

# June 28, 2015

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Date: 28 June 2015

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning.

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. If any kids want to come down and sing, they're welcome to join us. This is the day that the Lord has made.

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

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Good morning. Welcome to Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. I'm Kathleen, affiliated with Connectional Ministries. The congregation, pastors, and staff are thrilled to have you here this morning.

[ 1 : 26 ] If you've never visited our sanctuary before, be sure and pick up a welcome bag. And also, fill out a friendship card. We'd like to know about you and what your interests are.

We hope you come again and visit us. And God bless. We have two opportunities going around on your clipboards for ministry. The first is about our rummage sale in Niagara Falls, which is a very unusual rummage sale, because the primary goal isn't to make money, but to get stuff out to people who need it.

So if you can help or want to help with that effort, there's this clipboard going around on that. And the other one is if you want to sign up for all the flowers. Now, there's only one. So if you're looking for it, it's wandering around the whole sanctuary.

It's a big, long one. So we'll pass it as far as it goes. I also want to mention that if you didn't know, there's a church picnic today. And come and join us. We've got hot dogs and we've got drinks and people brought dishes to pass.

So join us even if you didn't plan on it. There's nothing else to do. It's raining. You might as well stay at church and have a picnic with the rest of us and join us for that. Today, we were supposed to do a car wash, but God is providing the car wash today.

[ 2 : 29 ] So what we're going to ask is if you're willing. This is actually one of them. And they try to have two of these and both have gotten rained out. So the kids going on the mission trip, we're looking forward to using this to help raise FUDs to go on their mission trip in two weeks.

So it's hard to even make it up. So what they're going to do is they're going to put buckets by the door. And if you're willing to make a donation for God washing your car, you can toss that in and that'll help the mission trip kids to go on their way.

They really would wash your car. Maybe they'll do one for free in the fall. How does that sound? And that'll make, well, I don't know if that's, we'll just have to be honest. You know, when you say we and it isn't you, it really doesn't work very well.

Tomorrow night, there's a prayer service here at the church. It says it'll be in the labyrinth room, but that's not going to happen because there's VBS stuff in there. So it'll be meeting right here in the sanctuary of the church.

And also, if you aren't aware of it, we are going to have two services on Sunday for the rest of the summer at nine o'clock and 1030. What time? Now you can come any other time you want to, but that's when the services will start.

[ 3 : 38 ] And we'll be glad to have you show up late or early and it'll be fine by us. We'll still be glad to welcome you here at the church. Let's pray, shall we? Dear God in heaven, we thank you for the blessings you give to us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Touch us with your grace and help us to celebrate this great day that the Lord has made. For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'm going to invite you, if you're able, to stand as we sing together, Shall We Gather at the River?

Shall we gather at the river?

Where bright angel feet have trod? With its crystal time forever, flowing by the throne of God.

Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river. Gather with the saints at the river, glad closed by the throne of God.

[ 4 : 52 ] On the margins of the river, washing up in silver spray, We will talk and worship heaven on a happy golden day.

Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river. Gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God.

There we reach the shining river, lay our every burden down. Grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown.

Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river.

Gather with the saints at the river, that flows by the throne of God. The Lord be with you.

[ 6 : 10 ] Also with you. Take a moment if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit. Good morning. Anybody else want to come up? Any other kids? I want to show you something. A trophy. A trophy.

And you know what this trophy is for? I used to be a wrestler. I could wrestle people. I was a pretty good wrestler. I won a lot of times. But this trophy is for losing. Yes, I lost a match one time. And it was over 40 years ago. And I was telling somebody in our church about it, that there was this guy one time that I couldn't beat.

But at least he didn't pin me, which means to push me down on the ground and hold me down like that. But he couldn't do that. And everybody cheered when I came off the wrestling mat, and I thought that was just weird, because I lost.

And I thought that was just weird, because I lost. And I thought that was just weird, because I lost. And I thought that was just a lot of times. And I thought that was just a lot of times.

And I thought that was just weird, because I lost, right? But you know what he told me 40 years ago? I was the only one. He ever wrestled that he didn't pin. So he thought he lost.

[ 7 : 11 ] And everybody thought I won, even though I was a loser. Isn't that weird? Yes. So I got a trophy for losing. Because sometimes you can win by losing. Did you know that?

If you hold your head up, and if you have dignity, and if you're respectful, and you look for it, and you look for it, and if you're not going to make yourself better in spite of failing, sometimes we come out winners in the end.

And that's the truth. So losing, or failing, or not making the grade, or whatever you might want to call it, doesn't mean that we have to give up. It doesn't mean that we're losers for life.

It just means that we just have an opportunity to learn and get a little bit better. And God gives us that because God wants us to learn how to get up after we fall down. And he'll help us do it every time.

Okay? What do you think before this morning? You want to share something? Raise your hand. I want to share something? My friends and family. My mom and dad.

[ 8 : 10 ] My mom. My friends and family. My dad. We're coming to this church. All right. Great. Harrison's been away from us for a while, so we're glad to have him back and visiting with us.

