

Sharing God's Love, Hope, & Faith

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] Thank you.

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

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Good morning and 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. We are glad to have you here at church this morning. There is one opportunity for ministry on our clipboards.

[1 : 32] It's to help with our dinners that we do weekly up in Niagara Falls. And so if you want to help with our dinners at First Church, we appreciate that. Let's take a moment, shall we, and turn our hearts and our souls to the Lord in prayer.

Dear Lord, we just pray your blessings upon us that you will send your Holy Spirit to gather in this place. To both calm our hearts and minds from all the thoughts of today.

Yet at the same time, excite our souls that we might be blessed by the presence of God Himself. Be with us. Give us your joy and your wonder. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

I'd like to invite you, if you're able, as we're going to sing, to stand as we're going to sing together a song called The Summons. Come on.

Will you come and follow me if I might call your name?

[2 : 41] Will you go where you don't go and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known?

Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me? Will you leave yourself behind if I would call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you risk the hostile stare? Should your life look trapped or scared?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me? Will you let the blinded see if I would call your name?

Will you set the prisoner free and never be the same? Will you kiss the leopard clean and do such as this unseen?

[3 : 46] Can it live to what I mean? Will you let me know what I mean? Will you let me know what I mean? Will you let me know what I mean? Will you love the you you hide if I would call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same? Will you use the faith you found to reshape the world around?

Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me? The Lord be with you. I'd invite you to take a moment and share the peace of the spirit with one another.

I'd like to invite any kids who want to come up and join me to come on up if they want to. We're going to hang out down here so we don't fall. Okay? We're going to do this down here. You know why? Because sometimes we do some things that are more fun.

[5 : 00] I have to take my jacket off because I don't want to kill myself doing this, all right? Sometimes we do things together just because we enjoy it. How many of you have ever heard of a song called, Our God is a Great Big God?

Yeah. Well, we're going to do that this week in Vacation Bible School. So just to get us ready and warmed up for this week, stretch, stretch, stretch, you ready? Our God is a great big God.

Our God is a great big God. Our God is a great big God. 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 submarine. He is wider than the universe.

[6 : 04] And beyond my wildest dreams. And he's known me, and he's known me. Since before the world began. Since before the world began. How wonderful to be a part of God's amazing plan.

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. 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 the sky. He is higher than the sky. And he holds us in his hands.

And he holds us in his hands. He is higher than the universe. He is higher than the universe. And beyond my wildest dreams. And he's known me, and he's known me.

[7 : 05] Since before the world began. How wonderful to be a part of God's amazing plan. 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. Our God is a great big God.

Our God is a great big God. And 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 What are you guys thankful for this morning?

You want to share? Raise your hand My mom, Tim, and everybody in my family Friends and family For the birthday party last year for my friends My mom and my dad Anybody else want to share?

Alright, let's pray Lord, we thank you We thank you for our friends, our families For parties and good things that happen in our lives Bless us and bless us this week For Vacation Bible School We pray this in Jesus' name Amen Okay, you guys go out to church school now While Pastor Tom recovers And I'm going to invite Mrs. Barbara Jeffords To come on up and share with us Oh, I guess not I guess not This is her sister Julie Hi, my name is Julie Beck I'm the special events coordinator of VBS I am the one that coordinates for Friday on Mission Day And I help with the setting up the tribal tents in the gym I have been working with VBS for several years At first I would hear about all the kids love VBS And how much fun they have

[9 : 38] So I started to come the week of VBS To see for myself It's an amazing and overwhelming feeling To see what we all do And how the kids love and enjoy the program I am thankful for experiencing And being involved with VBS And we all that are involved in VBS Thank you for your continued support Amen Thank you, Julie And we have in your bulletin You'll find a special offering envelope For Vacation Bible School Should the Lord put it on your heart To give to this wonderful ministry in our church We lift up right now to our Lord All of our gifts, tithes, and offerings Bringing them forward to Him As an act of worship Amen I pray the people

Let this be our eyes And watch us where we go And help us to be wise In times when we don't know Let this be our prayer When we lose our way Lead us to the place Guide us with your grace To a place where we'll be saved The light that you give I pray we'll find you that

The glory resterei And hold it in our pride The stars go out each night Eternally still us down Nella mia pregame Let this be our prayer What a faded day When shadows fill our day Lead us to a place Guide us with your grace nostro people The■ennac sateu show■ Quel Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

[14 : 09] Need to find a place. Kind us with your grace. Give us faith so we'll be saved.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Praise God. Praise God.

