

Thanking God

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [0 : 0 0] This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice, let us rejoice, and be glad in it, 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, this is the day, that the Lord has made. Lord, we pray that you will come and fill us in this place, fill us to overflowing with your blessing, with your power, with your wonder.
Help us to experience you by opening up our hearts to you this day, Lord. And may everything we say and do, everything we sing to you, Lord, be a blessing to you, for it's in your name we pray. Amen.
- [1 : 0 4] I'd like to invite you all to stand, if you're able, as we sing together, we gather together. We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing.
He chastens and hastens his will to make known. The wicked oppressing, thou see'st from distressing.
Sing praises to his name, he forgets not his own. Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining.
Ordaining, maintaining, maintaining, this kingdom divine. So from the beginning, the fight we were winning.
The Lord was at our side, all glory be thine. We all do rest, O Lord, our leader triumphant.
- [2 : 2 9] And pray that thou still a defender wilt be. Let thy congregation escape tribulation.
My name be ever praised, O Lord, make us free. And let us join together in professing the Christian faith contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
Do you believe in God the Father? I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father and will come again to judge the living and the dead.
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
- [3 : 5 3] Amen. Amen. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.
The Lord be with you. And also with you. Please be seated. Amen and amen. We have many things to be thankful for. And as we reflect on what we're thankful for, I want to pass out these clipboards.

These clipboards are opportunities. We're having a hanging of the greens on November 26th. And that is a time when our whole church family gets together and we have a meal and there's children's activities and we decorate for Christmas.

So I invite you to sign up for that. Also, the other one is for the First Church in Niagara Falls, the dinner that we serve there once a week. Every Thursday night. And they're looking for more supplies for that.

[5 : 12] And without your help and support, we can't possibly do that. If you miss the clipboard in some way, they're repeated back at the Ministry Connection site. And also at the Ministry Connection site, I'd like to point out to you the sign up for the ministry of ushering and greeting.

Basically a connectional ministry. Our first response, our first impression. We are assured a lot of people to just be nice. To just be... I mean, I know y'all are nice, but we need people to be like there to welcome and greet people.

We're sure a good 50 people for this. So I would like for you to prayerfully consider being a part of all of that. Also, in your bulletin, there is an envelope for a Thanksgiving offering.

It's an extra offering. And what that offering does as a mission moment is support the greater church of the United Methodist Church. So it can continue to go out and do a broader ministry and a broader mission base.

I also have the great honor of having membership this morning. We all do. And we're going to introduce a membership into our church this morning.

[6 : 27] Brothers and sisters in Christ, through the sacrament of baptism, we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit.

All this is God's gift offered to us without price. As a representative of this congregation, I present Melinda Wesolowski and Virginia Mann for membership.

Please come forward with your sponsors. We'll get there.

Oh, here she is. There we are. These questions are for our candidates for membership. Will you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

The responses are up here. And by the way, I encourage our members to reaffirm their vows as well with our new candidates. Will you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? I accept the grace of Jesus Christ as my Savior and acknowledge my need for forgiveness.

[7 : 53] I reject the power of evil, repent of my sin, and promise to serve Jesus as Lord. Will you love the Lord with all your soul? I will love the Lord with all my soul by praying, attending worship regularly, and supporting the church financially with a goal toward time.

Will you love the Lord with all your mind? I will love the Lord with all my mind by committing to reading the Bible and growing in my understanding of the Christian faith.

I will participate in opportunities for learning about God and the church. Will you love the Lord with all your heart? I will love the Lord with all my heart by caring for others at Pendleton Center United Methodist Church.

Will you love the Lord with all my heart? I will make an effort to be involved in groups and activities to get to know people and develop friendships at the church. Will you love the Lord with all your strength?

I will love the Lord with all my strength by serving in the ministries of Pendleton Center United Methodist Church, using the gifts God has given me, and by sharing about Jesus with others.

