

May 22, 2016

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Date: 22 May 2016

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad. If any kids would like to come up and join us, you're welcome to join us singing. This is the day that the Lord has made.

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

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

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.

[1 : 31] It's fun to be part of the welcoming committee here at Hamilton Center. We are glad to have you all here this morning. I wanted to just mention the two clipboard ministry opportunities.

One is for the retreat in the fall, which we talked about last week. If you want to know more about that, talk to Pastor Gene. We're signing people up now for it because we need to make reservations.

The other one is for a rummage sale. Somebody's going to say, we just had a rummage sale. This is a different kind of rummage sale. We collect things that we don't want or can't use anymore. We take them to Niagara Falls.

We put them in the parking lot with no prices on them. And people come and give us whatever they think they can afford. So this is really more to get stuff we have that we don't need, the people who can use it.

I did want to also mention tonight at our Niagara Falls Church at 630, there's a praise concert, a variety of different types of music. If you want to come down and join us in that, we'd love to have you there for that celebration.

[2 : 28] This Wednesday is the last Wednesday night program we're having for the season. So we won't be having our regular meals and Bible studies and such and that until the fall again. And one last thing.

This is an important one. Next week, the worship hours change. Anybody know what they're going to be? 9 o'clock and 1030. Yes. So come at 9 or 1030 and that will go until Labor Day.

Somebody said, that's just my sneaky way of getting rid of the 815 service. I said, no, it's not. We're going to bring that all back to the normal services in the fall. It's just that in the summertime, the crowds are a little smaller.

So we put them together and it makes it feel a little more comfortable. We're glad to have you all here with us this morning. Let's turn our hearts and our souls to the Lord in prayer. Dear Lord, we thank you for today and we pray your special blessings upon us.

That in all we do and all we are, you'll be a part of our lives and fill us with your Holy Spirit. Help us to be your people, Lord, to praise you and worship you in the way you would desire.

- [3 : 26] For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'd like to invite you to stand if you're able as we're going to sing together. We have a story to tell to the nations. That children their hearts do right. We have a story to tell to the nations.
- That children their hearts do right. A story of truth and mercy. A story of peace and heart.
- A story of peace and light. For the darkness shall turn to the dawn and the dawning to noonday bright.
- And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth. The kingdom of love and light. We have a story of peace and light.
- We have a message to give to the nations. That the Lord who reigneth above. And sent us his one to save us.
- [4 : 45] And show us that God is love. And show us that God is love. For the darkness shall turn to the dawn and the dawning to noonday bright.
- And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth. The kingdom of love and light. We have a savior to show to the nations.
- Who the path of sorrow hath trod. That all of the world's great peoples. Might come to the truth of God.
- Might come to the truth of God. For the darkness shall turn to the dawning. And the dawning to noonday bright.
- And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth. The kingdom of love and light. The Lord be with you.
- [5 : 59] Take a moment if you will and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit. All right. All right. All right.
- That's fine. All right.
- All right. All right. All right. All right. Come up and join us now.
- Any kids who aren't with the frocks come out over here. Any other kids want to come up with us?
- They're confused. That's okay. They're confused. That's okay. They're confused. That's okay. They're confused. That's okay.
- [6 : 55] There was some toy, a girl proclaimed by your clothes. wife and wife and wife and wife and wife. And found it neither comic have been judged. And found it on her lips are found on earth.
- Only Matthew, Mother's wall is found on earth. And assigned to Lama, she has passed on earth. Not a worker, crossingDO, but This was a worker for achtergr He had a plan that he was building a house, a house that was brand new.
- So he looked around, found a piece of ground, and he kept the lips so he could go, he'd live in all the news.
- So he looked around, found a piece of ground, and he built his house and settled down, till one of them was a great great point for himself.
- And the house that shook him above all the wind, and the rain does came up for him. And the house that strived to give him a spin, and the little blue times there, Damn, damn, hit the ship's in the sand, Damn, damn, and the house fell down, oh yeah, with a mighty roar.
- [8 : 15] There was no sunset, Damn, damn, hit the ship's in the sand, Damn, damn, and the house fell down, oh yeah, with a mighty roar.
- There was no sunset, Damn, damn, and the little blue times there, Damn, damn, and the little blue times there, Damn, damn, and the little blue times there, There was a man, he had a plan, that he would build in a house, a house that was brand new.

So he looked around, found a piece of ground, and he said to himself, He said to himself, But he looked around, and he built his house and settled down, That he built his house and settled down, Till one of them was a great point for him, Can't find, find, down.

But the house was warm in the top top And I'd only go drop a ring at it And the family one shall tie to quite take with it Cause it was built on rock Black grass, it was solid rock Black grass, there is nothing there I can't out of my house, built on rock Cause it was built on rock Black grass, it was solid rock Black grass, there is nothing there I can't out of my house, built on rock That was terrific.

Come on up guys, all the rest of the kids can come join us now. You know what these are? Tools. They are tools.

[10:11] Do you know what they're used for? Building stuff Building stuff Fixing stuff You know what I use them mostly for? Making friends. Yeah, did you know that?