[15 : 12] Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Holy Heavenly Father, praise the Son and Holy Ghost.

Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day that we may gather together and worship you, that we may bring all of our gifts before you, these gifts that come from our finances, Lord, but also all of the giftings you have given us.

Let them be a blessing to you. Anoint them and touch them. Empower us through them so that we may be able to bring an offering of praise to you.

That everything you have given us be recognized as being from you and for your glory. Help us, Lord, to draw many to salvation in Christ through all the gifts that you abundantly bless us with.

Give us wisdom to know how to best use each and every gift we have been given to further your kingdom. It is in Jesus' name that we pray.

[16 : 40] Amen. Please be seated. Sorry. Along with all of the blessings that we have been given by God and all of the wonderful things that are going on in our lives, there are some things we want to bring forward.

We know that you have some in your hearts as well. June Smith has been in and out of the hospital, and as has Chet Dombrowski. He's in the hospital as well.

Well, he's out. Look, Chet's here. He's on my list. He's here. Yeah. Amen. Praise God. So Chet's out of the hospital, and this is a good thing.

Claire Bolshaw is also coming home, and that's a blessing. How wonderful that is. And we want to keep... Ron Elman's son, Ron, is in the hospital awaiting surgery.

They're trying to sort that out with his physicians and whatnot. And we've had some deaths in our church family this past week as well. Ken DiVoli and Rick Adams and Rob Lingenfelter, and we want to keep their families and their friends all in our prayers as well.

[18 : 00] Vinnie Ward also had some biopsy on his shoulder, and he's hanging in there. We're doing better and awaiting good reports on all the results of that, so we want to keep him and his family in our prayers as well.

You are welcome, as we have been doing the last couple of weeks. You are welcome to join me as an act of faith at the rail kneeling or standing. Please come as the Lord leads.

Come, let's pray for God's blessings in our lives. Our gracious Heavenly Father, what a blessing it is to be able to come into your throne room, to come before you, and participate with you in all of the works that you want to do in this world.

We come this moment by prayer with our request, knowing that you hear us and that you answer us. We're grateful, Lord, that you want us to be part of all the work that you're doing in this world.

Lord, we pray for those people who are sick and infirm, who are in need of a healing touch from you. We are grateful, Lord, that you are the God who heals us.

[19 : 38] We pray that you touch them and make them whole from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. In their spirits, their souls, and their bodies, Lord, touch them. Be with them in the midst of the trouble.

Let them know your grace and mercy. Father, we pray in Jesus' name, for those who are caring for them, the medical professionals, the family members, the friends, we ask that you give them wisdom that comes from you, wisdom to know how to care for them best, and patience and compassion, Lord, as they're dealing with the various situations.

Be with them too, Lord. Father, we pray for all those who are grieving losses. We pray that they would know the hope of eternal life that is in you.

We pray that you would bring them comfort by your spirit, envelop them, hold them in the palm of your hand. Let them know that you're with them. Lord, bring them peace, your peace that passes all understanding, Lord God.

And pray, Lord, for all of those who have been the victim of troubles in this world, of fires and floods and droughts and famines, those people who bring violence into the lives of people, those situations too, Lord.

[21 : 14] We just ask in Jesus' name that you be there. We know that you are always with us. We ask that your presence be especially felt in places where there is trouble.