[9 : 04] I want us to go first. Melinda Wieselowski, may the Holy Spirit work within you, that having been born by the water and the Spirit, you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Virginia man, may the Holy Spirit work within you, that having been born by the water and the Spirit, you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Shall we greet our newest members into the family of God? And I'd like to invite you all to join us for a reception, as we're going to greet our newest members after church in the fellowship hall.

And today also, it's Heritage Sunday, so as we welcome in new members, we also would like to honor our oldest members, not oldest in age necessarily, but the ones that have made the longest commitment here.

And so if I call your name, please stand. Olive Burbage, June Smith, Anna Kay Anderson, Dick Anderson, Darlene Brooks, Shirley Doucher, Carolyn Patterson, Gene Beeger, Jeannie Prendergast, Ed Getty, Dorothy Getty, Jim Riggs, Marge Riggs, Sam Matina, Sandy Roseland, Tom Bush, Marge Wurtenberger, Ursula Morrison, Rich Anderson, Bev Spencer, Vicki Spencer, Gary Duchar, Claudia Rowe, Bonnie Bush, and Jean McMorris.

[11 : 00] Can we give a big thank you to these people who have been so committed over the years. We thank you so much. You know, having a commitment in Christ is one of the things we are very thankful for, that we have an opportunity to express that in this church.

And I'd love to hear this morning what you are thankful for. What are you thankful for this morning? Oh, come on. We're thankful for all of our wonderful health care providers.

Health care providers, absolutely. We are thankful for that. What else are we thankful for this morning? Yeah. We're thankful for snow?

Okay. Someone's thankful for snow. You know. What? Yeah, Melissa. My family's celebrating Thanksgiving today.

They're celebrating Thanksgiving today. Wonderful. What else are we thankful for? Yeah. So celebrating Thanksgiving on your birthday.

[12 : 08] Nice. Shelter and heat because of the snow. So we're all thankful for it in some way, right?

What else? We're heading into Thanksgiving, folks. What's on your heart? Yeah. Yeah. Family together for Thanksgiving. Yeah. Right?

The shoe boxes. My goodness, what a witness. I am so thankful for that. Yeah. College students that are home. Woo-hoo. Yeah. I'm thankful for this.

Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. You know, take some time as we offer up our blessings this morning to God to really reflect on how good God is. So let's return our gifts, tithes, and offerings to the Lord.

Thank you.

[13 : 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. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. When we talk with God We see a glimpse of His face Though we don't understand What the answer has been When we talk with God There is grace There is grace There is grace Grace for the broken heart Grace for the broken heart There is grace There is grace To the fellowship of Jesus There is grace Grace to seal the waters Grace to calm the storm Grace to give us strength

When we are weary Turn to oil Grace to overcome the walls of shame And guilt and storm Grace to lift us from afar Grace to lead us home There is grace There is grace There is grace There is grace Praise for the broken hearted Praise for the broken soul There is grace There is grace There is grace In the fellowship of Jesus There is grace There is grace There is grace There is grace In the fellowship of Jesus There is grace There is grace There is grace There is grace There is grace

[16 : 28] There is grace There is grace Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. So pray for Ron Elman. He lost another nephew. So pray for Ron Elman for health issues, but also he just lost his second nephew.

Thank you. It's very difficult. Yeah, Deb. Alyssa, you said? Yeah. So please pray for Alyssa, whose cancer has returned.

[18 : 32] Lift her up in prayer. Anyone else? Yeah. Sorry. Please pray for Janet, who is battling cancer.

Judy. Dan for opiate abuse, that he get through the rehab well and recover.

Yes. Yes. So for, and wanted to get off of her track.

She's in a rehab center now. Yeah. So please pray for Nancy's mom, Nancy Himes' mom, who is still in the hospital and is still in need of some blood transfusions.

Anyone else? Yeah, Tim. I can't hear you. What? Oh, she's having her tonsils out tomorrow. Oh, well, please pray for that.

