

# August 9, 2015

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Date: 09 August 2015

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [ 0 : 00 ]    You stood before creation, eternity in your hand.  
You spoke the earth into motion, my soul now to stand. You stood before my failure and carried a cross for my shame.  
My sin weighed upon your shoulders, my soul now to stand. So what can I say?  
And what can I do? But offer this heart, oh God, completely to you.  
Oh, so I'll walk upon salvation. Your spirit alive in me.
- [ 1 : 27 ]    My life to declare your promise. My soul now to stand. So what can I say?  
And what can I do? But offer this heart, oh God, completely to you.  
Oh, so I'll stand with arms high and heart abandoned.  
In awe of the one who gave it all. I'll stand, my soul, Lord, you surrender.  
All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours.
- [ 2 : 55 ]    All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours. All I am is yours.  
Good morning, everyone. Good morning. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad. And if the kids want to come up and help sing, that would be wonderful. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day.  
This is the day that the Lord has made. Good morning. Welcome to our church.  
We have a gift for our visitors at the Connection site. Please fill out your friendship card for any prayers or concern or just so we can get to know you. It's fun to be part of the welcoming committee here at Hamilton Center.
- [ 4 : 22 ]    We are glad to have you here at the church this morning. If you're a guest with us, we invite you to come and get a gift at our Connection Center this morning. I want to mention that the clipboard opportunities going around, there's two of them.  
One is for First Church for the dinners to help support that if you'd like to. And the other is for flowers and things like that in the sanctuary. Now there's only one of those going around. So if you're really looking for that, you're going to have to find it and start it over there.  
So see if you can hunt that down. This week we're starting Vacation Bible School. We're going to have hundreds of kids and teenagers in here tomorrow morning. We're going to jump. We're going to shout.  
We're going to sing. We're going to dance. We're going to do all kinds of fun things and have a great activity. So keep us all in your prayers and especially that I don't have a heart attack or anything like this or break my leg jumping and dancing and all that kind of stuff.

And if you can help in any way, we'd invite you to do so as well. This Wednesday is the last night for our summer Bible study. If you've been attending that or would like to attend that. And also, something else there isn't there.

[ 5 : 24 ] Oh, if you took over the community mailing that's going out into the community and you're working on that, if you can get that back this week, that would be really helpful for Debbie and our audience. Let's turn to the Lord in prayer, shall we?

Dear God, we do thank you for this morning and we do praise you that you are the great God of all gods. And we are here to worship you, honor you, be blessed by your presence. Fill us, Lord, and touch us with all that you'd have us to do and be this morning.

For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'd like to invite you, if you're able, to stand as we sing together. Grace, greater than our sin. Iest, grace, greater than our sin, and our guilt. Yonder on Calvary's mountathport, there where the flood of the land was filled.

Grace, grace, God's grace. Grace that will pardon and cleanse within. The trees mount up port, there where the blood of the Lamb was filled.

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin.

[ 6 : 36 ] Sin and despair like the sea waves cold threaten the soul with infinite loss. Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin.

Dark is a stain that we cannot hide. What cannot fail to wash it away? Look, there is flowing a crimson tide.

Brighter than snow you may be today. Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within.

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace.

[ 7 : 57 ] Really bestow on all who believe. You that are longing to see His face. Will you this moment His grace receive?

Grace, grace, God's grace. Grace, grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace, God's grace.

Grace that is greater than all our sin. The Lord be with you. I will. Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of His Spirit.

I'd like to invite the kids to come up and join us now.

Come on up.

[ 9 : 18 ] Come on up, guys. Come on up, guys. Come on up. You're not going to come. You know what these are? They are glasses.

I use these glasses to read with. I wear these glasses during the week. And sometimes I wear these glasses.

When I bought these glasses, the guy who sold them to me said, you don't want to buy those glasses. Those glasses are ugly. They're going to make you look goofy.

They're going to make you look like you don't have any class. And I said, no, I want those glasses. They said, they're only \$19.50. I want those glasses. And they said, nobody actually buys those glasses.

We make them ugly on purpose. I said, yeah. But they're huge and they're big. And so when I'm cutting and I'm working on construction projects, they protect my eyes. So that's what I use these for, is for construction.

[ 10 : 16 ] So I look different depending on what I wear, whether I wear certain glasses or I don't wear glasses at all. Do you think that changes who I am? No, not really.

I'm still the same person. You know, we judge people by what they wear and what they look like when actually God only judges us by who we are, what we are as a person. And that's how we should judge other people too.

And if people are good people and people are people that are friendly and loving and kind, we should remember it doesn't matter what they wear. It's just who they are inside that makes the big difference. Okay. What are you thankful for this morning?

You want to share something? For glasses and my family. My mom and dad. My dad. My dad.