You can use tools to make friends. Somebody tells me their roof is broken, this tool will help Somebody tells me they need electrical work done, this tool will help Somebody tells me their shelf broke down, this tool will help And I make friends.

What do you think of that? Yeah. Yeah, very interesting. You didn't expect that, did you? You didn't expect that, did you? We can use the things we have, the toys you own, the games you have, all the special things in your life to just have fun for ourselves or we can share them with other people and we can make friends.

That's what God wants us to do, okay? What do you guys think before? Raise your hand if you want to share something. Hi mom. Friends and family. My family. My friends and family. Everyone in this talk. My family. My obedient hamster.

My rulers who Ikka people in the book can be done here throughout Presenti.

[11:35] This is Traffic. This is my grassroots voice to education. My mom and dad. All right, Lord, we thank you for our parents and our families and our friends, all the people in this church, and even hamsters, pets, rabbits, chickens, dogs, all those things that make our lives special.

Thank you, Lord, for blessing us and help us always to do what we can to make friends in this world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Okay, you kids can all go to church school. All the kids are welcome to go to church school now.

He was standing right there. I'm going to invite Josh Mehar to come up and share with us. Good morning.

Good morning.

This is home. Thank goodness for your children. most of the time you work so hard you don't want to stop working until it's just right and that the log is perfectly level and flush.

[13:15] But once the project is finally finished, you get an amazing feeling inside and a strong sense of accomplishment. Last year, we built two log cabins for the camp we stayed on and built a storage shed along with painting a large office and two bathrooms for a mental housing facility.

Our main project was to help an older lady that was taking care of her two grandchildren. Because of being overwhelmed with taking care of her two young ones, her house was in a desperate state and she didn't even let us inside the house and only letting us clean her sunroom, being stacked to the top with garbage covered in cat waste.

We did a lot of work, including yard work, and taking out 26 loads of debris out of the house. After the project, we realized both her and her grandkids found hope again.

It's such a blessing and so meaningful to me to go on these mission trips when you get the chance to make new friends and grow stronger already existing friendships. Moreover, it's truly amazing because it brings hope to the families we have while setting the example not only to other youth across the world, but everyone of all ages.

Thank you and have a blessed day. Thank you and have a great day. So, our next day we'll take a look. Hello, I... Good morning.

[14 : 36] I'm Josh Mahar. You probably will remember me as Pastor Sherry's son. And unlike she, I didn't write anything down. And so I've been in church literally since before I was born.

And just helping people is just what I've always done. And I was always excited to go on the mission trips. I've been on five so far. And there are amazing experiences every time.

My first one, we worked on a nice old lady's house named Lou Labelle in Tennessee. Her daughter was having some problems and had to leave her kids with Lou Labelle.

Of course, she was retired and can't go get a job. And having three kids in the house with no job is a little challenging. And where she is, you would have to pay to get your garbage picked up.

It's a very small amount, but even that small amount she didn't have. So she actually just piled her garbage in her front lawn. So us and our group of teenagers went and cleaned everything up.

[15 : 55] We built her a new kitchen. We have tile floors with a washer and a dryer. The kids were totally inspired. The one grandkid, his name was Isaiah.

Him, he just loved breaking things because when we had a large piece of garbage, we had to break it into smaller pieces of garbage. He loved it.

Grab a sledgehammer and hit it. It's the best. And when we were all finished, we saw the look on her face and all of the kids, and it was priceless.

They were sobbing with joy. And we are having... It does take money to do this. And we have fundraisers coming up with the car wash and the hot dog sale and chicken barbecue if you would like to support.

Thanks to Josh and Chelsea for sharing with us.

[17 : 01] And I know that this church is so abundantly blessed with youth who are willing to serve. All they need is the means to do that. And God has blessed us so abundantly.

Let's bring as an act of worship our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord. Let my life be.

A voice for you. Above the noise a voice for you.

Let my heart sing your praise. Till all that is raised.

It's a voice for you. Let my life be.

[18 : 26] Let my life be. Let my life be.

A voice for you. Let my life be. A voice for you. But every choice a voice for you.

Let my life be. Let my life be. Let my life be. Let my life be. Let your words. Till all that is heard. Till all that is heard.

Is the voice for you. I may not speak with tongues of angels.

May not speak with tongues of angels. But I long to reflect. But I long to reflect.

[19 : 33] The love you show. So in my head. Let me live. Let me live. Let me live. Let me live.

Let me live. Let your love. Lord.

May not. Let me live. Let my life be.

A voice for you. The love of the Lord.

A voice for you. When the light that strong burns Till all that is heard Is a voice for you.

[20 : 45] Is a voice. A voice.

A voice for you. A voice for you.

A voice for you. A voice for you. A voice for you.

A voice for you. Praise the throne who all has been strong.

Praise the throne who is here we know. Praise the throne who has been strong.

[22 : 10] Praise the throne who is here we know. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father we give you thanks and praise for this day and for the opportunity to gather and worship you. Lord God we lift up this offering before you and ask that you would bless it.