Remind us to pray, Lord, for those circumstances that we can't be physically present at to help. Put it on our hearts, ways that we can help, Lord God.

We just ask that many would come to salvation even through such terrible trials. Lord God, it is a blessing to be in your presence.

We know that there are times when we get distracted by the cares of this world. We get distracted by things that don't really matter.

We get distracted by troubles between ourselves and family members, even in the family of God. We ask in Jesus' name that you would come into our hearts and show us your way of peace.

[22 : 34] Show us your way of love that we can reach out to our brothers and sisters and be instruments of your peace.

as we hear your word this morning, Lord, let it wash over us and transform us.

Bring us into line with what you have taught us that you expect from us as your people. Be with Pastor Tom as he delivers the word that you have given him.

Anoint him that it may be a blessing to him and to us. Make all of our worship this morning to be a blessing to you, Lord. That is why we came.

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

[23 : 58] Good morning. Today's reading is from 1 Peter 4, verses 7-11. The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

Above all, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Amen. He's going to go in separate directions and he won't know who to follow.

Right, and we'll meet up later. Are you all flying south? Probably. Are you all going together? Maybe.

[25 : 24] Probably not. Do you mind if I fly along? Suit yourself.

Thank you. I think it'll be fun. All of us shine south together.

It'll be a real adventure. Don't you think so? Hey, where'd everybody go? Hello?

Hello? Are you going south? Yep.

Can I go along? You going us? You gotta be kidding. Going south?

[26 : 24] Going my way? Get lost. Poor little ugly duckling.

Such a sad story, but I'm going to cry. The Book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon wrote. I saw something meaningless under the sun.

There was a man all alone. He didn't have a son or a brother. There is no end to his work, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. For whom am I toiling, he asked, and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?

This too is meaningless. A miserable business. Eleanor Rigby died in the church and was buried along with her name.

Nobody came. Father McKenzie, wiping the dirt from his hands as he walked in the grave. No one was saved. All the lonely people.

[27 : 33] All the lonely people. Where do they all come from? All the lonely people. Where do they all belong? Some of you remember that old Beatles song.

I was probably about 10 or 11 when that came out. Sometimes I felt very wrong. I wasn't one of those kids you'd call popular in school.

In fact, I was probably one of those kids you would call unpopular in school. I wore geeky clothes. That's what my parents bought me.

I had no choice. Plain pocket jeans from J.C. Penney. Does anybody remember those awful things? Everybody else at Levi's, not big. I was a lot more of those.

We didn't have the money. Ugly old glasses. As ugly as you could find. I knew the popular kids. I had grown up with them. And they knew who I was.

[28 : 33] But we didn't spend any time together. In fact, I'll be honest with you. At that point in my life, I don't remember having one friend in school. I went to school alone.

And I came home alone. Now, sometimes my parents would make my brothers play with me. You know? She'd hang a pork chop around my neck so the dogs would be friendly. Just kidding.

But it's true. You can feel so alone. So left out. I wasn't good at most of the sports. I tried them. So I was the last one picked.

Makes you sad. And eventually makes you angry. Two or three weeks ago, I was talking a little bit about that point in my life. How actually I got in with the wrong crowd. Why did I get in with the wrong crowd?

Because they made a place for me. But nobody else would. Because they'd let me be with them. In case they gave me a place to live out my anger and my frustration.

[29 : 38] God doesn't want to be that way for anyone. We're talking about parts of worship this morning. And all I'm going to talk about, a lot of people find annoying.

The announcements. The joys and the concerns and the passing of the peace. That friendly stuff. The thankful moment. Or that welcome video.

Some people would say, that's just a waste of time. Get down to the good stuff. The important stuff. Why we're here.

You're just trying to recruit people. To do stuff around the church. We come to worship. To experience God.

I know we do. But it's also so that we can experience a community of God. You know, if you just want to know about God. You want more information about God.

[30 : 38] Google God. I guarantee you, you'll get more information than I could ever give you. Google sermons. There's better preachers out there than me.