My mom and dad. Very good. Hey, Lord, we thank you for the blessings you give to us for our parents and even for glasses that help us to see better. We thank you for the blessings you give to us in every way.

[ 11 : 14 ] Be with us today and always. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If the kids want to stand up, the VBS guides would like to do our hit song for VBS, which is Great Big God, just to give you a little highlight of what we'll be doing all week long.

Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God. And he holds us in his hands.

All right, here we are. Ready? Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God.

And he holds us in his hands. He is higher than a skyscraper. And he's deeper than a summer. He is wider than the universe.

And beyond my wildest dreams. And he's known me, and he's known me since the whole world began. How wonderful to be a part of God's amazing plan.

[ 12 : 19 ] How wonderful to be a part of God.

God is a great big God.

Our God is a great big God. And he holds us in his hands. Our God is a great big God.

Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God. And he holds us in his hands. One more time. Our God is a great big God And He holds us in His hands All the kids can go out to Sunday School now if they'd like to And I am thankful for VBS We're going to have so many kids here And I'm thankful for our teenagers Who are willing to help with it So far Good morning As you can see we're getting ready for Vacation Bible School

You may have noticed that we've taken over the entire building Because we have I'd like to just point out the fact that These are all teenage volunteers here They are the heart and soul of our program Because we need so many I am praying for 250 kids each day this year So if you would pray along with me That would be wonderful Last year I think we averaged about 220-230 Every year I like to go up a little bit Every year we like to enhance our program We created the middle elementary program last year This year we're not creating any new programs That will probably be in a year or two About the time we get comfortable with this We'll need to expand So I just want to thank you in advance For your support for Vacation Bible School Because I have never had a year here Where we have asked for something And not got it Okay?

[ 15 : 28 ] You support us with food and snacks And financial support So thank you in advance for all you do To help this program take place Here in our church Thank you all There is an envelope in your bulletin If the Spirit has moved you To put in an offering for the VBS programs We are thankful for all of our volunteers Adults, youth, this entire church For its continued support And God has blessed each and every one of us In many ways As we reflect on our wonderful blessings from God Let's return our gifts, tithes, and offerings to the Lord The Lord The Lord The Lord The Lord The Lord O Lord The Lord O Lord You searched me You searched me

You know my way Even when I fail you I know you love me I know you love me Your holy presence Surrounding me In every season I know you love me I know you love me

At the cross I bow my knee Where your blood was shed for me There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave Your glory fills the highest place What can separate me now?

You go before me You shield my way And your hand upholds me I know you love me I know you love me I know you love me At the cross I bow my knee Where your blood was shed for me Where your blood was shed for me Where your blood was shed for me There's no greater love There's no greater love There's no greater love There's no greater love

There's no greater love You have overcome the grave Your glory fills the highest place What can separate me now?

[ 19 : 20 ] You tore the veil You tore the veil You made a way When you said that it is done You tore the veil You made a way When you said that it is done You tore the veil You made a way When you said that it is done And when the earth fades Falls from my eyes And your stand before me And you'll stand before me.

I know you love me. I know you love me.

At the cross I bow my knee. Where your blood was shed for me. There's no greater love than this.

You have overcome the grave. Your glory fills the highest place. What can separate me now?

I know you love me. I know you love me.

[ 21 : 20 ] I know you love me.

I know you love me.

I know you love me. I know you love me. I know you love me. These gifts, Lord, are in response to your goodness. And we pray that it will be a blessing in this world in your name.

Amen. Please be seated. I'm going to invite the mission trip kids to come on up. And while the mission trip kids are coming up, I just want to tell you a couple of things that are going on in our church.

Bob Dimick made it through his surgery okay. So that's good news. Please continue to keep him in prayer. People are in rehab and going through lots of things. So please keep our whole congregation in prayer.

[ 22 : 55 ] Sam and Diana Fritz are now grandparents. They just had a baby Noah Samuel. So Elizabeth is a proud mommy now. And we have, as a wonderful joy, just sharing a little bit about our mission trip.

Is Allie here? Give me a second. Good morning.

Good morning. My name is Allison Chatley, and this year I went on my second mission trip. I had been looking forward to going again this year because I had so much fun on my first one. But as the time for us to leave was getting closer, I started to get more nervous.

There were new, different people going, and old friends weren't going to be able to make it. So I was afraid I wasn't going to be as fun as last year. I'm glad I was wrong. After even just the first day of driving and going to do free Slurpees at 7-Eleven, I saw myself getting along with people who I hadn't thought I would even talk to.

As everyone began to open up to each other, I saw God at work. We all bonded over the smallest things, corny jokes, taking breaks to eat chocolate when a log to the cabin didn't fit, and singing along to Jade playing her guitar at bonfires.

