and nurses and other medical professionals, that they would have wisdom beyond their learning and experience, that they would have wisdom that comes from you, knowing what is best for each and every one they care for.

We pray for their loved one, Lord, and with concerns over their loved one's state.

We just pray in Jesus' name, that you would bring comfort and strength to them as well. Make them well able to minister to their loved one.

Make them well able to receive strength and endurance from you. We pray, Lord God, for those who are grieving losses.

At this time in particular, it's so difficult. We just ask in Jesus' name that you would be with all of those people who are missing someone.

[17 : 30] We pray that you would be with all of those people who are missing someone. We pray that you would be with all of those people who are missing someone. We pray that there would be comfort in good memories, comfort in joys shared, and comfort in the hope of restoration to relationship, the hope of salvation, the hope of being together in eternal life with you.

We do rest in that hope, Lord God. We pray for all who are traveling back and forth throughout this holiday season. We pray for those students who are trying to finish up in the midst of all of the distractions of the beginning of the holiday season.

Lord God, help each one to focus, to learn what they need to learn in the places where you have put them to do that.

We pray, Lord God, throughout this season, that we would continue to grow in you. That we would continue to be blessed by you so that we may be a blessing wherever we go.

We pray that even here in this worship service, we would hear your word. We would be blessed and participate in the music and the prayers. We would hear Pastor Tom's message and the words spoken.

[18 : 49] That all of these things would work together to build us up in faith. To transform us a little bit more into Christ-likeness as we press on to the perfection and love that you call us to.

We thank you, Lord, that you have saved us. We thank you, Lord, that you are continuing to save us in and through every circumstance of this life.

In Jesus' name we pray. And especially, Lord, that you bless Pastor Tom as he brings the message. Amen.

Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Today's reading is from Exodus, chapter 18, verses 2 through 10, and then verses 15 to 21. After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her and her two sons.

[20 : 08] named Jershom, for Moses said, I have become a foreigner in a foreign land. And the other was named Eliezer, for he said, my father's God was my helper, and he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness where he was camped near the mountain of God. Jethro had sent word to him, I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons. So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other, and then they went into the tent.

Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and about all the hardships that they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them. Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. He said, praise be to the Lord who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians.

Moses answered him, because the people come to me to seek God's will whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me. I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions.

Moses' father-in-law replied, what you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you. You cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me, and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way that they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from among the people, men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. This is the word of the Lord.

[22 : 17] Thank you, Terry. This morning we're concluding a sermon series about how we can go from being good, you're good folk, you're doing a good job, you really are. This is a great church, it's doing a good job, but we can be better, we can go on to glory. If we can figure out a way to get our lives in line with the dream that God intended for our life. Next week we're going to start talking about Jesus, and we're going to talk about Jesus for a few months. The life of Jesus, who was he, and what does it mean to us today? When I was away for Thanksgiving, I went to visit my sister down in Philadelphia, and when we got there, my brother wanted to show me all the projects he'd worked on in the house. You ever have somebody do that with you? He showed me this, he showed me that, the floor, he's done this and that, and the other thing. And I said, he did a good job.

My wife said to me afterwards, you know there were some things he didn't do so well. I said, yeah, but he needed to hear, he did a good job. He did the best he could. For him, he did well.

You know, in the Bible, it says that the goal of our lives is to get to the end in glory, and hear from God that he will say to us, well done, good and faithful servant. Well done.

Isn't that a wonderful thing to hear? We all want to hear it. Growing up, I wanted to hear it from my parents. We want to hear it from teachers. We want to hear it from the boss. We want to hear it from friends. We want to hear it from our spouses, particularly. We want to hear, you did good.

And it says in this story, actually in verse 1, that Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, heard that he did a good job. Now that's even better, when somebody else brags about us to the people we love. See, that's what our job is, to brag about those we love. And so he comes to see Moses.

[24 : 19] And Moses just starts telling them stuff. In verse 8, it says that he went through and explained all the things that happened. Let me tell you this that happened, Jethro. Let me tell you this. Oh, this wonderful thing. Oh, and by the way, sometimes we just want somebody to share.