[19 : 44] Absolutely. A little one. Yeah. It's been released from the hospital and is walking and has been released to a nursing home where her husband, who has Alzheimer's, is.

So we need to work that together in God's time. And her name is Tricia and his name is Bill. Please lift them up in prayer as well.

Anyone else? Let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Gracious and loving Lord, we come to you this day filled with your love.

And needing to trust you more. We're placing our lives in your hands, Lord. And we have experienced at times fear in our hearts, unsteadiness, unsettledness, as we have people in our lives that are struggling.

And we're counting on you to be there with them and to heal them and to walk everyone through it. Lord, we pray that your presence will be with the people.

[21 : 00] Help us to see you in the midst of our struggles. Help us to reach out to you in the midst of anything that comes our way. We pray for those who are struggling with their health, Lord, that your hand will be upon them, that they will receive healing in a miraculous way, that your name would be praised.

We pray that you will take anything that is broken, take anything that is hurting, take anything that's full of disease, and cast it out. Be with doctors and nurses. Guide them in your wisdom.

Guide them with your hand. Give them your skill. And we pray for those who are in the position of caregiving, that you'll give them your comfort and your support, your encouragement.

Lord, we pray for encouragement in a body of Christ that is hurting in so many ways. We pray that you will offer up your joy. Help us to experience your joy in the midst of struggles, to know you are good no matter what.

Lord, we pray that you will have a blessing upon our families, that our families will feel your peace, that the anxiety of the busyness of life will settle, and we will know what's important and have the priorities right.

[22 : 10] Make paths straight, Lord. We pray for opportunities. Opportunities to witness. Opportunities to love.

Opportunities to be a hand of grace in your name. We pray for our church, that you will set us on the right path, continuing to push us and drive us in a bold way, that we will proclaim your name in new and exciting ways, in whatever way you would have us to do it.

Lord, help us to hang on and go in your direction. We pray for the shoeboxes, Lord, that each and every one will be blessed by you, that they will be received by the child of your choice, and they will be a blessing that witnesses to you.

We pray for the communities that receive these boxes, that they will have open hearts to receive the message that's contained within them, and that the world will be transformed through it.

Lord, we're counting on you, trusting in you, loving in you, that these boxes will be a witness in your name. Lord, we pray for our world that is struggling and troubled, and we pray that your peace will come upon us.

[23 : 31] Help us to be part of the problem, part of the solution, part of the witness that is an example of love. Lord, we pray for our life, Lord, that you are a person, part of the witness that is a person that is a person that is in a way of love.

Help us not to be hateful and judgmental. Help us not to be violent. Help us to not be the things that the world is pushing everyone to be.

Lord, we pray that you'll set us apart, filled with your Holy Spirit, that we would proclaim your name in how we live. Lord, we thank you for what you're doing in our lives, what you're doing in the lives around us, for the healing you're having upon this body of Christ and upon those we love.

We thank you and we praise your name. For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Now let's hear from the word of the Lord. Good morning.

Acts 1, 4 through 11. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command. Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

[25 : 02] For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then they gathered around him and asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?

He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Men of Galilee, they said, Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Anna. This is the week that we celebrate Thanksgiving. What are you thankful for?

[26 : 13] Family? Turkey, somebody said? Warm home. Nothing else? All right.

There's a few more, aren't there? Actually, we could name all sorts of things, couldn't we, that we're thankful to God for. How do we thank God? How do we actually do something that would actually be what God would appreciate?

And it's by being what they call fruitful. You'll know them by their fruits, is what Jesus said. There was a parable Jesus told about a fig tree. He said that there was a fig tree planted in a garden, and the owner came to look at it and wanted figs, and there were no figs there.

So he said to the gardener, cut it down. Why should it take up the soil? And the gardener said, let me just have a year with it. I'll dig around it. I'll fertilize it.