[ 24 : 06 ] I'm also thankful for the adults who went on the mission trip, especially Pastor Sherry. There were times when building those log cabins that everyone was frustrated and just wanted to get it done. But she kept us smiling, laughing, and I think I can speak for all of us when I say how proud we were that the cabins were flush and lovely.

So thank you, Pastor Sherry. Finally, at the end of each day when we were all sitting around the bonfire, we would share God moments, which were times when we saw him that day in whatever we were doing. I think I can say without a doubt in my mind that I saw God every day on that week in Boyne Falls, Michigan.

And I thank God not only that I left with wonderful friends and memories, but a family that I will cherish and remember forever. And I'm so looking forward to next year. Thank you. Thank you. So just a recap of some of the things that we did.

We went to Boyne Falls, Michigan, and some of the projects there, we worked on the camp itself, and my team was there all week, and we built two log cabins.

So imagine heavy logs over your head on scaffolding with sledgehammers, and it was heavy, heavy work. We also had a group that went to the Bergman Center, which was, it's a facility for the mentally handicapped, and they tore apart a roof and rebuilt the roof.

[ 25 : 20 ] They built a shed from scratch. They painted with two coats, two bathrooms, and a huge office. And they also there were able to just really connect and spend time with the people that go to the Bergman Center.

They sang with them. They prayed with them. They had a good time with them, and they made a huge impact. The other place that we went to was Gail's house, and Gail was a mom who was, her grandma actually, trying to raise two granddaughters on her own and way, way, way, way behind.

And we helped starting from the outside going in, and we took apart her yard, at least 15 to 20 big truckloads full of just garbage, and then another 15 to 20 trailer loads full of yard debris.

And so we mowed, we created gardens, we fixed part of her roof, we fixed the windowsill and the soffit and the fascia, and we painted everything, and we made the new door, and we fixed the one entryway that was literally floor-to-ceiling garbage and hauled it all out for her.

And she prayed with us, and she was in tears, and she was praising God because of our teenagers, and you would be so proud. They made such an impact on everyone who was around them.

[ 26 : 37 ] They kept coming up and telling us just how wonderful these kids are. They assumed they were college students, and they said they've never seen teenagers this hardworking, this respectful, this kind.

And again, you would be so proud. So thank you for your continued support with the mission trip, and thank you to kids for participating in this. Thank you. Our teenagers are awesome.

We do have things on our hearts, and I'd like to go to the Lord in prayer. Lord, we pray that you will be with us this morning, that we may hear your spirit within our souls and move us to know you more.

We pray for our world that is broken. There are wars and rumors of wars, and we often don't know how to respond. But we know you're here, and you're in us, and you're praying.

We are praying desperately for you to break out in a huge way across the world that you may be known, and peace will happen. We know it won't happen without you. We pray for a nation that is so divided and struggling with right decisions, and we pray for peace and wisdom, guidance.

[ 27 : 59 ] We pray for our church, that you will be in our midst, that you will help us to know the right way to go in furthering your kingdom. Continue to bless this church, Lord, to be a blessing in this world, to be a blessing on families, on children, on youth, and within this church, help us all to grow stronger as guides and mentors for those who are younger than us and looking up to us, for example, in Christ's ways.

We pray for our families. Many are struggling and broken, and we know that you can be there and do repair, and it won't happen without you, Lord.

And I pray that families that are struggling will turn to you and grow closer to you and one another, that healing may happen. We pray for many individuals, Lord, that are hurting and struggling in their body.

May healing happen. Be with doctors. Be with nurses. Be with the families that are struggling right along their side. Give them your presence and your peace. We pray for people who are struggling in their soul, who need to know you more, that they may be drawn to you and that we may be able to be a witness in your name.

inspire us to know when to move, when to act, and help us to hear you more. In Jesus' name we pray.

[ 29 : 24 ] Amen. And now let us turn to the scriptures. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. I'm so blessed to be up here today. I've always wanted to do this. I'm very nervous. Good morning. Good morning. Our scripture reading today is from Luke chapter 14, verses 15 through 24.

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God. Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready. But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, I have just bought a field and I must go and see it.

Please excuse me. Another said, I have just bought five yoke of oxen and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me. Still another said, I just got married, so I can't come.

[ 30 : 45 ] The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

Sir, the servant said, What you ordered has been done, but there is still room. Then the master told his servant, Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in so that my house will be full.

I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Jeff.

The past few weeks, we've been talking about the things that block people from coming to the church of God, that we have this incredible garden of God behind a wall and we do things to keep them out.

But for the next few weeks, I want to talk about the things that we actually do as Christians that aren't quite right. Our garden is a little bit broken. So I want to talk about how we can fix our lives, fix our church, so that this fall, we can speak about how God can work his miracle power in our lives.