Give us wisdom to know how to best use it for the furtherance of your kingdom that many would be brought to salvation in Jesus Christ. Bless especially this morning Lord the offering that has been made for our youth missions.

We just ask in Jesus name that you would bless the youth and help them to be a blessing wherever they go. That they may be your instruments bringing salvation and love and grace and mercy wherever it is that you call them to go.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. I'd like to invite our lay leader Jan Hodge to come up and join us as we have two families who are bringing children for baptism this morning.

[23 : 27] What a blessing. Amen. Brothers and sisters in Christ celebrate the new birth by water and the spirit through the sacrament of baptism as we become members of Christ's holy church.

On behalf of the church I present Landon Richard Rio for baptism. Shall we pray?

Lord bless this water as a symbol of your sanctifying and renewing grace. As you have used water to bless the saints of history let it now bless these children.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on this gift of water to bless these children with your grace that leads to eternal life. Help us to know that as we die to this world we become alive to Christ and share in his final victory over sin and death.

Amen. I'm going to invite family and sponsors to come forward at this time. Amen. First questions are for the parents.

[24 : 54] You reject the evil power of this world, repent of your sin, and accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist Satan. If so, answer, I do. You confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and promise to serve as Christ's representative through faithful participation in his church.

If so, answer, I do. And will you nurture this child in Christ's holy church and by teaching an example lead him to accept Christ as his Lord and Savior? If so, answer, I will.

And will you who sponsor this child support and encourage him in his Christian faith? If so, answer, I will. And will you as the Church of Christ renew your own vows of commitment to Christ and accept the responsibility to assist these parents in fulfilling their vows?

If so, answer, I will. If so, answer, I will. Landon Richard Reel.

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord bless you and be with you this day and forever. Amen.

[26 : 19] Brothers and sisters, shall we greet our newest member into the family? Congratulations.

And now we'd like to invite the Kuzmanski family to bring Masson. On behalf of the church, I present Madison Briel Kuzmanski for baptism.

For the parents, do you reject the evil powers of this world, repent of your sin, and accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist Satan?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and promise to serve as Christ's representative through faithful participation in his church? Will you nurture this child in Christ's holy church by teaching and example lead her to accept Christ as her Lord and Savior?

And for the sponsors, will you who sponsor this child support and encourage her in her Christian faith? Congregation, will you as the Church of Christ renew your own vows of commitment to Christ, and accept your responsibility to assist these parents in fulfilling their vows?

[28 : 22] They're going to do a lot of babysitting between you and them. Let's go this way. Let's go. Let's go. And the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, and God draw you into his presence always, that you grow to be a child of God.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Would you like to greet Madison? Join us. Join us. Join us.

Welcome. Welcome. I'm going to sing. I got you funny. I got you funny.

I got you. I got you. Oh, there he is. Hey, Marky. Doesn't he look nice? Praise God.

[29 : 53] Yeah. What a blessing. Amen. We are blessed so abundantly.

The children and the youth, parents raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and the church all supporting all of this. It is just such a blessing to be part of Pendleton Center United Methodist Church and the greater church of Jesus Christ.

We can bring our prayer requests and all of those things that we are needing and that we are burdened in our hearts about before the Lord, too. Along with our joys, God wants to pour out blessings into us as we pray for the people.

Rich Henderson, I don't know if many of you have heard. He was out riding his bike earlier this past week, and he was hit by a motorcycle. He's had surgery.

It was successful, and he's now home, but he's going to be a bit in recovery. So we want to keep rich in our prayers. Let me see. Jan Faye is having more surgery this week.

[31 : 02] She had surgery earlier this past week as well, and she's going to be going in again, so we want to keep her lifted up. Kim Sussnet is having health concerns as well. This has been going on for a bit, so we want to lift her up.

Ron Elman's family has experienced yet another death in their family with the death of his aunt. They recently experienced the death of his niece, and he's got a couple of people in his family who are having all kinds of health problems, too.

So we want to keep Ron and his family lifted up. It's a rough time for them. And with these concerns and the concerns that are on your hearts as well, let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for this day and for the fact that you have called us to pray.

You come into our hearts. You teach us to be the people you called us to be. And you ask us to pray for those needs that there are here on earth.

Lord God, we are so grateful. We are so grateful that we serve a God who, although you are so great and the creator of the universe, you invite us to join together with you in concern for all of the people of this world.

[32 : 33] Father, we lift up those who are sick and unfirm. We pray that you touch them with your healing power and give patience to their caregivers that they might recover and be blessed.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name also for those who are grieving losses of all kinds. We ask, Lord God, that you bring your comfort by your Holy Spirit.

Allow each one to be drawn into your presence, to know the Holy Spirit in them and around them with the assurance that they can be with you.

Father, we pray for all of those people throughout our world who are dealing with tragedies and losses. Lord God, especially the families of the folks on the airliner that went down over the weekend.