I'll water it. Then if it doesn't produce fruit, we'll cut it down. A lot of times that passage is used to talk about how God always leaves an opportunity for mercy, that there's always a chance through God to find grace.

[27 : 24] It also talks about what God expects, which is God expects us to be fruitful. You know what the fruits of the Spirit are, don't you? Let's see if you can do them all.

Love, joy, peace, patience. Wow. Impressed.

Wonderful. Fruits of the Spirit are one of the ways we demonstrate who we are as Christians. And the other thing they talk about being fruitful in the Bible is that we will actually bring the good news of Jesus Christ, God's salvation, to other people.

We will increase the number of Christians. And in this story, Jesus is appearing to the disciples. There's hundreds of them gathered there. This is after Easter, after the resurrection.

And Jesus is actually, unbeknownst to the disciples, gathered there telling them the last thing he wants them to hear before he leaves. And he says to them, You will be my witnesses.

[28 : 29] Not you might be my witnesses, but you will be. The question is not whether we'll be witnesses, but will we be good witnesses. Will we be the ones who exhibit the fruits of the Spirit?

Will we be the ones who help other people to find God? Will we be the ones who take the mission of God out to the world, as it says, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth?

Or will we not? Christianity is on a mission to bring God to the whole world, whatever it takes. But the problem is, individual Christians struggle with this.

It's hard, because in a culture where we seem to be in a social battle with each other, we don't know what we can say anymore, what's right, what's okay, how should we live. It can be frightening in this world to even try to share what God wants us to share.

And we tend to lose our confidence. The wind goes out of our sails. Now, I've discovered in life that one of the things that gives me the most confidence is the love of another person.

[29 : 37] I can say to you that I'm confident in this world in large part because I know I have a wife who loves me and has always loved me, and that gives me strength.

I go through a lot of funerals for people who lose their spouses, and my heart goes out because what an amazing loss that is.

Those are the people that give us the ability to walk through this world together. Sometimes it's our children. Maybe it's our parents or friends or even our church.

Love gives us confidence. When I was a little boy, you know who gave me confidence? My father. Because he was eight feet tall and could defeat anybody.

If Superman himself showed up, my dad would take him out. I knew that for sure. Because my dad was bigger than anybody in the whole world. And that gave me courage to step out boldly and live my life knowing that I had somebody watching over me.

[30 : 42] Because we feel we can be bold when we're sure we're loved. In many ways, that's the way we look at God. Unfortunately, we sometimes leave him in sort of a childish idea that he's some sort of magic man in the sky to fix our problems and to be a magic genie, take care of all our troubles.

The apostles are kind of doing that in this passage. They have Jesus himself with them. I want you to think about that. Could you imagine if you had Jesus physically with you every day of your life?

I mean, here's a guy that when you get sick, he just goes, boom, and you're healed. Right? If you're hungry, he just makes you a fish sandwich. Pretty cool. In fact, even people that died, he raises them from the dead.

With this guy, we don't fear anything. And so the apostles are approaching Jesus, who's there and with them, with a sense of confidence.

But it's a confidence. It's really a childish confidence. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 11, it says, When I was a child, I talked like a child. I thought like a child.

[31 : 57] I reasoned like a child. But when I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. They look at Jesus and they say, Jesus, is this the time you're going to fix everything?

Are you going to bring an army of angels down from heaven and wipe out the people of the other political party and take out the folks we don't like and give us all great jobs and wonderful houses to live in and make everything perfect?

Is this the time, Jesus? Jesus. And he basically looked at them and said, You guys haven't got a clue, do you? You know? You don't understand how it really works.

Because they're still living in a childish faith. When I was a kid, there was a song that Peter, Paul, and Mary sang. And I probably shouldn't use it in church because the dragon is a symbol of Satan in the Bible.

But let's just put that aside for a minute. Do you remember that song? Puff the magic dragon lived by the sea and frolicked in the autumn mist in a land called Hanali.