And you can watch them on the internet anytime you want. Heck, you can even watch me on the internet. And some people do. We don't come to worship. For what we can learn.

We come to worship to experience God. But also to experience the body of Christ. Which are the other people that are gathered here. Some people think that worship is an obligation.

We come to get it done. But it's really an opportunity. We come to experience something. Something special. With God. And with the people of God.

Especially in a world where a lot of the culture doesn't really invite God in. We come to be with brothers and sisters. Where we can be God's people together.

[31 : 41] Someday we're going to answer to God. This passage starts out by saying the end of all things is near. It's interesting. That was written a couple thousand years ago.

God's idea of near is not the same as ours. Just in case you were wondering. But the end of all things is near. If not for our entire culture and our entire world.

Which it very well may be. I feel like I'm going to funeral after funeral after funeral after funeral. For people I know. And I feel like the end is near.

It's near. Are we ready? Are we living the way God would want us to do? Are we inviting God into our lives? In my little congregation out in Wyoming, New York. We were sitting down once.

And trying to figure out. How could we get more of the Holy Spirit to be present in church? And we actually came up with this idea of what we call the passing of the peace.

[32 : 39] Now not only were we encouraging people to pass the peace of the Holy Spirit. We really believed that if we were a little closer to each other. God would be a little closer to us.

And so we started greeting each other. That's what we do here as well. Sometimes some of you are walking around the whole sanctuary. And it takes a little time to get you sat back down again.

Other people are going. I wish they would stop this. I hate this. People touching me. Strangers I don't know. I don't want to do this. What kind of a wacky place is this?

We need. We need to figure out a way that we can grow closer to each other. Be more than just a face in a crowd. And sometimes when you say hello and shake the hands of somebody in church.

It's the only time anybody will touch them with a warm greeting. I did a funeral yesterday for a fellow by the name of Rick Adams.

[33 : 47] And one of the passages I used came from Matthew chapter 25 where they talked about God separating the sheep from the goats. And the goats were on the goats. And the goats were on the left side. And they were actually not going to make it in eternity.

And the sheep were on the right side. And they were making it. And the interesting part is that the king didn't say, you know, you got your theology right. You got the right words. You just went to sit down at church.

You understood the Bible inside and out. You said, you did the right things. You cared for people. You looked after the lonely.

You fed the hungry. You did the kind of stuff I would want my people to do. And we need the church to do that. I wasn't popular in school.

I went to church each week because my parents made me. Back then, that was not even considered something that you would even discuss as being optional. Your parents said you went to church.

[34 : 47] You went to church. It just was the way it was. For some of you, that's still true today. They made me go to church. And I sat there. And I did what you did in church.

When I went to Sunday school, I'd try to find little hiding places where I could avoid going to Sunday school. Not because I didn't like Sunday school. I just wanted to see if I could do it. But at one point, we had this associate pastor.

And he made me go on a youth retreat. Now, I've got to tell you, when I say he made me, he did something I'm not allowed to do anymore. He put the Vulcan death grip on me. There's still a couple of older young men in our church that know what the Vulcan death grip is.

It's no longer a legal maneuver. But there's a couple of veins in the back of the neck. And you can bring a scrapping young teenager to their knees with this thing. And he did.

And he said, you're going on the retreat where this is happening again. It was a little different back then. It really just was. Well, so I went. And on that retreat, I met God, which changed my life.

[35 : 57] I met pretty girls, which changed my perspective on church. And I found some people that even would let a geeky, strange, dysfunctional, angry, messed up teenager become part of their group.

I actually went to church more. And I enjoyed going to church where I had my real friends. I went to school because I had to, but my real friends really were at church.

I even went to church camp in the summer with a couple of my friends where I met all kinds of people, especially girls, from all over western New York. You're picking up a theme, aren't you? And eventually I met my wife.

All because somebody took me in when I was a stranger. In verse 8, it says, above all, love each other because love covers over a multitude of sins.