We just ask in Jesus' name that you would send your people to help. Father God, put in the mouths and the hearts of the people who are yours, compassion, words of gentle mercy and grace.

[33 : 55] Father, help us to be people like that too. As we hear your word, let it wash over us and transform us, giving us boldness in expressing who you are to all the people that we meet.

Be with Pastor Tom as he delivers the message you have given him. Let it be a blessing to him and to us. Lord God, make all of our worship to be a blessing to you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. This morning's scripture reading comes from the book of Acts, chapter 9, verses 32 through 42. As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydia.

[35 : 21] There he found a man named Annias who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. Annias, Peter said to him, Jesus Christ heals you.

Get up and roll up your mat. Immediately Annias got up. All those who lived in Lydia and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha.

In Greek, her name is Dorcas. She was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time, she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in the upstairs room.

Leda was near Joppa, so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lodau, they sent two men to him and urged him, Please, come at once.

Peter went with them, and when he arrived, he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

[36 : 23] Peter sent them out of the room. Then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, Tabitha, get up. She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up.

He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Jim. Brother loves, love, brother loves, that brother loves, travel and salvage and show.

How to, how to, pack up the babies and grab the old ladies, because everyone knows, everyone knows about the brother's show. Neil Diamond.

The traveling tent shows, the revival meetings that traveled around the country as people were excited about God. Billy Graham had the biggest ones. A hundred thousand people would show up.

[37 : 25] This is Peter and John's traveling miracles show in the Bible. They're going from town to town. They started out in Samaria in the chapter before this, doing amazing things.

Miracles are breaking out, and people are believing in God. People have problems. This one fellow was paralyzed for eight years, and he got up and walked.

Tabitha actually got sick and died. And they called out to Peter to come to pray for him. They had no idea that Peter was actually going to pray for her, and she would be raised from the dead.

Wow. Can God do that? Will God do that? Is God still in the miracle business? Throughout the world, we hear about miracles actually happening through the power of Jesus Christ.

I've seen miracles happen in the lives of people. I've seen people transformed in their attitudes, in their lives, in their hearts and souls. But I've also seen people healed like this physically.

[38 : 26] Broken hands healed. I've seen people who were supposed to be brain damaged, graduate from college. I've seen people who were supposed to die raised up out of bed.

God does miracles. It can happen. The problem is, it doesn't happen the way we expect. It doesn't happen the way we want. And it doesn't happen where and how we want and to who we want.

This amazing series of healings with Peter and John happened with unexpected people. It began in a place called Samaria.

Now, we think of Samaritans, and we think of the story of the good Samaritan. But in that day and age, the Jewish people believed there was no such thing as a good Samaritan. Good Samaritans had bad bloodlines.

They came from bad background. They believed the wrong thing. They lived the wrong stuff. Everybody that was called a Samaritan to the Jewish people was bad by definition.

[39 : 28] And yet here they are, coming to God, believing in Jesus. So they sent Peter and John down to check it out, to see what's going on.

And they saw amazing things as the people were believing. They were believing in the story of Jesus, but they hadn't received the Holy Spirit.

So Peter and John started praying for them and preaching to them, and even greater miracles broke out. And the power of the Holy Spirit broke out.

There was a man in that region called Simon who was a sorcerer. He had gone on for a number of years convincing the people that he had great power. We don't know what his power was.

We don't know if he was illusions. We don't know if he was conning the people. Or we don't know if he was probably more likely using the dark arts. Because if we believe there is power in the world of spiritual good, there's power in the world of spiritual evil.

[40 : 27] And I think Simon was tapping into that because he could do some things that would impress the people. But nothing like what Peter and John were doing. He was just astonished. And it says that he was baptized and he believed.

They started in Samaria. They had come from Jerusalem. And now they went from there to Lydda and Joppa. And eventually they went to the ends of the earth. And people were healed and believed.

One of our church leaders put up a chart when I was at a meeting with a number of pastors. And they said, this is what we're supposed to do as the leaders of churches. Not just the church.

We're supposed to train good Christian leaders and then put them into the church to inspire the church so that they'll make more disciples. Who will go out into the world and change the world and create more leaders.

It's actually an interesting chart. It's got the right words. It has the right places. But it doesn't seem to work.

[41 : 33] Just like for Simon, it didn't work. He believed, but he didn't have the power. He had accepted the idea of God. He was even baptized.

Into the rituals. Into the life of the church. But there was no power. There's a lot of people who believe. They understand the concept and idea of religion.

But they don't have the power of God. Wednesday night in our Bible study, we're talking about the Holy Spirit. What's it like? For Christians, it can be a kind of affirming presence.

Sort of a spirit that whispers into our hearts and lives that God is real and God is with us. And God cares for us. And God assures us. It also can be like an electricity.

I've had the Holy Spirit come into my life in such a way that I feel as if I'm being electrically charged. It's cool. And I've had the Holy Spirit come into my life in such a way that I can receive ideas and words and thoughts from God.

[42 : 41] Directions that God has guided my path to do and say what I need to say right at the moment that I never would have had the ability or thought to do. There's a power that comes with the Holy Spirit.