Let's pray, shall we? Lord, we do thank you for the blessings we have of family, of church, and of people we love and care for, and even those we haven't seen for a while. Bless us always with your strength and your wonder as we offer our prayers in Jesus' name.

Amen. Okay, you guys can all go out to church school now if you want to. Hi. Good morning. Good morning. For those who don't know me, my name is Linda Wetherill.

I've attended Pendleton Center for over eight years now. When I first walked into this church, I didn't know anyone. Now I am happy to call you all my church family, and for that I'm very thankful.

I'm here today to talk about the church retreat. I can honestly say that on my first retreat is when I really felt part of a family, not just a church. The retreat is the last weekend of September at Camp Asbury on the shore of Silver Lake.

[ 9 : 27 ] Don't let the word camp fool you. The lodge is very comfortable. Meals are provided and are very good. The views of the lake are gorgeous. The only difference between that and a hotel room is you have to make your own bed.

And if that's a problem, let me know. I'll help you. The best part is the time we get to spend with each other. We spend some time in worship and some time learning.

This year we're going to explore spiritual gifts and how to use them. We will enjoy great meals together and we'll have free time to spend as you wish.

Walk the grounds, rest, read, or as many of us do, go down the road and play miniature golf. It's a great time to grow in our faith and get to know each other better.

Please consider joining us for a weekend filled with faith, fellowship, and fun. Reservations are due by the end of the month and I'll be in the fellowship hall after service if anyone has any questions.

[ 10 : 29 ] Thank you. Thank you, Linda. We do have such a great interest in this church in helping everyone from the tiniest among us to those who have been here their whole lives and are well advanced in years in helping us all to grow in grace, to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, and to grow in our gifts.

Please do make every effort to attend the retreat and get involved in all the things that this church offers to you so that you can grow with God, grow in your faith.

Now, as we continue to grow in our faith, we worship God through presenting before God our gifts, tithes, and offerings. Pamphlets and remember in the ministry our gifts, to grow in our faith, unity, and peace, and to realize in the faith, if anyone can grow in mind, give away our faith, because our gifts and are well-to-making both of our have cool and with Bible Study. Steak in love with God, but also our love in our faith.

Now, as we move on a busy day, I will bundle our history with our party, Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 12 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 15 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 17 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Okay. Krista Eisenhardt. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And brothers and sisters, during our picnic after church, please greet our newest members and welcome to the family of God.

Shall we welcome them today? Thank you. Amen.

[ 20 : 33 ] What a blessing it is to welcome new folks into our body and to know that God is blessing us by drawing people into his church, that God, that the church, you know, you can look around and see that the churches all over the place are maybe getting smaller and smaller, but that God is bringing blessing into our midst.

And we continue to pray for God's blessings upon our new members, on all of those who have already become members and maybe have been for many years, and on all of you who are not yet officially members, but whom God continues to draw to fellowship in this church and in God's greater church.

May God bless us all. Amen. Amen. We do have some concerns to bring before, and a couple of joy as well. We have Jim Wells recovering from a medical procedure, and we need to keep in prayer the family of Eleanor Kimberly.

That is Norm's Kimberly's mom, and she died on Monday, and her service was over the weekend with calling hours on Friday as well.

And congratulations to Bob and Jan Inwards. Hey, Bob. Hey, Jan. On the birth of their grandson, Kobe James Johnson. He was born on June 23rd, and Charlene and Mark Johnson are his parents, and we pray blessings on that family as they welcome that new little life.

[ 21 : 59 ] Amen. Amen. Shall we take these joys and concerns and those that are on your heart and turn to the Lord in prayer? Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise.

So many joys in our lives. What a blessing it is to be here this day. What a blessing it is to welcome new members. What a blessing it is to celebrate new life.

What a blessing it is to celebrate eternal life with you, which you have promised to all those who believe in your name. To all those.

Lord God, we come before you. We come before you now, Lord, with not only the joys that you just rejoice with us in the midst of them, but also, Lord God, those concerns that we have.

We pray, Lord God, for all of those in the world, in our communities, in our families who don't know you. We pray in Jesus' name that you would just continue to draw them to yourself by your grace and mercy.

[ 23 : 16 ] We pray in Jesus' name that many would come to faith in God through Jesus Christ. We pray for all those who share the good news, wherever they may be in the world, Lord God.

And we pray in Jesus' name that you would protect them, that you would give them the words that they need to be able to reach out for you effectively.

We pray that you would anoint them by your spirit, that when they share those words, that would draw others to you, that the words would come forth with power.

Not just the words of human beings to one another, but the words of human beings who are filled with your spirit, reaching out to those who are in need of you.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would touch and anoint each one of us in just that way.

[ 24 : 19 ] That we would be able to talk to our friends and our neighbors and our coworkers, everyone we come in contact with. And be vessels through whom you can speak and draw people to yourself, that many would be saved, Lord.

We pray for all of those in our body, Lord God, who are sick and infirm. We ask that you would touch them by your healing power. Give them grace to endure the struggle.