Share the stories with, especially share good news. Unfortunately, in our culture, for a lot of people, that feels like, well, we can't do that because it seems like we're not being modest.

We're bragging. So just have someone we can say that to, and it's his father-in-law. He can do that. And Jethro says to him, Moses, I'm proud of you, boy. You did good. You know, we need people that'll do that. In Romans, it tells us that we should rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn, live in harmony with one another. And don't be proud. Associate with anyone. It doesn't hurt us to say to somebody, you did well. Now, of course, we need to recognize that all of this is a gift from God. And Jethro, being a priest, actually said that to Moses. He said, praise to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians, and of Pharaoh, who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. We always need to remember that in everything we do, it's not us, but it's God working through us that amazing things happen. But then it comes in verse 17. Moses goes out to do his daily work, and his father-in-law is watching him. Anybody want that to happen to you? You go out to do your job, and your father-in-law is watching you? That's the last thing we want, right? And he gives him a critique. Now, he's trying to be helpful, but oh, how it stings. What you're doing is not good. Now, we just talked about how great it is to be affirmed, to be affirming, but Jethro's looking at you, and he's going, dude, you're messing up. We don't want to hear that. Moses is doing something wrong. You see, God has a dream for each and every one of us. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, it says to us, each one has a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Every one of you, we've been talking about this for weeks now, every one of you has something specific and particular that you're designed to do. The problem is in life, so often, we get distracted. We get stuck.

And we're not sure what we're supposed to do, because we've gotten distracted and lost. Sorry, I'm busy right now. Sorry about that. That kind of stuff happens. You know, sometimes you're going along, and you get some kind of distraction, right? Where was I? See, we don't get to God's dream, because we're stuck in someone else's. We're doing what somebody else was supposed to be doing and designed to do. Our scripture for today is from John, and it says to us, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. If we turn to God, He'll guide us into what we should do and what we should be. You know, there's a lot of good to do. And compassionate, loving, Christian people try to do all the good they can, but sometimes we get stuck doing the wrong good. Okay. Oh, cool. Video.

Video. I believe I can fly.

[28 : 22] Oh, I'm sorry. Have you ever had that? Where you know what you're supposed to do and you know where you're supposed to be going, but somehow along the line you find yourself with distractions, right? That keep us, that block us from what we're supposed to be doing. And a lot of times that's someone else's dream. When we do too much, when we live someone else's dream, the problem is it doesn't just distract us from our purpose, but can actually hurt others. Jethro says to Moses, you and the people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. You can't do all this yourself.

We find ourselves not only hurting ourselves, but hurting the people we love. You know what a reinforcement loop is? If you could imagine that we have a rubber band that's kind of loose and comfortable. And just say on one side we have our family and on the other side we have work or school or sports or whatever it is that you spend a lot of your time on, okay? If we spend a real lot of time on, let's say, work, the people there will like us a lot. But the people over here in our family will be like, ah, come on, dude, you're always at work and be ragging on us, right? So that'll make us want to spend more time at work, which makes the people over here even more upset. And you see what happens? More and more tension develops because we don't have the right balance. Same thing can happen the other way, by the way. What it's supposed to be is something that's balanced, that's right.

And Moses has lost his balance completely. All right, he went to Egypt and he's got to confront Pharaoh. He's got to deal with armies, he's got to deal with hundreds of thousands of Israelis that he's got to mess around with. I understand he didn't want to take his family along. That's a lot of work to have the kids in tow, right? But now Moses is out in the desert, camped by the mountain of the Lord, just hanging out, doing really just not anything that really keeps anybody in harm.

And his kids are still with his father-in-law. So did you notice what Jethro did? Hey, Moses, you're doing a great job. Here's your kids back, right? Here's your family. But sorry, dude, it is not my responsibility to take care of your kids. See, unfortunately, when Moses over-functioned, it meant that Jethro had to pick up the slack somewhere else. There's a parable that a man named Friedman wrote. And in it, he says that life is like a bridge. And you're crossing across the bridge, and you know that everything you're meant to be is on the other side of the bridge.