And if you've never experienced that great manifestation of power of the Holy Spirit, it's not something I can explain. It's only something we can witness to and talk about.

The people here were attracted to the power of God. Because the power of God is driving out the brokenness, the demons, the pain, the hurt, the broken people who come to God and see their lives change.

And I've seen that happen in our world too. People who are transformed by the power of the living God. Neil Diamond could see it. That's why he sang a song about the revival meetings and the power that he saw happening in the name of God.

But Neil Diamond's Jewish. He didn't really understand it. He only saw it. We can witness to it without experiencing it. And Simon did that.

[43 : 47] He saw the power and he wanted it. We see the power and we wanted it. We wanted it. The people of Samaria, Joppa, Lila, they wanted it. They wanted the blessings that came with it.

The people of Buffalo. The people of Lockport. The people of Amherst. They want that power. They want that blessing. Especially when tragedy and difficulties and problems occur.

Simon wanted it so much he offered money. A lot of money. Because Simon was rich. You'd think that a lot of money would get somebody's attention.

I've had people offer me money. They offer me money to put their child's name in a very prominent place in the sanctuary. Or they offer me money so that we will do something that they want to have done.

And probably some of you would be disappointed. No, I usually turn it down. Because as Peter said, you can't buy the blessing of God.

[44 : 46] Of course we can utilize the money that people give us to do the work of God. But you can't purchase the work of God. You can't purchase the blessing of God.

And so Peter told Simon, you've got the wrong idea. You can't buy God's blessing. Your heart's not right. It's dark. It's broken.

The problem is, we have our wants. We have our desires from God. God. And sometimes they get in the way of receiving the blessings of God.

These kids go on a mission trip every year. Do you know why most teenagers go on a mission trip? Truth. So that they can get away from home with their friends and have a good time. That's why they go on a mission trip.

We usually promise them a trip to an amusement park or going whitewater rafting or something like that. And so they say, cool, and they want to go. And then they get there and they find out that they've got to work.

[45 : 46] And when I say they've got to work, they've got to really work. Amen? You guys have been on it. We work from morning to night. And these kids learn how to work like they've never worked before.

And they're picking up garbage like Josh was talking about. They're fixing houses that are a mess. They're in places they have never imagined existed. Now you would think that after they were done with this, they would say, that's not what I was thinking.

I'm not going back next year. See, the trouble is we approach our whole life with God that way. What's in it for me? What can I get out of life?

The Bible says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. But belief is not just about having some religious intellectual idea about God.

Belief in God doesn't drive out demons. Belief in God doesn't make miracles happen. James, the brother of Jesus, wrote these words. He said, someone will say you have faith and I have deeds.

[46 : 50] He said, show me your faith without your deeds and I'll show you my faith by what I do. You believe there's one God. Good. Even demons believe that. And they shudder. They tremble.

Believing is not the point. Simon believed and was baptized. But his heart wasn't right. He needed a heart attack. He needed a change of direction.

The Holy Spirit changes our heart. Causes us to repent, to turn in a different way. It's not a head thing. It's not something we can figure out.

It's not a ritual that if we just do the right thing, everything will happen to us. It's not saying the right words or being in the right place or believing the right idea. Because to do so would be magic.

That's what Simon practiced. But we're not called to that. We're called to something greater. When John talks about the Holy Spirit in his book, he says this.

[47 : 49] Jesus said, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they're born by the water and the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit. You shouldn't be surprised by saying you must be born again.

The wind blows where it pleases. You hear it sound, but you can't tell where it comes from or where it's going. And it's the same way with the Holy Spirit. God is God and God will do what God wants, not what we want.

Does that mean it's wrong to have baptisms? Of course not. It's a blessing as we enter the children into the family of God so they can be raised up in the faith. Does that mean that rituals are bad?

Of course not. They help us to draw closer to God and remind us of God. We walk in this place, we say a few words, and all of a sudden we're just thinking God. But the power comes from some other place.

There are two great commandments in the Bible that Jesus talked about. The first one is, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

[48 : 58] You notice there's nothing in there about us. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Not pray to God so that he'll bless us.

We become Christian gimme pigs. Dear God, I want you to get me a new job, and I'd like to have somebody that I could fall in love with. And if you could fix the brokenness in my arm, and if you could help my kids, and if you could take care of that neighbor down the street who's a real jerk, then that would be great.

Amen. Really? You think that God is there waiting for you to put in your request so that he can fix stuff for you? As if you are the center of the universe?

Churches get caught up in this, and they think it's all about the church. What new program can we have? If we could just sing the right song, if we could just have the right seating, or if we could just do things the way it'll make people happy, it doesn't fix anything.

Religion is a good thing. It's the manger that holds the baby, but we've gotten focused on the wrong part of it. And we've made it into something where it's designed to control God.

[50 : 05] And that's religion. When we want to be blessed for ourselves, Simon sees Christianity as something that he can do so that he can control God.

Something that he can make happen. Something that can be done to people, not done within people. Peter told Simon, pray to God. And Simon said, pray for me.