[ 31 : 59 ] This particular parable, historically, has been understood as being about the Jewish people who refused God's grace when Jesus came. And so God opened up his grace to the whole world, to the people that were called Gentiles, those who weren't Jewish at the time.

The Jews were rich and revealed truth. They had the scriptures. They were blessed by God. The Gentiles were spiritually bankrupt. They were blind. They were poor in their opportunities for revelation.

They were crippled in their relationship with God. And so they talk about this as if this is the purpose of the parable, but if that were the case, then its whole meaning would have ended a couple thousand years ago because at this point in time, we're the church.

We're the people of God. So what is God trying to say to us? Especially what is God trying to say to the church? I grew up going to church.

I grew up in a church in Snyder, New York. I was from Cheektowaga. Everyone in our church seemed like they were better dressed. They all seemed to have more money.

[ 33 : 05 ] They all seemed to have different kind of jobs that weren't quite the type of jobs we had. It seemed like we somehow were from the wrong place, the wrong school, the wrong location in life.

Sometimes I'd go out into our fellowship hall and we'd just look around to see if there's anybody who would talk to us, anybody who wanted to say hello to us. It was a large church.

It was easy to get lost in a church like that. Sometimes I felt like I didn't belong, like I didn't measure up, like I didn't belong there at the church.

And I would have loved to have somebody invite me to visit with them. Maybe go to dinner together. Maybe talk. Maybe just have an opportunity. It doesn't have to be a banquet like this.

Just something somewhere. My wife has a bird feeder in our backyard. I don't know how many of you have birds, but they attract these little tiny birds, finches and such, just sparrows, and they cluster around and they eat the food.

[ 34 : 13 ] Sometimes they pick at each other a little bit, but let one of the blue jays or a crow or something show up, and all those little birds will go after the big one, chasing them out of the yard.

It's kind of an odd sight to see this huge bird chased away by these little ones, but if you've ever been the awkward, odd bird owl, it's an uncomfortable feeling.

And they hold up like this.

It's creepy that he's also living his PKiczon. Oh. Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh.

[ 35 : 43 ] Oh. Oh. Oh. I sometimes thought we should show this video at the beginning of every church worship service.

We're invited to a banquet by God himself, a great banquet where we'll be blessed for all eternity. Many are invited, it says, because God wants really everybody there.

The problem with this banquet is it doesn't have a set time. So imagine you're invited to a party and they say, we'll let you know when it is. And you say, well, yeah, yeah, I want to come.

And then you don't hear about it for a while. And you get busy. This last week I was invited to have a meal with three different people that I had to tell no.

One of them was a 10 year old boy who was making dinner for me. And I had to say, I'm sorry, I wish I knew, but I've got dinner plans, I was like, I'm going to go back to this at home.

[ 36 : 54 ] How do you tell a 10 year old boy who was making dinner for you? No. Sometimes it just comes at the most inconvenient time. They were all trying to do me a favor.

Each one of them was trying to provide me with some sort of a meal or a time of fellowship or a time to get together. It's the kind of thing I really wanted to do. But I had to say no.

God wants to do us a favor. He's invited us to a party for all eternity. One that we don't even deserve to go to. Eternal joy.

Eternal joy. It's not a right. It's not something everybody gets just for existing. It's a gift from God. It's what we call grace. See, really, none of us are good enough to be in God's presence.

In Romans chapter 3 it says, Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There's nobody who's perfect. Not one who measures up. Not you, not me, not anyone.

[ 37 : 57 ] And further in Romans it says that the penalty of sin is death. The penalty of sin is death. And yet God has given a gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It's a gift that God gives to us. That's what grace is. Most people don't understand grace. Most people don't even understand life. They don't understand God. This man stands up and says, Blessed are those who feast at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven.

What does it mean to live a blessed life? For most people in our culture, we think living a blessed life is to win good fortune, a good job, and a good family.

If you've got those three men, we'd say you are blessed. Things are good for you. You've got a good life. These people told them they couldn't come to the banquet.

And the reason was because of work, family, and prosperity. I just bought a new piece of property. I've got to go see what it looks like. If you're the kind of person, by the way, who buys things without seeing them, we could make a deal.

[ 39 : 16 ] I've got a new pair of oxen. You have no idea what this will mean to my business. I have to go try them out. Same thing. I just found the love of my life.

I'd rather spend time with her than partying with you, God. They're excuses, obviously. Nobody goes out and buys something like a pair of oxen.

This would be like buying a new car without driving it. We're not coming. Many won't come to the banquet. They'll be invited, but they're going to miss it. And they're not just going to miss it for a little while. They're going to miss it for all eternity. That's a shame. The truth of the matter is, God doesn't send anybody away from eternal life.