And as you're going across the bridge, you see somebody coming from the other direction. And it's a little strange because you've got a rope tied around their waist. And just as soon as they see you, they hand you the end of the rope, and they jump off the bridge yelling, don't let go or I'll be lost.

[31 : 43] Well, you know, what do you do? You just grab the rope, and you're like holding it. And it's like, it's a strange thing because it's like it's perfectly balanced. So that you can't, you can't pull them up, but you also won't drop them. And you find yourself just there.

Now, the difficulty is, is there's nothing to tie it off on. There's no one else to give it to. And the person on the end of the rope just keeps yelling, don't let go or I'll be lost. So you tell them, look, just climb up. If you climb up, I can hold the rope and you can get out of there.

No, I can't do that, but don't let go or I'll be lost. And all of a sudden you find that you're stuck. That you're totally...

Sorry about that. You know what I'm talking about? This is a life distraction that's so bad that somewhere along the line you can't move on to what God made you to be. Because you're trapped holding on to something you're not supposed to do. Moses is making all the decisions for all the people, for all the people. Now there's hundreds of thousands of people, and none of them can make a decision about anything. My neighbor hit my lamb with his pickup truck, and so I'm not sure what to do, Moses. Oh, well, let me take that to God and pray about it. Can you imagine how long this would take and how cumbersome and ridiculous it is? But the difficulty is we all find ourselves doing this.

I find myself doing this all the time. His father-in-law says, select capable people from the people, people that will fear God, that are trustworthy, and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens. Find some good people.

[33 : 50] Because there's a lot of people that are capable of taking care of this situation. But unfortunately, if we're good at doing something, we can find that we just get trapped.

We get so distracted from what we're supposed to do, we find ourselves doing all sorts of things we're not supposed to be doing. And by the way, when I read this passage, I thought it was God preaching directly at me. Because oftentimes I feel like the guy on the bridge with about 12 ropes hanging off of me. And I can't get anywhere. Because all the expectations that people have on me.

And we have this sort of unholy attitude with each other that will applaud you if you do our dream for us. But unfortunately, what that does is it creates one group that's overworked, and another group that feels underappreciated, that doesn't get to fulfill their dreams.

This can happen in anyone's life, and it can happen in the life of a church. This is a really good church. We do many wonderful things. But sometimes we count on a certain group of people to do all of it.

And by the way, they do it all because they feel good, because they've gotten all the recognition. But what we're doing is we're stealing the dreams from somebody else who's supposed to be doing. Doing whatever it is that we've taken from them.

[35 : 14] And God is calling us not to do everybody's dream, but help each one of us fulfill the dream God intended for us. You see, we're good. In fact, we do a lot of good.

But sometimes we get stuck doing the wrong good. And not the good that we're called to. Sorry. Give me just a second. This won't take long.

Okay. Have you ever been stuck doing something good, but you know it's not the good that you were made to do?

The truth is, is that these people are out in the desert, free from Egypt. They've got their chains broken off. They're next to the mountain of God, where they can get everything that God ever wanted for them to have.

But they're so busy, so distracted by so much other stuff that Moses isn't going up the mountain. It's up on top of the mountain Moses is supposed to go, where he'll get the commandments of God.

[36 : 31] But he's stuck down in the valley. And so even though they're free from the chains of Egypt, they've chained themselves up in a different way. If we turn to God, God will give us the answers.

And John, it says to us, when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all that is true. God gives us what we call discernment.

When we face distractions, what we need is we need to know which of these things belong to us and which don't, so that we can discern the truth.

In Jeremiah, it says to us, this is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time. I will put my law on their minds and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people. We need to learn to love God more completely in our heart, our soul, and our mind before we go do things.

[37 : 32] See, strength is how we love God, by what we do. But unfortunately, too often, we put that first when it's supposed to be last. We jump into action when we should be discerning whether or not this is what God is calling us to.

So do we love God with all our mind? Do we have a biblical mind? In the book of Psalms, in 119, it says to us, deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees.