See, some people think that it's about some magic prayers. Maybe if Pastor Tom will pray for me, that'll be more powerful than my prayer. The most powerful prayer is the one that you have in your heart, your soul, with your God.

Now, rituals help us focus on God and to see God. But we need something even more powerful, a life of change. In the Bible, it says we need to repent, which means to turn around and go a different direction.

Right now, we're having the weirdest political election for president I've ever seen. I mean, come on, really? This thing is off the charts. Weird. Right?

[51 : 10] And everybody's trying to figure out, don't you love the people on TV and in the newspapers? They're trying to figure out what's going on. Why are people voting the way they're voting?

None of this makes any sense. Because they're thinking with their head. People today are trying to make a decision with their heart. They know something isn't right.

And something isn't right, folks. Something's broken. Something isn't the way it used to be. Something is off kilter. Something isn't going the way we expected.

And so we become disillusioned. We become frustrated. We're feeling like something just isn't the way it's supposed to be. It's broken. We've been using images from eternity.

The tree of life has leaves. And it says the leaves can be used for the healing of the nation. You see, the leaves can be taken from the tree of life and given out to the world to heal the world.

[52 : 13] And we need some healing. Because things are broken. And that chart was a good chart. But the arrows were going the wrong way.

This is what we need to do. We need to take good, motivated, quality Christian leaders and put them out into the world. Not the church. The church can put them on a committee and put them in charge of taking care of some dinner or something like that.

We've got our concerns and our interest. It's not bad, but it's what we do. We'll take all the energy out of you. But if we send them out into the world, they're going to transform souls.

They're going to take the darkness and turn it to light. They're going to take people who are broken and get them so excited about Jesus, they'll start following Jesus. And when those folks start showing up at church, we're going to be going, Whoa, what's going on around here?

These people are different. They're changed. And see the power of God. And we'll get excited again, too. The effort has to begin in Samaria.

[53 : 15] Not in Jerusalem. We want to change the world. It doesn't change here. It starts out there. You see, there's a second part to that commandment.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. Our neighbors.

The people around us. The folks that live and share in this world with us. God will bless us to be a blessing. God will bless us to be a blessing.

He will not bless us because we want it. He will bless us because he wants it. I was fortunate enough to grow up with a member of the greatest generation.

You know, those folks that saved the world. He was a Buffalo firefighter. He'd run into burning buildings to rescue people. I mean, really, who does this kind of stuff? He cared more about taking care of his family than taking care of himself.

[54 : 17] He was willing to help a friend or a neighbor any time they needed it. He was there for people. And it wasn't him. It was a whole generation of people that were trying to figure out a way to make the world better.

Not just their own little lives better. And amazingly, they were blessed. Do you see how that works? It came back around. We've got a broken generation.

And it's not politics that will fix it. I don't want to disappoint you. But it isn't the politicians that will fix it if you haven't figured that out yet. We're sending all of ours to jail in New York.

Think about it. It's going to come because we have a change of heart. A change of direction. A change of where we're going and what we're trying to do.

This young woman, Tabitha. I think of her as young. Maybe she was old. All right? She took care of people. She made him clothes and she looked after him. It says she helped everybody all the time.

[55 : 18] Peter came. And they were telling him all these stories. And he put them out of the room. Sometimes people wonder why he put them out of the room. You know why he put them out of the room? In my mind? Because he's hearing all of this.

He's thinking, God, we need this woman back. It hurts to hear that somebody so good is gone from the world. Because she gave her life to change the world.

And that's what God is calling us to do too. These teenagers, really and honestly, if you did to them what I do to them on a mission trip as a job, they would never come back.

I'm telling you that. They work like dogs. And sometimes they treat dogs. They work hard. But they come back not because of the work, but because of the transformation.

I've been on the mission trip two times.

[56 : 40] And both times that I've went, it's been a life-changing experience. Because it gives me the opportunity to help others while I'm with my friends. One specific time, we were helping a lady clean out her house and take care of her garden.

During the transition of it, a lot was going on. And it was really overwhelming. But coming back the last day and seeing her reaction to how much her house had changed just made me feel really happy and excited.

And it felt like we did a great job. And that's the reason that we're there. So the mission trip is a great experience because once you go on it, you feel good about going.

But once you're there and actually doing the work, it feels amazing. Because you're doing things for other people that they're not possibly capable of doing. I remember on my first mission trip, we helped these people.

They were living in a one-bedroom home with eight people. And they had a kitchen smaller than most people's closets. We gave this family a whole new dining room.

[57 : 44] So not only do they have a chance to eat together every day, they have a chance to pray to God every day and share a moment with their family. I know. I get so much out of it.

Not only do we touch the lives of the folks that we help, I see it transform the kids that we're actually on a mission trip with.

They have a chance to spend time away from their busy lives, really get in touch with God, have really close personal moments. And I see their lives touched.

And it means so much. Once you do go on the mission trip, it's setting an example for a bunch of people, not only youth across the world. And it gives people a sense of hope once you do the work and you have a great sense of accomplishment.