They just choose not to go. That's the sad part. Because, you see, they think they're already at the banquet. They think they're already finding the purpose of life.

They're successful. They're successful. They're successful. They're going to miss it. They're not just going to miss it for a little while. They're not just going to miss it for a little while. They're going to miss it for all eternity. That's a shame.

[ 40 : 15 ] The truth of the matter is, God doesn't send anybody away from eternal life. Finding the purpose of life, they're successful. They're prosperous. They've got a good job.

They've got a good family. Things are good. 1 Corinthians 13, verse 1, starts out by saying, If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I don't have love, I'm nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.



We can have all the gifts, all the abilities that make people go, Wow, we could be so good we'd get on America's Got Talent and make it through the third round. But if we don't have love, agape love, the love of God, the love of people, what's the point?

There's nothing wrong with success. Don't hear me criticizing that. There's nothing wrong with being wealthy. There's nothing wrong with having a good job. There's nothing wrong with having a good family.

Those are blessings. But they're not the blessing. They're just something we do here until we get to the real experience.

[ 41 : 25 ] Success in life is to experience joy, to experience acceptance, to experience love, or in other words, to have grace.

Nehemiah talked about banqueting together. In chapter 8 he said, Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks. Send some to those who have nothing prepared.

This day is sacred to our Lord. Don't grieve, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. Being with God, celebrating with God, is supposed to be a time of joy.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Say rejoice. Rejoice. Yeah, some of you look like you're ready to go to sleep. See, that's the problem.

Too often church feels like, ah, let's go take a nap. Boring. You know, why is it boring to be with God, to be with people we love, to celebrate about God?

[ 42 : 23 ] The joy of the Lord is our strength. Not the misery. Not the criticism. Not the judging of people. Not getting everything perfect, standing up just when you're supposed to, sitting down when you're not.

Don't move the wrong way. That's not joy. That's a chore. And no wonder people aren't interested in that. I wouldn't want to go to that banquet either. Have you ever been to a boring party?

I have. I shouldn't say that, but I have. The best banquets aren't the ones that come off perfect, by the way. The best banquets aren't the ones where they have all these special things and special attractions and gadgets and widgets and things for you to do.

The best parties of all are the ones where you get to spend some time with the person who invited you. I've gone to parties where they've had spectacular opportunities for you to do something to have fun.

But if the host or hostess, the people that invited me, didn't come around, my wife will say, Boy, why didn't they come around? I felt like there was no reason to even go.

[ 43 : 30 ] And I've gone to parties that have nothing, just people sitting in a room. And I've had a wonderful time visiting and talking with people and spending the time. It's about being with the people we love.

That creates joy. Church is supposed to be a place of joy, of love, of celebrating God. Say, rejoice again.

Rejoice. It's good for you. It makes you feel better. And when you go to church, you're supposed to feel better. Not worse. This is only a taste of the banquet feast. Don't misunderstand.

This isn't as good as it gets. Pastor Tom sharing some story is not as good as it gets. Let me tell you, God is better. We've given the wrong image. We've also given the image that churches somehow says to us that we need to be a better.

God says to us that we have to be perfect. We have to impress other people. We have to be dressed just so. We have to stand just so. We have to act just so. We have to have certain behaviors.

[ 44 : 35 ] Behind the wall was a garden. This isn't the garden, by the way. The garden is back here. I don't know if you can see it. It's kind of messed up. The problem with a real garden is real gardens have problems.

They have difficulties. They have weeds. They have bugs. They have things that don't work right. If you want to have a perfect garden, you just get fake flowers. It's the truth. They'll be perfect.

Always. Out at Silver Lake, we have some real flowers in the garden down below. But up above in our flower boxes, we have fake flowers.

Those babies bloom in December. But I've got to tell you, nobody goes by and says, look at those incredible fake flowers. They look at the real flowers that Jackie grows down below.

They have problems. There's something wrong with them. They're not perfect. But they're alive. They're full of vitality. They smell. They feel. You have a sense that there's something important about this.

[ 45 : 33 ] And it's the same thing with churches. It's the same thing with God's kingdom. It's about having all sorts of different types of people. We have to have people in our world who think that they're good.

I've had people say that to me. Well, I'm a good person. No, you're not. You're not. You're not. I hate to really burst your bubble. You're not good. None of you are. Neither am I. Don't hear me criticizing you.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And that's the problem. When we think we're good, we start to look at other people.

We start to compare to them. We start to believe that somehow we're good enough to make a claim on God for eternity. That we can say to God, you've got to give me eternal life because I'm good.

But you're not good. You see the problem? You're really not. None of us are. We're broken. And so he said, go out and find the marginalized people.

[ 46 : 39 ] The lame, the weak, the broken. The ones that people cast aside. Invite them and they're real people. Christianity isn't about perfection. It's about forgiveness.