And let them see the light on the other side, that there is healing present, that they can receive. Father, we pray for those who are grieving losses of all kinds, that by your spirit you would grant them comfort.

We pray in Jesus' name, Lord God, that you would continue to lead us and guide us in the way we should go in this life. Lord, light the path that you would have us take.

Encourage us to move step by step closer to you. And help us, Lord, to encourage one another as we go forth in your name.

[ 25 : 37 ] As we come to a time when we will hear from your word, we ask that it would wash over us, transform us, cleanse us, teach us, draw us into your presence.

Anoint Pastor Tom to deliver the message you've given him. That it would be a blessing to him and a blessing to us. Make all of our worship, Lord God, to be a blessing to you this morning.

That's why we've come, to worship you. Be with us, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord?

Good morning. Today's reading is from John, chapter 4, verses 7 through 24. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, Will you give me a drink?

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

[ 26 : 51 ] Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asked you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. Sir, the woman said, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.

Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and his herds? Jesus answered, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life. The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.

He told her, Go, call your husband, and come back. I have no husband, she replied. Jesus said to her, You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.

What you have just said is quite true. Sir, the woman said, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.

[ 28 : 06 ] Jesus declared, Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know.

We worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father sees.

God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Christy.

I keep going to the river to pray, because I need something that can wash out the pain. I know.

I don't do those songs too well, do I? But I heard that on the radio, and I've heard it several times, and I think, isn't that an interesting idea? That somebody on regular radio is talking about going and having their problems washed away with prayer.

[ 29 : 13 ] God wants to wash us clean, cleanse us, bless us with living water. Jesus says, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is that asks you if we're a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

And the woman says, where can we get that stuff? Where can we come across this blessing? John chapter 8, Jesus says, if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Most of us have heard that verse. In fact, a lot of us have probably quoted that verse. People want to know the truth, but people also like to win.

They like to win. And winning sometimes pushes people, keeps people away from Jesus. We're talking about the walls we build up as Christians that keep people from Jesus.

The things that we do, and the attitudes we have, and the directions that we take that can actually block people from the grace of God. Sometimes it's our customs.

[ 30 : 30 ] The things that we've always done that can become a barrier to Christ. Things that can change, but we don't want them to. If you read a little further in this passage, in verse 27, it says that Jesus' disciples showed up, and they were astonished.

They were shocked that Jesus was talking to a Samaritan woman. First of all, the fact that he was talking to a woman, because it's scandalous for a man to be seen talking to a woman at a watering hole.

It's scandalous for a man to have any association with a woman back in those days. And even now, it creates whispers and concerns and worries.

We have all kinds of gender issues going on. Stuff that keeps us from being what we should be. The other night, I was talking with a group of guys from the church, actually, and there were some women there, and I said that someone looked and acted like a regular housewife.

And there was a woman there that said, what's a regular housewife look like? And I didn't know how to answer that anymore. I could answer that 40 years ago, but it completely doesn't make any sense today in the way in which it used to it.

[ 31 : 49 ] I've decided, I think that word is wrong. I think somehow that's not the right word to use. Even though all our lives we've thought it was a normal word, it's somehow inappropriate these days.

And we have the same kind of things going on in this story. They were astonished that Jesus would talk to a woman and that he would talk to a Samaritan woman. We use the word Samaritan like it's a good thing, you know?

We call things Samaritan stuff because it's about people that are kind and loving because of the story in the Bible of the good Samaritan. But in that day and age, the Jews thought Samaritans were the biggest problem there was near them.

They wouldn't even talk to them. They would go 50 miles out of their way walking on a journey to avoid being near Samaritans. They didn't like Samaritans.

Samaritans were the people who were left in the land when the children of Israel were taken to captivity in Babylon. And some of them actually had the audacity to marry people from other tribes and other races.

[ 32 : 56 ] So they messed up their bloodlines. And then on top of that, they actually thought you could worship God on a mountain when everybody knew you could only worship God in Jerusalem.

What a bunch of bums. For that, we should disassociate with them. Now, you know I'm being sarcastic, right? It's silly to us.

It seems ridiculous that these people would decide that somehow they couldn't associate with people because they worshiped in the wrong place in the wrong way. The same God.

But I gotta tell you, when I grew up, we weren't allowed to go in other people's churches. We didn't know what went on in there. We wondered if they were really Christians.

Nowadays, we mix it all together as if it's always been that way. These are their cousins. And you and I both know that it's harder sometimes to accept differences in our own family than it is in strangers.

[ 33 : 58 ] And so they didn't associate with the Samaritans. But Jesus is talking to them, talking to this woman, because he's not gonna let the people's prejudices and their customs keep this woman from Jesus.

That's hard for us. Because you see, if we give up what we've always thought, these things we've always done, the way we've always done things, we also have to give up a little bit of our pride.

So one of the blocks we put on our wall is pride. This idea that somehow it's about winning, even at the cost of being right.

People want to know the truth, but people worry sometimes more about being right. And so we develop self-righteousness, even if we know we're doing wrong.