[33 : 06] Little Jackie Paper loved that rascal Puff and brought him things like sealing wax and other fancy stuff. Together they would wander on ships with billowed sail.

Jackie kept the lookout perched on Puff's gigantic sail. Noble kings and princes would bow when e'er they came. Pirate ships would blow their flag when Puff roared out his name.

Oh, Puff the magic dragon. That's the way we look at God. Really, that's how we tend to see God as children.

And it's understandable when you're a child. That's the way you should look at God. But we're not, for the most part, children, although we have children here. And God is not a magic creature that fixes every single thing in our lives.

And we figure that out somewhere in life. And for many of us, it causes a crisis of faith. Because we're looking for answers in the wrong place.

[34 : 12] We're following a broken model based on made-up stuff. And we do that throughout our entire lives. The world is not going to be fixed by magic.

And it's not going to be fixed by what they wanted, by some kind of war or by taking out the bad guys. Because when we look at it real closely, we'll find out each and every one of us is the bad guy. Do you understand that?

But deep down, if we really examine our own lives, we'll see that all of us are flawed and fall short of the glory of God. They are so focused on what they've seen in Jesus, so focused on what God has done, that they're not able to see what God is doing.

And we need to make sure that God is not some mythical creature that exists in an old book and that we're practicing a dead religion when God wants to give us a living faith.

At some point in time, God wants us to outgrow the childish faith and live in a world where we understand what real love is.

[35 : 21] Because love is a two-way street. And it's only when we experience the love of God and offer our love to God together do we really have a relationship with God and with each other.

So we're going to do something a little different this morning. I'm going to have you say something nice to your neighbor. But just because I know you're going to say, but I don't know what to say, I'm going to give you some suggestions. You don't have to use these, but here's some ideas.

You can say, you look great today. I love your smile. May God's love be with you. Have a great God-filled day. You're a special gift from God. May God bless you.

I'm glad you came to church today. And Pastor Tom is singing especially well this morning. How did that get in there? All right, go ahead and do it. Don't leave anybody out. You can stand up.

It's all right. You can walk around if you need to. Thank you. Don't leave DJ out.

[36 : 26] He's all by himself back there. You know, I got to tell you, last night it took me a while to get you people to stop being nice to each other.

That's a great thing. That was surprising. That's not what we expected to do in worship this morning. Amen? Amen? But God surprises us, and God surprises us with his amazing love and his experience.

These people were surprised by God. They're looking up into heaven where Jesus had gone to, and an angel appears to them, and they don't even see him. And then he starts talking to them.

I got your head in the cloud. Oh! Can you imagine an angel standing next to you, but you're not looking? You see, because part of our difficulty as Christians is we're not looking for what God's doing.

We're looking for what God did. God wants us to live into something amazing. We're looking for the normal stuff, and God wants to break in with something special.

[37 : 31] And part of that is, God wants to break in with a faith for adults, a grown-up faith. When I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child.

I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put childish ways behind me. You got to picture how these people felt.

Jesus had died a few weeks earlier, and they were completely devastated by his loss, and then he was resurrected to life, and they were like, yes, yes, we have victory, and now he just went away again.

He just went away again. A dragon lives forever, but not so little boys. Paper wings and giant rings make way for other toys.

One gray day it happened. Jackie Paper came no more, and Puff, that mighty dragon, he ceased his fearless roar.

[38 : 36] His head was hung in sorrow. Green scales fell like rain. Puff no longer went to play along the cherry lane without his lifelong friend.

Puff could not be brave. So Puff, that mighty dragon, sadly slipped into his cave. Seriously?

They sang this to me when I was a little boy. I'm like, really? So what you're telling me is, the people we count on, the people we call friends, the people we love and we like are going to abandon us. Really? Really? And we're singing that to little kids?

Honestly? I don't like this song. This song freaked me out when I was a kid. I'm like, that's not a good song. Where'd that come from? I like the pirate ships lowering their flags.