That's what grace is. Grace is God saying, I know you're not good enough, but guess what? I'll take you anyway. Do you follow?

That's such a relief. See, unlike some people who think they're good, I know I'm not. I know I'm broken. I know I'm messed up. I know that whatever I put out here is just a facade for what's really bad here.

And by the way, that's the way it is with most people who are Christians. So we confess our brokenness. We do it every week in church, but we should do it every day in our lives.

God, I'm broken. I need your grace. God, the greatest host ever, the greatest being ever, accepts us and says, it's okay.

[ 47 : 53 ] Come on in to my party. Don't care what you dress like. Don't care what you look like. Don't care what you've done. Let's have a good time.

In Mark chapter eight, verse 35, it said, if you try to save your life, you'll lose it. But if you give up your life for Christ's sake, you'll save it.

When we try to win, we lose. But when we stop trying to win and let go and let God do what he wants to do for us, that's when we really win.

So here's what happens. We receive that grace. And grace tells us also that we're not supposed to keep on sinning. In fact, in the Bible, Jesus said, go and sin no more. We're supposed to try to do better.

So we were to try and do better. But then we start to think. So the key is to get rid of the sin in our lives and get rid of the sinners in our churches. You see how that all kind of gets messed up?

[ 48 : 56 ] And we forget who we are. And we start living like the like the plastic people. All we got to do is get rid of the weirdos, the problem people, the gawky people.

The big birds that are sitting on the wire. And that will be fine. Okay. There we go. We go to the little three. That's how our souls are dying!

The door \*\* vibrate bateria\*\* \*\* dinarel and \*\* breathing según in■■■■■■■■ start \*\* chirping, \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* Every week we should see that.

See, grace is God's gift given to us. But so that we can offer grace to others. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul says to us, God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him.

[ 51 : 04 ] So all the little birds who thought they were so special and so perfect find themselves having to hide behind the big, gawky, strange bird. Paul was concerned about the Jewish people.

He knew that they had rejected the grace of God, but he felt that somewhere in their hearts, they must, because they were seeking God, have the possibility of regaining grace.

So he writes about it in the 11th chapter of Romans, where he says this, Just as you Gentiles who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so now they too, the Jews, have now become disobedient in order that they may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.

Or in other words, it's been turned around. The very people that thought they were perfect, that thought that they had the grace of God, all sewed up, now need to recognize their need for God and what grace really is.

Sometimes we can get so full of ourselves and so certain that everybody else is broken that we don't really see that the problem can be right in our own lives and hearts. We went on this mission trip to Michigan.

[ 52 : 21 ] It was sort of a punt. We kind of picked it at the last minute because the people in Tennessee couldn't take us. So Sherry called up some people there, and they said that we could come to the camp.

We had to work on these log cabins that they've reduced the rate because we couldn't afford their camp. And Sherry kept saying, we want to work in the community too. And basically the guy who ran it was more or less saying, no, I'm giving you a deal to work at our camp, you know, and giving her a lot of trouble.

In fact, he wasn't even very nice. And when we got there, he wasn't nice either. It was pretty rough, kind of short, almost like he didn't want us there.

He introduced us to the guy in charge of maintenance who was supposed to arrange all the projects, a guy named Mike. And Mike didn't seem very happy to have us either. You can imagine why.

Who needs a bunch of teenagers hanging around that are supposed to do work, and we all know that they'll spend three hours working, and then they'll take off to go swimming, and I'm going to spend more time and invest more money and effort in these kids than I'm going to get out of them.

[ 53 : 27 ] But they lined up the work. The first day, they hovered over Sherry's crew at the camp, watched every single thing they did, wouldn't let them hardly do any work because they had to make sure they would do it perfect.

They sent a guy out to watch us, too, on our site. They had given us a whole week's worth of work. By the second day, they left Sherry alone. They realized she could do it better than the guys they had assigned to her.

And they found out that we were done with our week's work by Tuesday afternoon, and they didn't know what to do with that. All of a sudden, we found ourselves with a lot more work, and we did the work, but that wasn't what really changed.

These two guys changed. They want to hang around with our kids. One came down to our campfire to hang out with us, talk to us, tell us stories, just be with us.

The other one took the kids out for ice cream, smiled and laughed. Changed. Because of the way they were treated. In fact, one fellow in charge said to me, you need to tell the kids how lucky they are to have some kids to grow up with that they've known all their lives to be so close to.

[ 54 : 37 ] And I said, these kids don't know each other. They don't even all come from the same church. Most of them have no idea who all these people are that they're with. They just decided to forget all these rules that the world has put in place and just live the way God calls us to live.