This last week, they made a decision in South Carolina that it's time to take down the Confederate flag. Now, for those of you who grew up in this area like I did, it's like, dude, the war was over like 150 years ago.

[ 35 : 07 ] Seriously, what's the big deal? I know somebody from the South is right now starting to boil. You know, they actually said we should take a flag down.

That didn't mean much to me. I thought, yeah, if it offends somebody, take down that full flag. But what if it offended somebody that we have an American flag in our sanctuary? Because I know for some people it does.

Should we take it out? Oh, now. Now if I did that, I'd start getting the emails and the comments. Because these things, they actually mean something to us.

But we can take these matters of custom and pride to the point to which it breaks people and hurts people and keeps them from God's truth. People want to know the truth, but people want to win.

This was kind of a week of winners and losers in lots of places. Did you notice this? Supreme Court made decisions. ISIS killed a bunch of people on three different continents.

[ 36 : 13 ] And then we had a guy who's been running around in the woods up in northern New York in the Adirondacks for a few weeks. You all know about this, right? And it came on the TV where I was sitting and they said that they shot the guy.

And I looked at the TV and I said, good. I thought, oh, I'm not supposed to say that. I'm a pastor. I'm not supposed to say it's good they shot him. I didn't really mean good. I should have said that. That was wrong.

Oh, man, it's tough, isn't it? What's right? What's wrong? What's the truth? And what if our side loses somehow? There are things that the church needs to defend no matter what the cost that are the truth of God.

But some things we defend are just not worth the effort. we have religion and we have customs and we have prejudices and they can get in the way of the truth.

The Bible says, spare the rod and spoil the child. When I grew up in school, what that meant was that my school teachers could take a yardstick and I don't mean those thin, skinny little things they make now.

[ 37 : 25 ] I mean those quarter-inch, heavy-duty yardsticks and they could whack us with them any time they wanted to. Hitting us, that was nothing. Throwing books at us, whacking us in the head.

Whatever they wanted to do, it was okay. You know what happened if we went home and complained? We got hit again. Okay? My dad was a compassionate kind of father because he only hit me with his hand for the most part.

My friends, most of them got beat with belts and sticks, brooms, brushes. all sorts of stuff. Then the parents would say, this is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you.

We all think, no, nah, you're whacking me with something. Today, today, if people did what loving people did back then, we'd have them arrested.

things change. This wasn't parents trying to be abusive. They didn't know any better. They didn't realize it.

[ 38 : 34 ] It didn't take those measures to help a child learn. Small little swat is one thing, but you don't need to hit somebody with a shovel to get the point across.

But they did back then, and they thought it was normal. And some people still defend things that are really, truly, we know are wrong.

Some things change. Some things are the same. We have to decide which are which and why, and that's what Christians really need to struggle with. This woman says to Jesus, are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well?

And we're all going, yes, seriously, you have no idea who you're talking to. Right? She has no idea who she's talking to. But sometimes it's not even looking at Jesus, it's just looking at the past and customs that are from the past, when we need to be looking at the future.

We're Methodists, and so we follow the teachings of a fellow named John Wesley, who lived about 200 and some years ago. And a lot of our faith principles are based on the teachings of John Wesley.

[ 39 : 48 ] And every once in a while I disagree with him, and one of my colleagues will say to me, well, who do you think you are, smarter than Wesley? Yes! Seriously, dude, I'm a lot smarter than a man that lived 200 and some years ago.

Are you kidding? Try to do your kid's sixth grade homework, and you'll realize they're smarter than we are. you don't think we've changed, that we've grown, that we've learned some stuff in 200 years?

I think so. The man was brilliant, wonderful. Jacob dug a well, good for him. But we change. We don't live back there anymore. I drive a car.

I don't ride around on a horse. That's just nuts. And I know you like the look of those classic cars. We're riding one once. They're no dream, let me tell you. things change, and we need to learn how to change with them when things need to change, and not keep people from God, because we never did it that way before.

I can guarantee you that the day that I stop being a pastor here, a few years later, there's going to be somebody who's going to quote that very line to somebody and say, we never did it like that before.



[ 40 : 56 ] Pastor Tom said, he's not here anymore. He's gone. Doesn't matter what he said. I'm not Jesus. For goodness sakes, we have to learn how to move forward, especially if we're keeping people from Jesus.

Where do we find God? On a mountain top. Does it matter if we worship in Jerusalem? Does it matter if we're in this room? Does it matter if we're out in the field? Does it matter if we're this denomination or that denomination or some other crazy thing?

We're worshiping God. In spirit and in truth, he says. That's what matters. Things are going to change, he says. And they do change. The other night I was out at Silver Lake with a couple ladies from Florida.

We happened to be here last night as I was preaching. And they asked me if I liked hummus. How many of you have ever eaten hummus? Seriously, how many of you ate hummus when you were five years old? Young people, maybe.

Nobody else will tell you that. We never even heard of hummus. Doesn't even sound right. And it looks like something that came from the wrong place, let me tell you. And we're supposed to eat this stuff?