Your friends abandoned you? Jesus went to heaven and left them alone? What's that? Seriously? That's just cruel. See, an adult faith is experiencing a living God.

[39 : 40] Not a dead religion. Not a magic man. But a relationship with God that gives us power and strength and confidence from God's love because we experience God ourselves.

In Romans chapter 8, Paul talks about it. He says, Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you receive does not make you slaves that you live in fear again.

Rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry out, Abba, Father, which means Daddy. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we're God's children.

And if we are children, then we're heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Christ. So God gives us this incredible gift. This incredible gift that He accepts us and loves us and welcomes us into the family regardless of who we've been, what we've been, and then, as He tells them here, He gives the power of the Holy Spirit.

See, so long as Jesus is walking the earth, He's one person going from place to place. Maybe He can talk to thousands. But the Holy Spirit can breathe into millions.

[40 : 55] Billions, if you will. The Holy Spirit gives us the presence of God in our lives right now. And as I've been saying for the last couple weeks and we'll say for the next few weeks, without the presence of the living God in our lives, all we've got is a religion.

And I've got to tell you the truth, religion doesn't move me much. I appreciate religion. It's a great thing. It's the manger that holds the little child. But it's not the child.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God breathing into your world. And once you experience that, you gain a power and a confidence like nothing else.

So an adult faith receives God, experiences God, and then understands that God has His timing, God has His plans, and we're not here to tell God what to do.

We're not even here necessarily to just be told by God. We're partners with God. He tells him, I've got a plan for you. Go out and be witnesses, Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria, to the ends of the earth, and I'll tell you when to do it.

[42 : 05] You'll know, because you'll experience the power of the living God. Don't be doing anything until you know it's the right time. Sometimes we have to wait for the right time.

You know, I was thinking about it last night. In western New York, things change after the harvest. I think this is something that's been going on for hundreds of years, but I never realized it because we are not so much an agricultural society as we used to be.

But have you noticed that it's after we take in the harvest, we start giving out the bounty? After we take in the harvest, somewhere around November, we don't just give thanks to God, we start feeding the hungry.

We gave out 60-some baskets to people who needed a Thanksgiving dinner this week. We start preparing meals. We start sending little boxes all over the world.

The angel trees were up. We start taking gifts for other people. We start sharing with the world because we've received the harvest of God. You see, we aren't prepared to go out into this dangerous, scary world all by ourselves.

[43 : 25] We need the power of God. And God's love gives us the confidence to share with one another. I was speaking with our confirmation class last week.

It's kind of a smaller group. And they asked me the question. They said, how do you know that you know? All right, this is a question adults ask. How do you know that you know that you know?

Do you know what I'm saying? So how can you be sure that this day, if you died, you'd go to glory? John Wesley referred to it as the blessed assurance.

I said, it's a gift. I said, we begin our faith with, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Which comes right out of the Bible, by the way.

That's common. A lot of the believers in the Bible said, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. These guys were saying it. But at some point in time, when we experience the gift of God, that power of the Holy Spirit, when we open up our lives to be what God wants them to be, filled with Him, then we have the blessed assurance that we know that we know.

[44 : 31] I don't think, I don't think I'll make it to glory. I know it. I don't think I deserve it. I don't have any idea why God in His infinite love gave me grace, but I know that I know.

And that only comes from the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In John chapter 14, Jesus said, I'll ask the Father. He'll give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

The Spirit of Truth. You notice He calls the Holy Spirit an advocate. Someone who will fight with you. Someone who will work with you. Someone who will be with you. Not leave you alone. The world can't accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.

But you know Him for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. And I'm sure as these apostles were watching Jesus go away, into the heavens.

They thought back to that verse. Because the Holy Spirit brings power. It brings us the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of the Holy Spirit, the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

[45 : 42] It tells us that we're loved by God. Not a magic spell. Not some wishing and hoping. but a real, genuine love by God.