And accept everybody. Even the ones that everybody else may not. See, the truth is, when we act like Christians, when we give love, when we offer the grace we've received from God, it comes back our way.

And people change. The goal is to build a banquet of acceptance. Of love, of forgiveness, and of joy. Success is great.

I'm all for it. It's sort of like the icing on the cake. But the real heart of it all is in God's love and acceptance and joy. Back at that church I grew up in, there was this older couple.

We were probably all of about 20, 21 years old. Poor as church mice. That's an interesting statement, isn't it? Yeah, and we had nothing.

[ 55 : 58 ] And this couple who seemed to have everything, they were old people. I bet you they were in their 50s. And they came up to us and invited us to their house.

Carolyn Clarence, I remember them to this day. And you have no idea how excited we were to be invited just to dinner. They just thought they were just having this young couple over for dinner.

We were like, we have arrived. Somebody in church knows us, realizes we exist. You need to understand, I was baptized in that church.

I grew up in that church. I was confirmed in that church. I was married. But until I was in my 20s, I never felt like anybody said we were okay.

Until one couple decided to invite us and offer us grace. Didn't take everyone. And it won't take this little church to change somebody's lives.

[ 56 : 59 ] It just takes one of them to make something special happen. Now here's the real concern. Time is running out. Time is running out.

You know, it says it got kind of angry. The guy who was running the bank got kind of angry because people didn't show up. They ignored him. They dissed him. Have you ever had that happen? Have you ever given a party and the people don't come? I've done that.

Jackie and I have had those parties. And we get all the preparations. We do all the work. We send out the invitations. People say they're coming. And then they don't come. It's devastating. It's hurtful.

It says we don't really think you matter. So I try to go to every party again. I don't want to see the disappointment.

You know how hard it was to tell a 10-year-old boy, I won't come to your house for dinner? He knows I care about him. I gave him up yesterday. I don't care about him. It's hard.

[ 58 : 04 ] So God says, go out and find some other people that will come. Go out and get a lot of people. And people started responding. And he says, how are we doing?

And the guy said, well, the house isn't full yet. He says, go and wait some more. My house will be full. You know what that tells me? There's a number. I don't know what the number is. It's a big number.

But there's a number. Something else you might need to know about banquet. If you have a banquet, there's only so many you can invite. And when it's full, it's full. You can't invite anymore. I'm worried.

Because I think the banquet hall is getting full. Remember, this was written a couple thousand years ago. Since that time, we've had a whole lot of people being born. And we've got billions in this world today.

And I'm a little worried that the banquet hall is getting full and the people I care about, people that are out there doing their thing, worrying about their jobs, worrying about their success, worrying about everything but God, are going to be on the outside when that day comes.

[ 59 : 08 ] So it might feel awkward. It might even make you feel like that strange bird. But sometimes we just need to be the one that stands out, the one that shows up, the one that takes a moment to send the invitation.

We got some invitations, by the way, by the door. Handed them out last week, church. You know it says that if you invite somebody to church, 80% of them will come. That's how much they think of you.

And you can make the difference in what they think about God. You stood before creation Eternally in your hand You spoke the earth into motion My soul bound to stand You stood before my failure And carried the cross for my shame My sick weight upon your shoulders My soul bound to stand

What can I say? What can I do?

What can I do?

[ 61 : 18 ] What can I do?

I completely live in you I'll stand with arms high And heart of branding In awe of the one who gave it all I'll stand my soul My soul, Lord, you surrender All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours In your love I'll stand My soul Lord you surrender All I am is yours

All I am is yours All I am is yours All I am is yours Amazing grace How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost But now I'm found Was blind But now I see T'was grace that taught My heart to fear And grace my fears relieved How precious did that grace so fear The hour I first believed My chains are gone I've been set free My God, my Savior Has ransomed me And like a flood His mercy waits Unending love Amazing grace

The Lord has promised To me The Lord my own secures He will He will My shield And portion As long as Time endures My chains are gone I've been set free My God, my Savior Has ransomed me And like a flood And like a flood His mercy waits And like a flood His mercy waits Amazing grace My chains are gone

[ 65 : 57 ] I've been set free My God, my Savior Has transformed me And like a flood His mercy remains Unending love Amazing grace The earth shall soon Dissolve like snow The sun forever to shine But God who called me Here below Will be forever mine Will be forever mine

You are forever mine One day when heaven Was filled with His praises One day once it was As black as could be Jesus came for a dew Be born of a virgin Dwelt upon men My example is He We're big and glad What shined among us His glory revealed Living He loved me

Dying He saved me Buried He carried My sins far away Rising in justified freely forever One day he's coming, O glorious day O glorious day One day they led him on Calvary's mountain One day they led him to die on a tree Suffering anguish, despised and rejected Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He And their new nation set down on a tree Took the nails from me, living He loved me