[ 42 : 07 ] Seriously? I saw it before most of you because my brother's from the West Bank of Palestine. So we ate Mediterranean food early on. We were putting that slop on all kinds of things before you even knew what it was.

Yeah, hummus. It's the new condiment, isn't it? Yeah, just like salsa. How many of you eat salsa? Really?

We never heard of salsa back in the day. I like the way it's salsa. I'll have a little salsa with that. Yeah, that sounds good. Or, what is that doing? Serrata? You know what I'm saying.

Yeah, see, you know what I'm talking about. Never heard of it before. We're using spices and foods and things we never even thought. Let's get out for Thai food tonight. Thai? What? Thai food?

Who eats Thai food? We do! Right? Why do you think McDonald's is going like this? Because we don't eat regular food anymore. We eat all kinds of cool stuff.

[ 43 : 06 ] Because some things change. If things are alive and they'll grow, they'll change, they'll transform. The things that stay the same forever are dead.

and the only thing they can do is deteriorate and fall apart. We tend to think about what we know as being possible and focus only on that.

This woman says to Jesus, you don't even have a cup to reach down in the well to get the water out. How are you going to get this living water? And you can almost picture her going, like, really, seriously, I'm the son of God.

I'm not talking about this. And Jesus wants us to open our eyes to possibilities that otherwise we wouldn't see. We need to have vision.

We need to be able to see possibilities and dream dreams that other people don't even know are there. And we might be able to see healing that can happen that otherwise wouldn't occur.

[ 44 : 10 ] These disciples couldn't imagine Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman, and yet he was doing it. God refreshes us. Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.

He said, but whoever drinks from the water that I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water, welling up to eternal life, living, moving, alive water that transforms us, living water.

water that's alive, living water is moving water.

It changes and transforms. Would you want to drink water from a stream that's flowing clearly, or would you want to drink water from a stagnant pond?

And you see, God gives us living water, where we're supposed to be alive and change and transform and understand the power and wonder of God.

[ 45 : 22 ] Stagnant water, you've heard water all morning already, haven't you? Stagnant water sounds like this. It's dead. Stagnant worship sounds like this.

It's dead. Stagnant lives sound like this. We cling with pride to customs and we're not going to change.

We're certain of our truth and sometimes we're just stagnant and dead and hurtful and hateful. People want to win, but people need to know the truth.

John says to us, I think he does. I think it's over here. If you hold by teaching, you are really my disciples, then you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free.

down in the river to pray, studying about that good old way, and who shall wear a starry crown, good Lord, show me the way.

[ 46 : 33 ] Oh, sisters, let's go down, let's go down, come on down. Oh, sisters, let's go down, down in the river to pray.

This is what they call a shift. Because you see, sometimes we also need to hold on to something old, because it's true. There are some old truths, the teachings of Jesus.

Some things change, and some things are always true. They always remain the same. They're not up for debate, they're not up for discussion. It doesn't matter what the vote is, it doesn't matter what anybody decides or says anywhere, God has said it, God has spoken it, it is true, it always will be.

We live in a world where postmodern thought has become the norm. Postmodern thought says nothing is ever true. Quantum physics and wacky math where four plus four sometimes equals nine.

Where the truth is not always true, you have your truth, I have my truth, you have your truth. Whatever you believe, whatever truth, it's okay. Everybody believes whatever they want. We have scientists who are going nuts with postmodern thought trying to figure it out, because scientists believe that there's got to be a truth somewhere.

[ 47 : 53 ] There's got to be something that's always right. But everybody's saying there is no truth anymore. Did you know people think that science and religion are fighting with each other? We're seeking the same thing.

We both want the truth, right? And if one happens to show that the other one's wrong, then guess what? You find the truth, you find the truth. It doesn't matter how you got there. But there is a truth.

There is a truth, a living water that's always the same. If water goes up, it also comes back.

Right? You can't throw water up and it stays up there. I've never seen it. It's never happened. I don't think it ever will. Even if it stays up there for a little while in the cloud.

Even if we're having a church picnic. Even if we want to do a car wash. If the water's up there, it's going to come down. But that's how it works. Truth is truth is truth is truth.

[ 48 : 55 ] Not all ideas that people call truth are truth. This woman says, we've got our way thinking about it. You've got your way. Which is right? And Jesus says, we're right.

You're wrong. Did you hear that? He says, we've got the truth. You don't, lady. You're wrong. And we're all going, oh, Jesus, how could you say that? That's offensive. How can you tell somebody their religion is wrong?

Because sometimes it's wrong. That's the way it is. The reason we have churches, the reason why we even have the Bible, the reason why we talk about this stuff is because sometimes there's things that are right.

And if people are wrong, it doesn't help to tell them it's okay to think whatever they want. Nowadays, everybody's spiritual. Oh, we're all spiritual. We're all seeking after God. And we take many roads in many different ways, but we all get to the same place.