No matter what. No matter if you're messed up. No matter if you're confused. No matter if you've got your life in a tangle. No matter who you are and what you are. No matter what. God loves you.

And that helps us so that we aren't afraid to go out into this world because this world is scary. But so long as we know we have the blessed assurance of God, so long as we have God with us, the gates of hell cannot prevail against us.

It's not a childish faith. My wife likes to say this. It's a child-like faith. They talk about in the Bible. God, a loving Father that we can love as well.

Jesus said to His disciples when they came to dispute Him about who's the greatest in heaven, He said, called the little children, placed them among them, and said, Truly I tell you, unless you become like a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

[46 : 52] Whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. You see, God doesn't want us to be childish. He wants us to be childlike because there's some wisdom that comes in the truth and the honesty of children.

Listen to what these say. Love is like over a gillion stuff.

Helping someone even if you don't want to. When your parents or your teachers don't tell you to. Giving away stuff that you really, really like. If they wanted toys, I should sell toys.

It's smiling and saying good things about them. I should say, You have very nice clothes on. I help my mommy. I played with another person on the playground and she didn't have anybody to play with.

People that are loving to me feel like I should do it to someone else. Because Jesus did the same for us. It's like their daughter says you have them do to you. that you should treat the other one just like I've been treated before.

- [48 : 07] Not like bad, but the times I've been good treated. Nobody really wants to play with somebody who's being mean. Not the bad I did, but the times I was good.
- Because nobody wants to play with somebody who's mean. God is a God of love and of peace. He's still our daddy.
- But the difference is he wants to be a daddy who's a partner with us. Joint heirs with Jesus. When I was a little boy, my dad did construction and I'd watch them.
- Once in a while, they'd have me hold a board. I hated it. Who wants to hold a board? When I became a man, my father and I worked together. He was the master, but I was the one who learned and I actually did stuff that mattered.
- It wasn't just me watching the mighty man work. It was me actually doing it with him. God isn't looking for us to be some kind of subservient ants.
- [49 : 11] He wants us to be partners on the mission to bring the grace of God to the world. Partnering with him. First John says to us, there's no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.
- Fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. So what we need is we need the perfect love of God to fill us up, to change us, to make us into what God intended us to be.
- Fill us up, Lord, and bless our souls. Lord, my life.
- I want to do that. Pastor Tom isn't singing very good this morning, but don't tell him that. That would be right. Lord, my life is an empty cup.
- Here's my heart, Lord, you fill me up. I'm placed to the ground forsaking my pride, leaving my will, my burdens behind.
- [50 : 50] All I want, all I need is just to be with you, just to be with you.
- Here I am, and you're free, just to be with you, just to be with you.
- I have come to the end of me, and there's nothing I have to bring.
- You said I belong. You said I belong. You say I am yours. Nothing compares to knowing you more.
- All I want, all I need, is just to be with you, just to be with you.
- [51 : 57] Here I am, here I am, at your feet, just to be with you, just to be with you.
- You may know wait for me, oh, Savior, I am yours forevermore.
- You may know wait for me, oh, Savior, I am yours forevermore.
- I am yours forevermore. All I want, all I need, all I need, is just to be with you, just to be with you.
- Here I am, at your feet, just to be with you, just to be with you.
- [53 : 04] Just to be with you. All I want, all I need, is just to be with you, just to be with you.
- Here I am, at your feet, just to be with you, just to be with you.
- Thank you. Thank you, do you work.
- There is a question Krit cori■ is We will wait upon the Lord Strength who rises We will wait upon the Lord We will wait upon the Lord We will wait upon the Lord Our God We will wait forever Our hope Our star-believing You are the everlasting God The everlasting God You do that faith that you want How weary You're the defender of the weak You come the Lord We will wait You lift us up for kings like he

Your hopeational Peak We will disadvantages We will wait Auchstofe were We will wait upon the Lord ■■■■ End of earthuminate We will reboot data Our■■■ You wait forever, our world, our strong deliverer.