And the love they're talking about is a love that in Greek is referred to as agape, which is a love that goes beyond just a feeling or an emotion. It's a giving of oneself, a caring for someone else even more in some ways than we care for ourselves.

[37 : 10] A love that goes beyond a concern for us. Philippians, Paul said it this way. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interest of the others. A love that cares more about the other person than yourself.

That's what a marriage is supposed to be. You don't have to watch out for yourself because somebody else is doing that as your partner. But this kind of love can happen anywhere. It covers over a multitude of sins.

When you're in love with somebody, the truth is they can do something wrong and you don't even seem to notice it so much. Last Friday, I went to a fancy banquet with my wife for the military.

A very high, formal, everybody dressed up. I had on my tuxedo and I was doing my best to be a proper spouse to my wife. And she got up to pray in front of this august group of people and all her colleagues and friends.

[38 : 14] And somebody's cell phone went off. Really? Really? It's me? Really? I have to tell you, just before I got up, somebody else's cell phone went off and I said, after her prayer, I've got to sit down and turn this thing off.

But I didn't. And it went off. And I silenced it. Well, I hung it up. And it went off again. And I fumbled with it.

I was certain that I was going to get destroyed when she got to the table.

But of course, friends and colleagues and all were there. So she was very gracious. So I asked them as soon as I was in the car, I would get blasted. But I still haven't heard anything about it.

Because love covers over a multitude of sins. If we love someone, even when they do something wrong, we don't hold it. We let it go.

[39 : 21] Verse 9 says, offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Without grumbling. Be kind and loving to people.

Be the kind of people that folks want to meet. When I was in about 6th or 7th grade, I decided I have to get away from being shy.

Believe it or not, I was very shy. So I started saying hello to people. I don't mean started saying hello to people I knew. I said hello to everybody. I'd walk down the street.

Hey, how you doing? Hi, how are you? I'd say hello to people in the malls. Hey, how are you doing today? Have a great day. Good to see you today. I said, people would look at me. And then they'd smile.

And say, hello. And they walked away with a smile. And I found out, oddly enough, 99 out of 100 people will smile back at you and say hello.

[40 : 20] Offer hospitality. Without grumbling. Without grumbling. Basic. Basic. Courtesy. We're losing courtesy in our culture. We've come to the point where we've decided it's good to be rude and angry and nasty and hurtful.

Or scared and frightened and sensitive to everything. What do they want? This guy's saying hello to me. What's she after? Come on. People can just be friendly. And hello. Hi. Open a door.

Say hello. Offer a cup of coffee. The real daring in church would say, if you'd like to, you could sit with me.

The fascinating thing is people have been waiting for somebody to be hospitable all their lives. So we share the peace of the spirit.

And we make announcements. And the reason we make announcements is, yes, because there are things that we're trying to engage in and do in the church. But really, it's so that you can engage.

[41 : 26] You may or may not have noticed, but this is a fairly large group of people. And this is only one of our congregations. And this is the summertime. There are hundreds of people that come to this church every single week.

And literally thousands that call this their church home. Only a delusional person would think they could possibly know everyone. I don't even know everyone.

And I'm terrible with names, and I apologize for that, because they're just terrible with names. All right? I always have to. But we need to get to know people somewhere.

We need to have some place that's a little different, where we can engage people and connect with people. And the reason why we offer all these opportunities, really, is so that you can connect with people.

So you can have a place where you can find somebody with similar interests and maybe meet your new best friend that you didn't even know was in this world.

[42 : 28] That's the whole point. In fact, God gives us gifts and abilities so that we'll be able to do something to make friends and acquaintances and people liking us.

Offer your help. Offer your gift to someone. It's why God gave it to you. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 says, There's different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

There's different kinds of service, the same Lord. Different kinds of working, but in all of them, in everyone, it's the same God at work. And each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

God gave you gifts so that you will be needed and useful to other people so that you can connect with other people and make a relationship with them.