That's wrong. That's just something somebody made up because it sounds nice. But just because it sounds nice doesn't mean it's real. Jesus was offensive to this woman.

[ 49 : 53 ] Lady, I'm sorry, but you're wrong. We're right. Somebody's asked me sometimes, what would I do with a person of a different faith? I would say very clearly, I hope your faith has some possibilities of gaining you eternal life, but I can tell you the way, the truth, and the life, and the way to get there.

So if you want a sure thing, follow Christianity. Everything else is a roll of the dice. It's not up to me to decide whether it works. That's up to God.

But I preach what I know is true, and it's okay to say that some things are true. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. It's true. Love your neighbor as yourself.

It's true. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. We're saved by the grace of God, His forgiving alone. Jesus Christ is our Lord and our Savior.

These are classic, absolute truths. We can't throw them out the window because somebody doesn't like it. Jesus says, the time will come when you will worship God in spirit and in truth, with the Holy Spirit empowering you to find the truth.

[ 51 : 05 ] You see, if you don't have the Spirit of God in you, if you don't have God working in you, all this stuff is just philosophy. It's just stuff we talk about. It's stuff we study, but it doesn't have any life. The power of God only comes when we receive Christ.

This Bible doesn't do anything but help those of us who already have God living in our lives. The first place is to receive the power of Jesus Christ in your life.

Open up your heart and let Him in. When you do that, then God will lead you to the truth. God will lead you to the right direction. God will help you to understand because that's how we come to know God in spirit and in truth.

People want to know the truth, but pride makes us want to win. Oh, too many times. I was in the South when I was a teenager one time.

We were in West Virginia doing mission work and we had these young guys from the community coming around harassing us and they would call us Yankees.

[ 52 : 09 ] I can't say the word in church. It's not appropriate, but just assume that, you know, some people who don't have Jesus are damned to hell. Oh, I guess I just did say it, right? They would call us darn Yankees, but you know what I'm trying to say, right?

Okay? I know the things you can get in trouble with as a pastor, really, okay? And I looked at them and I said, seriously, guys, you're upset with us.

You do understand how West Virginia came into being. Yeah, we know. We know. No, you don't. Because West Virginia split off of Virginia because it fought with the North.

You fools. You're a bunch of Yankees. You don't know the truth. You're arguing to fight for something you didn't fight for.

But we hold on to it because somebody taught it to us. Somebody showed it to us. Somebody said it to us. Somebody we like. Somebody we respect. But it's just not true. I know the South doesn't like it that they lost.

[ 53 : 13 ] How? How? I hear him saying the South is going to rise again. Well, maybe, but, you know, they're Americans, we're Americans. Let's end the war.

Amen? I think it's over. I think it's over. Christianity is about seeking the truth, not winning. Some of you are going to find that very hard to accept.

Christianity is about seeking the truth and not at all about winning. Actually, Mark said this. If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world and lose their soul? We gain eternal life by giving up who we are.

We take up a cross, not to carry around some burden like some kind of strange thing, but because that cross means we're dying. We're dying to who we are. We're dying to our winning. We're dying to our pride.

[ 54 : 22 ] We're dying to the walls. We're opening our lives up to God because sometimes even in losing, you can win.

But sometimes it takes time to realize it and let it truly sink in. Learning the truth of God is giving God the power and letting God wash over us with living water.

Like waves of motion just flowing over the top of us and washing us new and clean. That's what God wants us to do.

We win when we give up. We succeed when we surrender. We have victory when we lay down ourselves and give ourselves over to God.

You know, one of the odd parts about this story is that Jesus is alone. If you read the Bible, Jesus is never alone. A couple times he tries to get alone and the crowds chase after him.

[ 55 : 33 ] They'll chase him around the lake, they'll chase him up a mountain, they'll chase him everywhere. Jesus is almost never alone in the Bible. That would drive me crazy. I like people, I like you, but you know, give me space, right?

He's alone. He's alone. What do you think would have happened if his disciples were there? What do you think would have happened with this woman? Do you think Jesus and this woman would have had this conversation?

I think they would have said, you don't belong here. Hit the bricks. You're a Samaritan, you're a woman, you have no business with Jesus. Jesus' disciples would have pushed her away from Jesus.

Jesus tells the woman, I know all about you. I know the five guys you've lived with and I know the one you're living with now. And we're still talking. I know you got problems.

I know you got confusion in your life. I know you make mistakes. We're still talking. You might have faults. You might have problems. You might have deficiencies in your life.

[ 56 : 40 ] But Jesus is still talking to you. He accepts us right where we are. Meets us where we are. Respects us. So that the walls can come down and grace can start happening.

In Psalm 118, we read this. The Lord has chastened me severely, but he's not given me over to death. He opened for me the gates of righteousness. I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks for you answered me. You became my salvation.

Knocking down the walls, going through the gates, opening up the walls so that we and others can come to Christ. Christ died so we could live. He was brought low so that we could be lifted up.

He was counted as a criminal so we could be made righteous. He lost so that we could win. Living water of God's grace, that's what baptism's about, remembering that God himself took it away.