I am your servant. Give me discernment that I might understand your statutes. We need to understand what God wants from us. Moses is making all kinds of decisions, and he takes every one of them to God himself, when what he could do is teach the people.

Jethro says to them, teach them God's decrees and instructions. Show them the way that they're to live. Because if we teach people the rules of God, if we teach people what God wants of our lives, they can go out and live in this world without having to go ask somebody's permission.

A permission-giving organization, just like a permission-giving world, is not one without boundaries. It's where we have set the clear and defined limits to what someone can and cannot do, what's right, what's wrong, what's good, and live within those boundaries.

[38 : 52] And God has given us this Bible so that we can know the mind of God. If we were to actually read this book and regularly pour over it and put it into our hearts, within a period of time, it would become the air we breathe.

And we wouldn't have to ask somebody else, what does it mean? Because we would know in our mind. And we also need to love the Lord our God with all our heart. It's interesting that Moses had been going on doing this, and how many of you think no one ever said to Moses, Moses, you're overdoing?

I'm sure a lot of people did, right? A lot of people probably said, Moses, really, dude, you're kind of like over-functioning here. I am Moses.

You can hear it, can't you? I know what God says. I know everything. But Jethro's his father-in-law. And he's also a priest.

He's a holy man who knows God. We need to surround ourselves with people who know God so that when we ask for advice or we hear advice, we know it's coming from people who love us and care for us, who rejoice with us when we rejoice, who are wanting to do good for us and not bad, so that we have people that we can listen to.

[40 : 09] Loving the Lord your God with all your heart means putting people around us, people around us that we know we can trust and love because they're filled with God. Jethro says, listen, I'll give you some advice.

And may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. But then select other people to take care of the other work.

You see, he says to him, God be with you. Because as much as we need to love God with all our mind and love God with all our heart, we also need to love God with all our soul. Our spirit.

The Holy Spirit. Because when the spirit of truth comes, he will instruct us in all that is true. The power of God is with Moses.

There are things we need to take to God. Sometimes the distractions are so big or so many that we've completely lost our ability to discern where we're supposed to be. And we need God himself to help straighten us out.

[41 : 12] Sometimes the decisions are so big as Moses had to face for a whole nation. That he needs to speak to God. And we do that through prayer. We do that in worship.

We do that in so many ways. Is God with us? And do we really love him in our mind? In our relationships? In our heart?

In our soul? By turning to the Holy Spirit. If we do that, we'll gain God's discernment. The truth is, in the course of my life, I've had many, many, many good things, ministries, that I've had to say no to.

Because I've discerned that there are times when I'm getting stuck. When they're just distractions that I should pay no attention to. That I should totally ignore.

Because they have nothing to do with what really matters in my life. You know you can turn your cell phones off. You're aware there's a button that says that.

[42 : 15] Do you know that you can even not answer them? Did you know that you can actually check a voicemail later? And maybe the people you're with, and what they're saying and doing, is more important than what that little phone is saying.

Do you know that there was a man who said, the most distracting invention that's ever been created, on the face of the earth, and I will not have one in my house, was Alexander Graham Bell.

Who invented the telephone, unless you're not aware of that. So the man's going across the bridge, or woman, and as he's going across, he finds himself stuck with this person on the other end of the rope.

Now at this point, he really only has two choices. He can hold this rope forever. Or he can let go, and walk to the other side. We all have those decisions when we get stuck.

We feel as if we can't let go of those ropes, because it'll harm someone, and people are dependent on us, but our dream is somewhere else.

[43 : 28] Now maybe this is a rope you should hold. I've held those ropes. When my parents were dying, when my kids need me, when my grandson has a problem, when it's something where only I can be the person, I'm responsible to hold the rope.

The rope won't be forever. And it's not somebody who jumped off the bridge on their own. It's somebody who life kicked off the bridge.

Or maybe you're a rope holder. Maybe that's your job. You stand on the bridge, and you hold all these ropes, so other people can get across the bridge. That would be fine. Then that would be your purpose, and you wouldn't need to go across the bridge, because your purpose is right there on the bridge.

It's not bad to hold a rope. It's only bad to hold a rope if it's not your rope. It's somebody else's rope. And I know what you're saying. That's heartless, Pastor Tom.