Dying He saved me, buried He carried My sins far away Rising in justified freely forever One day he's coming, O glorious day O glorious day One day the break would Sealed him no longer One day the stone rolled away from the door Then he arose over death he had conquered Now he's ascended, my Lord evermore Death could not hold him, the grave could not keep him From rising again

Living He loved me, dying He saved me Carried He carried my sins far away Rising in justified freely forever One day he's coming, O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day One day the trumpet will sound for his coming One day the trumpet will sound for his coming One day the skies in His glories will shine Wonderful day my beloved one praying My Savior Jesus is mine Living He loved me, dying He saved me

[ 71 : 16 ] Buried He carried my sins far away Rising He justified freely forever One day he's coming, O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day O glorious day Amen Amen Please be seated So we're a room full of broken people That's the first start to getting fixed Recognize we all got problems, every one of us We don't have to be perfect We just have to know where the source of perfection is We turn our sins over to God

And God removes them And we go to the banquet Let's pray, shall we? Dear God in heaven I have sinned You know I have sinned You've seen my sin You've heard my sin I have sinned Forgive me Take away my brokenness Teach me to sin no more Then I might represent you With love With grace With gratitude Bless me Lord Share grace with others As you have shared it with me For it's in Jesus' name we pray Amen None of us

Can do it alone With God all of us Can do it That's something to rejoice about Say rejoice Rejoice That's something to be happy about To celebrate about We can all go to the banquet You just punched your ticket It's time to go God says Confess Repent And he forgives And forgets everything And you start here today In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen Jesus Glover of my soul Jesus I will never let you go You've taken me

From the miry clay You've taken my feet Upon the rock And now I know I love you I need you Though my world may fall I'll never let you go My Savior My closest friend I will worship you Until the very end I love you I need you Though my world may fall I'll never let you go My Savior My closest friend I will worship you Until the very end

And every week we invite people to come to the table It doesn't matter if you've come to church all your life Or you just started coming today You're welcome at the table And most weeks a pastor puts on a robe like this And you might wonder why do we do that We do that because This is to symbolize that we disappear You see the truth of the matter is There's not a single person in this place That has the right Coming off of this table None of us are good enough You think I feel good enough to stand here And proclaim God's grace to you I know who I am So we put on the robe Tell us We become less And God becomes more Because this is his table He's the one who made the invitation Not me So you're all welcome You're all invited to come Experience grace The presence

[ 76 : 25 ] And take God Into your lives The Lord be with you Lift up your hearts Let us give thanks to the Lord our God It is right It's a good and joyful thing Always and everywhere to give thanks to God Because God is the source of everything Everything Even the things we think are our success Are really just God Doing his thing for us and through us And so with all the people on earth And all the angels in heaven We praise his name And join their unending hymn saying 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 Blessed are you And blessed is your son Jesus Christ He came into this world to offer grace To give love To teach

To heal And for that The good religious people Beat him Rejected him Mocked him Hung him on a cross And killed him It's amazing what people do In the name of God A God they really don't know And yet He could have Called down the angels To destroy the world But instead Offered grace On the night In which he was betrayed He took the bread He gave thanks to God And he broke the bread He gave it to his disciples And he said Take and eat This is my body Which is broken for you For the forgiveness of sin Eat of this Remembering me When the supper was over He took the cup He gave thanks to God And he gave it to his disciples And he said Drink from this all of you This is my blood Of the new covenant It's poured out For you and for many For the forgiveness of sins Drink of this Remembering me And so in remembrance

Of these mighty acts In Jesus Christ We offer ourselves Both in praise And in thanksgiving As a holy And living sacrifice In union with Christ Offering for us As we proclaim The mystery of faith Christ has died Christ has risen Christ will come again Pour out your Holy Spirit On us gathered here On these gifts Of bread and cup Make them be for us The body and blood of Christ That we might be to the world The body of Christ Redeemed by his grace And power Bless us Lord To be a blessing To all those around us That all might come To know the love Of wonder The power Of the grace Of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior In whose name we pray Amen And now as Jesus Taught his disciples To pray Let us join together In 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 For those who are Assisting with serving Comfort at this time Please Amen Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 81 : 11 ] Thank you. If you're invited to join us at the table at the rail for prayers for healing, light a candle, come and join us.

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.

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

[ 82 : 13 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 84 : 53 ] 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. Since Jesus came into my heart, since Jesus came into my heart, floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows grow.

Since Jesus came into my heart, see you smiling.

That's what it's supposed to be like in the banquet of God. Go out of here with a smile on your face and the blessings of God in your heart and share that with somebody that they come to the banquet to.

[ 86 : 38 ] May God bless you. May God be with you. May God give you his joy today and always. Amen.