[ 57 : 52 ] I keep going to the river to pray because I need something that can wash away pain because I'm messed up too.

I work for a company called Chemlon, lawn care company. We had a big truck and in the winter we could kind of customize our trucks a little bit. And I got a cool idea because I've been watching a TV show called The Dukes of Hazard.

Anybody remember that? So I was going to put a Confederate flag on the side of my truck and I was going to change the horn so it went da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da because that was cool because the Dukes of Hazard were cool, right?

So I was going to pull up the people's houses including in downtown Buffalo all around this region I was going to show up at their house with a truck that went da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da and a rebel flag on the side of my truck.

That would have been smart. Fortunately, I ran out of time before I could paint it down there. Thank you, Jesus. Because that would have been like so offensive.

[ 59 : 03 ] I know we thought The Dukes of Hazard were fun. A couple of guys who broke the law all the time, right? That was a good idea. That was good role models for everybody, right? Drove too fast. Jumped their cars over all kinds of things.

This was a smart thing. Put this show on as a role model for our young men and wonder when they're going to crash their vehicle next. Just saying. But I didn't know that.

I just saw a TV show and I liked it. So I wanted to do that. And I was wrong. It's not the only time I've been wrong. I'm asked all the time.

I know I do. I don't do it on purpose. I don't do it to hurt people. I just do it. We all do it. We get things wrong. And grace says we're forgiven.

But grace also says don't go keep doing those same things again and again. Our pride causes us to hold on to what's wrong even when we know it's wrong.

[ 60 : 04 ] And it keeps others from Jesus. Last week we handed out some slips of paper. There's some actually in the back if you didn't get a chance to do this where we asked people if they would write down a name or two on a slip of paper.

Just one or two. And put it in a basket of people who needed to know about Jesus. So people wrote these names on here. Okay? And if you still want to write a name you can.

They're in the blank ones. They're in the basket back there. And you can put them up here. But what I want you to do this week is I want you to take a name. Take one of the slips. And actually pray for whoever's on there. I picked out Victoria last night.

I don't know who Victoria is. Somebody put her name in. They're just first names. We don't know these people. I don't want to know. I just want to pray for them. But I want you to do one other thing. When you pray for them pray for yourselves as well.

Put your name on the slip. Because you know it's not just people out there that need the grace of Jesus. Right? It's you and me.

[ 61 : 09 ] We're all broken. Some things change. Some things stay the same. Some things are obvious. Some we're not so sure about. Little by little we'll come to the truth. And in the end the only way we find salvation of God is when we let his grace just flow down and cover us over with wonder that only he can get.

amazing grace amazing grace grace a sweet a sound amazing love amazing love now  
flowing down from hands and feet that would nail to the drinking grace and grace close  
down and covers me and me and me and me and me and me and me and me and me  
and me me and me and me and me and me amazing grace how sweet the sound  
amazing amazing love now flowing down hands and feet that would nail to the tree that  
would nail to the tree that would nail to the tree grace flows down and covers me he  
covers me he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he he  
he he he he he he guitar solo

And the following is, it's okay The last thing I need is to be heard But to hear what you  
would say Word of God's feet It'd fall down my grave Washing my eyes to see Your  
majesty Be still and know That you're in this place Please let me stay and rest In your  
holiness Word of God's feet I'm finding myself In the midst of you

Beyond the music Beyond the noise All that I need Is to be with you And in the quiet Hear  
your voice Lord of God sing When you poured out my grave Washing my eyes to see  
Your majesty To be still and know That you're in this place Please let me stay and rest In  
your holiness Word of God's feet In your holiness Word of God's feet When you poured  
out my grave Washing my eyes to see Your majesty Be still and know You're in this place

You're in this place Please let me stay and rest In your holiness Word of God's feet Word  
of God's feet Word of God's feet Word of God's feet Word of God's feet Word of God's feet  
Word of God's feet Word of God's work Word of God's feet Music You are not a God  
created by human hands. You are not a God in any moment. You are not a God in  
freedom. Anything we can give by your plan, that's just the way it is.

[ 68 : 06 ] You are not a God created by human hands. You are not a God in any moment. You are  
not a God in freedom. Anything we can give by your plan, that's just the way it is.

You are God alone from the cold time began. You are on your throne. You are God alone.

And right now, in the good times and bad, you are on your throne. You are God alone.

You are the only God whose power is none can't condemn. You are the only God whose  
name and praise is well with.

You are the only God whose name and praise is well with. Anything we can give by your  
plan, that's just the way it is.

[ 69 : 28 ] You are God alone. You are God alone. You are God alone.

And right now, in the good times and bad, you are on your throne. You are God alone.

You're unchangeable, you're unchangeable, you're unstoppable, that's what you are.

You're unchangeable, you're unchangeable, you're unstoppable, that's what you are.

You are God alone, the Lord I'm making. You are of your heart, you are God alone.

[ 70 : 32 ] And right now, in good times and bad, you are on your own, you are God alone.