Did you know that? I find it fascinating that our cultural mantra, and you've heard me say this before, is you all need to go to college to get a good education to get a good job to make a lot of money.

[43 : 34] There's nothing wrong with a good education, and there's nothing wrong with a good job, and there's nothing even wrong with a lot of money. But God can gift you so that you would have some special ability for yourself.

It's an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to connect to others. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

God gifted you so that you would be able to have a reason to be needed. People, people who need people are the luckiest people in the world.

It's wonderful to have somebody that you depend on. Believe it or not, we've been taught that we need to be rugged self-individuals.

No, no, no. We need to be people interdependent upon each other so that we need each other so that we have a reason to always be with one another. That's why God gave us all these various gifts and didn't give them to everybody so that the way we make ourselves complete is the same way a body becomes complete.

[44 : 43] A hand does the hand, the foot does the foot. We all do our part to make the whole, get a good education, get a good job, to serve others and make a difference in this world and make friends.

Make the church. You know what the word church, ecclesia, really means? We tend to think of church as a building or religious gathering or a group of people gathered for God.

It really just means a gathering. A bunch of folk coming together. That's what it originally meant. So if you, back 2,000 years ago, would have said to people in Athens, are you going to church?

They would have said, which one? What gathering? You mean the festival downtown? Which are you talking about? Because we gather for all sorts of things to grow closer.

And the church is the same type of gathering. Just like a family gathering. When we sit around the table, we gather together to share with one another, tell the stories. What have you been up to this last week or two or this last year or two?

[45 : 54] What have you been doing? What's going on? What's broken in your life? What's fixed in your life? What will you rejoice about? What are you sad about? What are the things you want to share with me? Because I'd like to know what's going on in your life.

In Romans chapter 12, Paul said that we're supposed to rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony. Which isn't, by the way, everybody singing the same song, is it?

With another. Don't be proud. Be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited. Gather together in a group of people to love each other, care for one another.

Because the greatest gift of all is not what ability we have. The greatest gift of all is not what will win you America's Got Talent. The greatest gift of all is not something that will make the crowds go, wow.

The greatest gift of all is much more modest than you might think. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul said this, If I speak with the tongues of men and angels but have not love, I'm only a resounding gong or clanging cymbal.

[47 : 00] If I have the gift of prophecy, I can fathom all ministries and all knowledge, and I don't have a faith that can move mountains but don't have love, I am nothing. If I have all the skill and the ability to wow everyone and make everyone think I'm amazing, but I don't care for anyone, I am worthless.

Now, these three. Faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these gifts. And not love like some crazy, it makes me feel good kind of love.

Not love like, man, I don't love chocolate. Not love like, you know, boy, I love rock and roll. I love rock and roll. It's not this kind of a thing. In fact, in the King James, they call it charity.

A love reaches out to other people and cares for them. We went on a mission trip a couple weeks ago. That's why I wasn't here for a week. On a mission trip, we rebuild houses.

The house I was at, we put siding on. We did plaster work and painting, a lot of different stuff. But you know, it's not what we do to the building that matters on these trips. There were these two little guys that were there.

[48 : 17] They would move 100 miles an hour. I'm telling you, they never stopped moving. Fastest little guys in the world. And their mom had arranged for them to have all kinds of things to do in the summer.

They were going to go to the fair. They were going to go to this school where they could play with their friends. They were going to go to grandma's. These kids would not leave the house because they had teenagers that came to play with them.

Not to fix their house. They didn't care about that at all. They had teenagers every single day that came to play with them. And even adults that would swing them around or play with a truck.

As far as they were concerned, probably as far as some of us were concerned, all the work we did didn't make any difference compared to what we did for those little boys.

We needed to know somebody in the world cared who they were. Because when we do that, we do what God does. God cares about us.

[49 : 21] God cares about us. In Isaiah chapter 49, Isaiah says this, Shout for joy, you heavens.