It's a life-changing experience. Did you hear that? When you go and help somebody, it changes people and gives them hope. It transforms who we are.

[58 : 47] Because we had an opportunity to do something for someone else, to love our neighbor, as God called us to. Tabitha committed her life to help people because of her love for God.

And because of that, God made miracles happen. Paul had an odd question in Philippians that he posed to himself and to us. You ever have somebody, when you're talking to them, and they say, well, better than the alternative.

Well, Paul says, no, not really. Here's what he says in Philippians. For me to live as Christ and to die is better. If I'm to go on living in this body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.

Yet what shall I choose? I don't know. I'm torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far, but it's more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced to this, I know I'm going to stay. And I'll continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith. Or in other words, yes, believe it or not, the alternative is better. We should be looking forward to going to glory, not trying to avoid it.

[59 : 51] But if you want to live long in this life, live for God and give him a purpose to leave you here. Tabitha gave God all kinds of reasons for Tabitha to stay here.

I have some people sometimes in their 90s will come up to me and they'll say, you know, all my friends have gone on to be with the Lord. How come I'm still stuck here? It's a little different perspective when you get to that age.

And the reason is because you keep helping those children. The reason is because you send notes and cards to people who are hurting. The reason is because you help somebody in need because you make the phone calls because you become so useful.

God doesn't want you gone. You follow? Do we give God a reason for us to be here? Do we give God a reason to do miracles?

Believing is to be living for God. To live our lives for a God that can change the world. God offers to drive out darkness from our lives and from the world.

[60 : 57] Simon wanted to control God. He wanted some magic spell. And that's what people want from their religion. Some kind of magic incantation to control God.

And Simon ended up controlled by the demons. So often so many people do too. We need to repent, change our directions. Remove the bitterness, the frustration, the pain, the brokenness, the darkness, the evil, the demons, the sin, and frustration from our lives.

Drive out a life that's like living death and bring the power of God. A heart change where we change the world.

I have to be honest with you. I am so excited about the people of this church. I'll brag on you. We're changing lives of teenagers in Lockport because some people are willing to go places where a lot of people don't want to go.

We're feeding people in Niagara Falls and Buffalo. And I'm going to tell you, I've seen miracles happen in those people's lives. We've got one man up there. He couldn't talk really. And now he speaks to people.

[62 : 12] He talks to people. He was what you'd call antisocial. And now he's a social butterfly. We're like, what's happening to them? God is transforming, changing lives.

You want to talk about the living dead? Go to a nursing home sometime and look at the wheelchair. We have people going into these nursing homes, into these places where people be broken, neglected, and abandoned.

And they're bringing the love of God and the song and some joy. And it changes lives. It can be small. It can be big. You can be amazed at what you can do.

The other day I was out for lunch with my wife. And we just did what we do. We ordered our food. The food came. We bowed our head and said a blessing. A 20-year-old girl came up to us and said, thank you so much.

We're like, for what? She says, nobody prays anymore. Nobody ever prays. And we need God so much. Thank you for just being people that are willing to pray.

[63 : 09] What? That's all we got to do? That's just a piece of it. God wants to make incredible miracles, wonders and signs, break out and restore our world.

But it means each of us doing our little bit to start a fire, light a spark, and pass it from this person to this person to that person until the Holy Spirit of God breaks out and changes.

It only takes us work, to care how we're going.

And soon on those around and more of Him is glowing.

That's how it is with God's love. Once you've experienced it, you spread His love to everyone.

[64 : 30] You want to pass it on. I wish for you, my friend, His happiness that I've loved.

You can't depend on Him. It matters not when you're proud.

I'll shout it from the mountain top. I want my world to know the Lord of love has come to me.

I want to pass it on. God wants us to light up the darkness.

Take away the brokenness. Be the light of the world. Change this world. There is a candle in every soul.

[65 : 43] Some bright and burning, some dark and cold. There is a spirit who brings a fire.

He ignites a candle and meets His home. Carry our candle come to the darkness.

Take out the hopeless confused and torn. Pull out your candle for all to see it.

Take your candle and blow your light of the world. Take your candle and blow your light of the world.

His heavenly brother see how He strived to guide His own candle some of the way.

[66 : 59] See now your sister spread round and mine too still holds our candle without a flame.

Carry our candle run to the darkness take out the lonely take out the lonely not tired and war put out your candle for all to see it.

Take your candle your light of the bound your light of the world. Take your candle Hehe
Take your candle Take your candle go sh Independent take your candle go chants our
Will Go take your candle Go We are a family whose hearts are blazing.

So let's raise our candles and light up the sky. Pray to our Father in the name of Jesus.

Make us a beacon in darkest night. Carry your candle from near the darkness.

[68 : 29] Seek out the helpless they seek and pour. Hold out your candle for all to see.

Take your candle, Lord, light your world. Carry your candle. Run to the darkness.

Seek out the hopeless unwritten soul. Hold out your candle for all to see.

Take your candle. Take your candle. Go light your world. Take your candle.