You're unchangeable, you're unshakable, you're unstoppable, that's what you are.

God is God. God is God. We're not. God does everything right.

We don't. That doesn't just mean you don't. Neither do your neighbors. Neither do the  
people that live in Dixie. Neither do the people that come from a different neighborhood, or  
different background, or different life.

We all only make it to God through grace. The only thing that the people of this world need  
more of is the grace of God.

[ 71 : 48 ] God. We've got to stop putting up walls to keep out people like the Samaritan woman. And  
rip them down. And open this place up so others can have that grace.

The first place we start is by realizing we're broken. And going to God's gift. So let's pray, shall we? Dear God in heaven, I have sinned.

I do things wrong. I think things wrong. Sometimes when I don't even know it. I worry about winning.

When only you should win. I worry about being right. When only you are right. Forgive me, Lord.

Forgive me for pushing others away. Forgive me when I hate. When I hurt. When I cause pain.

[ 72 : 50 ] Help me to offer grace. As you have given me grace. Forgive me, Lord. Change me. Help me change the world.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Jesus says right now. Put the brokenness behind you. Put the division behind you.

Don't worry if you're sitting next to a Democrat or Republican. The world will go on. Stop worrying about it. People think different than you. It's okay. God still holds the world in his hand. Stop worrying about other people's sins.

And look at your own. Put them in the past. And move on. To a life that really can change you. And change the world. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ. Your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Amen. Like a woman at the well, I was seeking.

[ 74 : 08 ] For things that could not satisfy. And then I heard my Savior speaking.

Draw from my well that never shall run dry. Fill my cup, Lord.

I lift it up, Lord. Come and quench this thirsting of my soul. Bread of heaven.

Need me till I want no more. Fill my cup. Fill it up.

And make me whole. By what he has done for us on the cross. His death and resurrection.

[ 75 : 07 ] We are made whole if we come to him. Everyone is welcome to come to the table and receive what God has for them. Everyone.

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 the table this morning.

Doesn't matter if you're a member or not. Doesn't matter if you're just visiting. Doesn't matter if this is the first day that you have looked up and said, God, I get it.

I know I need you. And I receive Jesus. You are welcome at the table. And God will bless you.

As he blessed every disciple at the table on that last day in the upper room when they met. Before he went to the cross. And when he met after his resurrection with all kinds of people walking.

[ 76 : 10 ] And sitting. And visiting. He met with them and he broke bread. And they were blessed. And Jesus wants to bless you today by breaking bread with you.

So come to the table. And be blessed in all things. The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right. And a good and a joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty.

Creator of heaven and earth. Creator of heaven. 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.

[ 77 : 14 ] We praise your name. And join their unending hymn. Amen. 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. And on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread.

[ 78 : 18 ] And he gave thanks to you. 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 he 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.

[ 79 : 27 ] In union with Christ's offering for us. As we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here. And on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us.

The body and blood of Christ. That we may be for the world. The body of Christ. Redeemed by his blood. By your spirit.

Make us one with Christ. One with each other. And one in ministry to all the world. Until Christ comes. In final victory. And we feast at his heavenly banquet.

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.

[ 80 : 23 ] Shall we pray now. 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. If you still want to take a prayer slip.



And you forgot to do it coming up. I'm going to put them out towards the back of the sanctuary. Because I see there's still a few left here. For people to pray for. So you can take one if you want to. On the way out of the sanctuary. I'm going to invite you now to stand.

[ 81 : 21 ] As we're going to sing to the Lord. It is well with my soul. Amen. When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll.

Whatever my love, thou hast told me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should bow, that the trials should come, That is blessed assurance, control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And has shed his own blood for my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. With my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

[ 83 : 22 ] And Lord, it's the day when my faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll.

The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend. And even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. So I know some of you came into church this morning and go, Really? Somebody's sitting in my seat.

Deal with it. You know, you have to sit somewhere else, A little different perspective. Hopefully this is going to happen a lot. Not because we do one service, But because we keep bringing people to Christ, And so somebody's going to be sitting in your chair a lot.

[ 84 : 37 ] Because that would be a good thing. You should just be happy that everybody didn't show up. You would have been sitting in the kitchen. Go out and be a blessing.

We don't need any more hurt. We don't need any more yelling or pain. We need to hold to things that are important, that are true. And you can do that. But you can do that with grace.

You can do that with love. You can do that with offering to people What Christians are supposed to be. Like the people did down in South Carolina When their children were shot.

And they went and said, I forgive you. That's real grace. You want to know why that flag's coming down? Because the people were so embarrassed They didn't know what to do. When somebody showed such dignity and love and grace In the face of anger and hurt, They said, we've got to do something.

We've got to do something. And 150 years of animosity ended. Because somebody showed grace. Instead of hurt and hate and pain. Preacher of the church said, They thought we were going to riot.

[ 85 : 39 ] They don't know us Christians, do they? Amen. May God bless you and be with you and love you And offer you grace that you might offer to the world. God is peace.

Amen. 2nd a second