Rejoice, earth. Burst into songs, you mountains. For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me.

The Lord has forgotten me. What can a mother forget the baby of the breast and have no compassion on the child she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget you, says the Lord.

See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Always before me. When Jesus had the nails driven through his hands, he engraved you on his heart.

He wrote on the palm of his hand a message of love for you, for me, on Calvary.

[50 : 27] We go on mission trips and we do change houses. You'll hear about it along the line. Amazing things that we accomplish and teach young people how to do construction and really have a wonderful time.

But the greatest thing we do is to extend hope and faith and love.

And it changes the people we meet and it changes us. And God takes us from ugly ducklings and makes us into beautiful swans. Look at those swans.

They're so beautiful. And I'm so ugly. What do they do when they see me? They'll probably scream or fly away or chase me.

I'd better hide. Maybe if I hide my head underwater. It can't be. But it must be.

[51 : 31] Well, there's no one else it could be. It's me. I'm a swan.

I'm a swan. Of course you're a swan. In fact, we've been sent to ask if you'd like to be the leader of our flock. Yes. You have the longest, most graceful neck anyone on this pond has ever seen.

Me? You want me? Yes, indeed. Come. The amazing thing is that when we love others, it doesn't just change them, it changes us.

in the book of John in chapter 3, you'll remember a verse that says, God so loved the world that he gave his only son. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

He didn't send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. The world doesn't need any more condemnation. The world doesn't need any more judgment or pain or anger or pointing out the faults in people.

[52 : 41] someone who will give, that will whisk. That's the purpose of life and it's how we reflect God inside us and who we are.

And after all, verse 11 tells us the whole point of this is to bring praise to God. It's not easy. It's not always convenient.

We were sitting on our porch, my wife and I, out at Silver Lake. We finally caught ourselves a little moment to each other. We haven't had that a lot in the last couple of years.

And it was just so nice to just relax in this quiet place we love. We should have sat on the upstairs porch. The upstairs porch is like your backyard, which means nobody bothers you.

But on the front stairs porch, it's assumed you're on the front downstairs porch because you want to say hello to everybody who walks down the street. And this couple walking up the street said hello. We said hello. But they didn't keep walking.

[53 : 41] They approached our porch. Can we sit down with you? Really? I wanted to say, no, go away! Leave us alone!

Of course, we said certainly. And we started talking and they were sharing the common niceties you share. And all I could think is, would you leave?

As we smiled. You know, you can be loving without feeling loving. You do know that. Now these are very popular people out in Silver Lake. Pretty much everybody knows me.

And they said, we've been walking up and down the street waiting for you to get here. Because we have something going on in our lives and we have to tell something. And there's nobody we can tell about this.

Because it's about our family and the brokenness in their family. And we knew we could talk to you because you're church people. Wow. That changes things, doesn't it?

[54 : 45] And I was back at work. Sitting on my front porch with a different hat on. But it also meant that somewhere they had seen God in us.

I don't know what difference we made. It seemed to matter to them. Because sometimes we need to share our joys and our concerns, our hopes and our dreams, our lives and our work.

Something we're thankful for. something we're sad about. So we tell you when people in our congregation are struggling or having problems or when they've got a joy that they've received, we lift those up.

Because somehow, even if we don't know the names, it means that somebody somewhere cares enough to share. And that can make a difference. Loving isn't always easy.

This young, this picture right here is a picture of a young woman named Caitlin. Thank you.

[55 : 55] Caitlin. This is the mom. On the right. On the left is Victoria. She goes to our church. And it was Friday and we were finishing up and we finished up late so we ordered pizza because we wouldn't have time to get back to camp for the camp food.

And Caitlin heard we were having pizza so she said, well you're bringing the pizza back here, right? And I looked at her and I said, Caitlin, honey, we're not bringing the pizza back here.

And then I had to look at her and I said, in fact, honey, we're not coming back after today. In fact, I may never see you again for the rest of our lives.