That poor guy on the end of the rope, he's going to fall down into the river, swim to shore, climb up the bank, stand at the end of the bridge, and wait for some other sucker to come along and take the end of the rope.

[44 : 36] Because there's people in this world who spend all their time under-functioning and trying to distract you from what God intended for your life to be. I'm not calling you to be heartless.

You're good people. We all want to hear those words from God at the end of our lives. Well done. You did okay, right? Well done.

Not too bad. Well done. I know you meant well. We want to hear well done. Good. Faithful servant. It's hard for compassionate people.

We want to do good, not wrong. But sometimes we get stuck. And all we get to is good when God intends for us to get to glory.

We become like Moses on the side of the mountain when we could be on the mountaintop. But we're stuck. We're chained. And we need to have those chains broken. And we need to be freed.

[45 : 42] For God to truly set us into the purpose he intended for us. to be filled with us. guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo

If you believe it, if you receive it, if you can feel it, somebody testify.

If you believe it, if you receive it, if you can feel it, somebody testify.

If you believe it, if you believe it, if you receive it, if you can feel it, somebody testify.

You got faith. You got faith. You got faith. He's a pain taker. You feel hard. He's a way maker.

[48 : 48] If you need freedom, say, man. If you need freedom, say, man. He's a prison, say, man. He's a savior. You got change. He's a pain breaker.

If you need freedom, say, man. He's a prison champion. He's a prison champion. He's a savior. You got change. He's a chain breaker.

God ishyyy. You know, God's got chains that he wants to break off of you.

Chains that other people can't see. But you can feel them. They're holding you in. And then God will take you and mold you and shape you and turn you into what he designed you to be. We just have to open up our hearts, open up our minds, open up our souls.

Let God, let God give us that discernment, that understanding. Amen. Father, I know for sure, all of my days I have in your hand, I've taken to your perfect plan.

- [50 : 17] You can be calling me into your presence. I will remind you. Lord, it's here and teach me to know the glory of my life through your eyes.
- I am to my holy calling. Send me your fire. I know you're drawing me to yourself.
- Lead me, Lord, I pray. Take me, hold me.
- Use me, fill me. I yield my life to the Father's hand.
- Call me, guide me. Lead me, walk beside me.
- [51 : 28] I yield my life to the Father's hand. I yield my life to the Father's hand.
- I yield my life to the Father's hand. I yield my life to the Father's hand. Lead me, Lord, I pray.
- I yield my life to the Father's hand. I yield my life to the Father's hand. Holy calling, send me your fire.
- I know you're drawing me to yourself. Lead me, Lord, I pray. Take me, hold me.
- Take me, hold me. Use me, fill me. I yield my life to the Father's hand.
- [52 : 36] I yield my life to the Father's hand. I yield my life to the Father's hand.
- I yield my life to the Father's hand. You know, one of the most difficult things in life is not a choice between good and bad, right and wrong. We know how to make those choices.
- It's when we have a choice between good and good. I could spend my time doing this good, or I could spend my time doing this good, and they're both good. Which is the one God wants me to choose?
- And the difficulty is that sometimes we have to decide that one will go along the side, so that we can get on to the thing that God has designed us for.
- I've been talking a lot of weeks about what has God called you to do. We've been talking about it. We've been talking about it. We've been talking about it.
- [53 : 45] Now, the question really is, what are you going to do with it? How are you going to discern what it is that's peculiarly yours?
- Maybe you are a rope holder. Maybe you're a leader of tens or hundreds. Maybe God has something specific for you. We need to find that, because when we don't, we actually fail.
- Now, God will still love you. You'll still get the glory. This isn't an eternal thing. But imagine how amazing your life could be if you move past the distractions to what God meant for you to be.
- So let's turn it over to God in prayer, shall we? Dear God in heaven, forgive me for the things I do wrong, the distractions that are evil that I know I shouldn't do.
- Bless me, Lord, with discernment in my heart, my mind, and my soul, that I might clearly see what I should do, what I should do.
- [55 : 00] What I should do. What I should be. And live into that. And live into that. And put the distractions aside. Put the distractions aside. Bless me, Lord.
- Bless me, Lord. To be your blessing. To be your blessing. To this world. To this world. For it's in Jesus' name we pray. For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. The other day I was talking to somebody who was talking about a regret in their life. I said, you know, you can't do anything about yesterday. It already happened. Whatever you did wrong or made a mistake on yesterday, you can't change that.
- That's what we take it to God and give it to Him in confession. And He has promised He will forgive us. The new start is what we can do with our tomorrows. And that's the dream God promises for you today.