Go light your world. Take your candle. Take your candle. Take your candle.

[69 : 33] Take your candle. Take your candle. Sometimes I think What do people say of me?

When I'm only just a memory In the home where my soul belongs Was I love that no one
else would show up?

Was I Jesus to the beast of love? Was my worship more than just a song? I want to give
my hand Give it all I can To let everything I see and do Voice to you This is who I am And
this is where I stand You're recklessly abandoned now And this is where I stand I want to
live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that Am I true?

You are who you say you are Dear Lord Ace lactate Faith will really change your heart To
I live like that You are coming mostly sure People will head Give it if they don't know my
name Is there evidence that I've been changed?

Is there evidence that I've been changed? May see me deal ways in you We all know in
my life, in it's all I've had For everything I say and do, what's to you?

[71 : 53] But it's who I am, this is where I stand Where I can see abandoned, never hold back I
want to live like that I want to show the worth of love you gave for me I want to live like that
I want to call the love to know the glory of the King I want to live like that Give it all my
hands So that everything I say and do, what's to you?

But it's who I am, this is where I stand Let us be abandoned, never hold back I want to live
like that I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that You know, so
often when we think about God and we think about sin and we think about our relationship
with God we think about something we've done Some action we've done Something that
somebody tells us is wrong Things like that Do you know how easy it is for God to forgive
that stuff?

That's not the problem for God God knows every one of us is going to mess up throughout
our lives and do something wrong He's already decided to forgive you from that He's just
waiting for you to ask But the real problem is when our attitudes are all messed up
Because even if our actions don't seem to be wrong if we're not doing the right thing and
we're not thinking the right way and we're not living for what God wants He has no reason
to do miracles and blessings for us And He wants to He wants to pour that into our lives
So today as we confess before our God let's not just confess those things we've done
Let's confess our need to really change our attitude Let's start living to be blessed, to be a
blessing for God Shall we pray?

Dear Lord in heaven I have sinned You know that I do things wrong I'm sorry Forgive me
But change me Lord Change my attitude Change my heart Help me to live to be a
blessing Help me to make this world better Help me to live to honor you In Jesus name
Amen God Already decided to forgive you But He also already decided To do something
incredible with your life It says in the Bible Before you were born He already knew you
And already decided What amazing thing He could do with you And He'll just go in His
direction Instead of fighting to go in yours

So live with God And be blessed In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen God invites us to the table To share in His great love And mercy And grace To be That action that we do Coming forward So we can receive All that God has for us God has So much blessing For each and every one of us That God wants to pour out Everyone Is welcome at the table Everyone is welcome If you love God If you earnestly repent Repent of your sin And seek to live in peace As a disciple of Jesus Christ

[76 : 46] You are welcome At the table this morning You don't have to be a member Of the United Methodist Church You don't have to be a member Of any church If you come seeking God This morning God will meet you here And you are welcome to come 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 joyful thing Always and everywhere To give thanks to you Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth You formed us in your image And breathed into us The breath of life When we turned away And our love failed Your love remained steadfast You delivered us from captivity Made covenant To be our sovereign God And spoke to us Through your prophets And so with your people on earth And all the company of heaven We praise your name And join there in ending hymn

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might Heaven and earth Are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest Blessed is he who comes In the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest Holy are you And blessed is your son Jesus Christ 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 When the Lord Jesus Ascended He promised To be with us always In the power

Of your word And Holy Spirit Now the night In which he gave himself Up for us He took bread And he gave thanks To you He broke the bread And gave it to his disciples Saying take and 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 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 It's poured out For many For the forgiveness Of sin Do this as often As you drink it In remembrance Of me And so in remembrance Of these Your mighty acts In Jesus Christ We offer ourselves

In praise And thanksgiving As a holy And living sacrifice In union With Christ's offering For us As we proclaim The mystery of faith Christ has died Christ is risen Christ will come again Pour out your Holy Spirit On us gathered here And on these gifts Of bread And wine Make them be for us The body and blood Of Christ That we may be For the world The body of Christ Redeemed by his blood By your spirit Make us one with Christ One with each other And one in ministry To all the world Until Christ comes In final victory And we feast At his heavenly banquet Through your son Jesus Christ With the Holy Spirit In your holy church All honor and glory Is yours Almighty Father Now and forever Amen Shall we pray together

With the confidence Of children of God The prayer Jesus taught us Our Father Who art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done On earth as it is In heaven Give us this day Our daily bread And forgive us Our trespasses As we forgive those Who trespass against us And lead us not Into temptation But deliver us From evil For thine is the kingdom And the power And the glory Forever and ever Amen Will those who are serving Please come forward Amen Amen

[82 : 26] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Receive God, be blessed by God, take him into your life.

You're all welcome. Everyone is welcome at this table, whether you're a member of our church or this is the first time you've ever been here. You're welcome to come and receive the blessing of God. You can come for prayers at the rail, for anointing and healing, or to light a candle.

Come and join us with the Lord. You're welcome.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[85 : 05] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[87 : 35] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you.