[55 : 18] You are the everlasting God, the everlasting God. You do your faithful, our world, our weary.

Your Lord, you thank the Lord for me. You come and go in me. You lift us up, our weak, our weak, our weak.

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord. We will wait upon the Lord. We will wait upon the Lord. But that's hard.

Isn't it hard? I mean, we know that we can get our strength from God, and if we should be trusting in God, and yet it's really, really hard to do that.

You know, we end up thinking that we can just fix it ourselves. We don't want to wait on what God's timing is, on what God's plan is, and we just end up moving on ahead, and usually when we do that, we end up sinning.

[56 : 26] In fact, every time we don't follow God's will, we end up sinning. Each and every one of us is a sinner in need of God's grace, and each and every one of us needs to have a time when we can come back and repair our relationship with God and get right back on the right path, remembering who God is and what God has done for us.

So I invite you to have a prayer of confession along with me. Lord, I am a sinner. Lord, I am a sinner. I need your grace. I need your forgiveness. I've not always trusted.

I've not always loved by what I did, by what I said. Forgive me, Lord.

Set me on the right path. Fill me to overflowing. Fill me to overflowing. Fill me to overflowing. That I may be your witness. That I may be a witness. Blessed by you.

Blessed by you. To be a blessing to others. To be a blessing to others. In Jesus' name we pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Hear the good news.

[57 : 32] Christ died for each and every one of you while you were still sinners. And that proves God's love for you and for me. So in the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. And now as we prepare for the table, let's be together as a body of Christ, greeting one another with the Holy Spirit.

Let's pass to the peace of the Spirit to one another. Praise the Lord. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. It does, kind of.

Go ahead. Give thanks with the great love.

[58 : 59] Give thanks to the Holy One. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ.

Give thanks to the Holy One. Give thanks to the Holy One.

Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ. It is I am now that the weak say I am strong.

And the poor say I am rich. Give thanks because the Lord has done for us.

And now, when the weak say I am strong. But the poor say I am rich.

[60 : 03] So, when the Lord has done for us. Give thanks because the Lord invites us to the table.

A table where we celebrate what God has done for us. And so, whether this is your first time here or you've been here all along, you are welcome to the table of grace.

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

It is right and a good and joyful thing. Always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through the prophets.

[61 : 13] And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn. Holy, holy, holy, 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. 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. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

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.

[62 : 17] When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always in the power of your word and Holy Spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread.

He gave thanks to you, Father Almighty, and he broke the bread. He gave it to his disciples and said, Take it and eat. This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, he took the cup. And he gave thanks and said, This is my blood.

The blood of a new covenant poured out for you, poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of this often, remembering 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.

[63 : 30] 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.

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. And now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying, 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.

[64 : 50] With those who are serving, please come forward. Amen. ■■■ej I A Gef.

lout terra A dor A dor Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[67 : 52] 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. Thank you.

[71 : 36] Thank you. Thank you. Goslingaty. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

As we sing together, Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine. Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine.

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

[73 : 30] This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight. Angels descending, ring from above, Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest. I, my Savior, am happy and blessed.

[74 : 33] Watching Him, watching Him, waiting, looking upon, Helping His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

Once again, I'd like to invite you to the reception for our newest members after church. There's cake. I also wanted to say to you, I do believe in the miracle powers of God. I do believe that God can break through into this world and do amazing and incredible things.

I'm aware that God does miracles. However, sometimes we walk through the shadowy valleys and the struggles of life, and that's part of living, and that's just being an adult and realizing how it is.

But even in the shadow of the valley of death, God is with us. And God goes before us, and God strengthens us, and God walks within us.

[75 : 44] So may that God take you through life, take you through the struggles, the brokenness, the heartaches, and fill you with the love and the joy and the strength of God that you might be able to share that with others.

Go in his peace. Amen. Amen.