And gives you a new fresh start. Right now this morning to begin on that journey. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

[55 : 58] Glory to God. Amen. And now as forgiven children of God, let's share the peace of the Spirit with one another. Thank you.

Asked Go. What?

I guess I have. Yeah. Yeah. Have thine own way Lord, have thine own way.

Thou art the Father, I have the clay. Hold me and make me after thy spirit.

While I am bleeding, yielded and still. Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way.

[57 : 33] Hold all my being, absolute strength. Fill with thy spirit, till all shall see.

Christ only, always living in me. Amen. We come to the table because God invites us.

We come to the table to be refreshed and renewed in Christ. We come to the table as often as we do it so that God can touch our lives in a unique and special way that can't be any other way.

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

God would have his own way with each and every one of us, whatever it is that our circumstances may be. Amen? So come to the table because you're welcome.

[58 : 42] Even if it's your first time in the church, if you are feeling like you want to draw closer to God, if you are one who is wanting God to have God's own way in your life, you come to the table and commit to that.

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks to the Lord.

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 they 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.

[59 : 42] 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. The bread of life for others.

When the multitudes were hungry, he fed them. 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.

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. He said, take and eat.

[60 : 50] This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

When the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to you and 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 and 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.

[62 : 05] 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 and your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen. Shall we pray together with the confidence of children of God, 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.

[63 : 42] Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[66 : 46] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. If you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand as we're going to sing together my reward.

I want to hear you say Bless me well done I want to hear you say Good and faithful servant I want to hear you say I've prepared a place for you Let all the treasures of His world Take away Jesus You are my reward Hear your voice song that day That's all I'm living for Jesus, you are my reward

[71 : 29] See your face song that day That's all I'm living for I want to hear you say Bless me well done I want to hear you say Good and faithful servant I want to hear you say I've prepared a place for you That all the treasures of His world I want to hear you say You're my reward You're my reward You're my reward You're my reward

And I'll hear you say Your voice song that day And while you're our reward Jesus, you are my real one.

You see your face on that face. Now I'm living hope. Jesus, you are my real one.

You hear your voice on that face. Now I'm living hope. Jesus, you are my real one.

You see your face on that face. Now I'm living hope. Now I'm living hope.

[73 : 28] Now I'm living hope. Now I'm living hope. Speaking of following dreams, we have with us Reverend Nicole Henderson-Johns, who some of you may remember, who used to be a part of our congregation, but now leads one out in Ohio.

Two. Two of them out in Ohio. Two of them out in Ohio. I stand corrected, so she's going to offer a blessing for us. Good morning. Good morning. I know discernment is probably the most difficult concept that we can grasp as Christians because we have to do this one thing that we can't do ever.

That's be quiet. We can't stop and listen to God's voice talking in our lives. And if we do, we will be abundantly blessed. I know it happened to me standing right about here once a long time ago, and it has been a true blessing.

Man, you know what? It has been a true blessing to follow in the call and follow the footsteps that God has planned for me, even though it took me away from you guys.

But it took me into communities that needed somebody to speak into their lives, just as you have many pastors here to speak into your lives. I pray that God would speak in all of you as you turn off your cell phones and your smart watches, because that really helps too.

[74 : 47] Turn off all of those things. Turn off all the distractions. Turn off all of the things that get in the way so that you can be quiet and listen to God work in your life and speak into your life this week.

I pray those things for you, and I pray many blessings upon all of you as you go out into the world and make more disciples of Jesus Christ for the change and the transformation of this world.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.