And she looked at me like I was taking her world away. I gave her a hug. I can't stay in the Adirondacks. I have someplace else to be.

Some of us don't want to share who we are because we're afraid somewhere we'll hurt someone else or we'll be hurt by someone else or we won't be able to make this laugh. But you know, for one week we brought church to that family.

[57 : 02] Their husband is deployed. He wasn't able to be there. He doesn't even know we were doing this work. He works at Walmart. I don't know if you know it but most people who work at Walmart can't afford to hire this kind of stuff done.

So he fixed this house and we loved this family for a week and while we couldn't make that last forever, I guarantee you those little boys will never forget the day that all these teenagers came to play with them.

Caitlin will never forget the day that she was embraced by a group of people that became her friends and showed her what church is.

Ecclesiastes, chapter 4 says, I saw something meaningless under the sun. There was a man all alone. He had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil. Yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

For whom am I toiling? He asked. Why am I depriving myself of enjoyment? This too is meaningless. A miserable business. Two, you see, are better than one. They have a good return for their labor.

[58 : 02] If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. And a cord as big as a church will never be.

I have seen how the church can change the lives of people, transform their hearts and take away brokenness, mental difficulties, sadness and hurt and anger and pain.

I've seen it in the lives of others and I've seen it in my own life. All the lonely people. Where do they all come from?

All the lonely people. Where do they all belong? I'll tell you where they belong. Right here. God saved my soul.

[59 : 03] Church saved my life. I'm still doing that. People from this church, people from a church long gone, people that found a place for me.

I made a home for me. I let a geeky kid who wore bad glasses and pennies plain pocket jeans find a place for someone to love.

legee not. It's a great day to write what ■■■■K■ is of all you That you were just a yes by the ■■■■ who's no Tell me what's best to do to raise your mind Someone will direct me, there's someone there you're for One who says follow me and I will lead you home How beautiful, how precious, the Savior of all

To love so completely, the loneliest soul How gently, how tenderly, be sent to one and all Just you can follow me and I will lead you home Trust me and follow me and I will lead you home Be near me, Lord Jesus I ask Thee to stay Will die me forever And love me, I pray Bless all the dear children in my land again

Take us to heaven, it will be there Take us to heaven, it will be there I am in worship to the great The peace that's in Crying to fade into the faces The girls teasing that blood is carrying Father, let them go Father, let them go But if we are abiding

[62 : 39] Why are the days of arms reaching? Why are the days of pain stealing? Why are the days of teaching?

And if we are abiding Why are the days of teaching?

Traveling and far away from home He shouts his coat Quietly slings him to the back row And laid out their judgmental answer Tells him that his chances Are better out on the road What if we are the body Why aren't his arms preaching Why aren't his hands healing Why aren't his words teaching And if we are the body Why aren't his feet going Why is he love not showing Then there is no way Jesus paid much to the higher price

For us to pick and choose who's come We are the body of Christ But if we are the body Why aren't his arms preaching Why aren't his hands healing Why aren't his words teaching And if we are the body Why aren't his feet going Why is he love not showing Then there is no way Jesus is the way Jesus is the way But we are the ones Who are the body of Christ And so for some people The only Bible people will ever read Is you And so the way we live

What we do That's what's going to change the world So that God can change the world I don't think What would people say to me When I'm only just a memory I know where my soul belongs Was I alone No one else could show up Was I Jesus to the least of us Was my worship more than just a song I want to bear my flag I want to bear my flag You gave it all I have To let everything

[66 : 23] That's the way you do To listen to you Because it's who I am And this is where I stand Relax me, your name And never hold me back I want to live like that I want to live like that I want to live like that And I prove You are who you say you are Grace can really change your heart To let everything But what I live like that Love is true People will ask Even if they don't know my name It's not evidence that I've been changed When they see me here

They see you I want to live like that Give it all I have To let everything I say and do Go home to you If you're just who I am This is where I'll stand Recklessly abandon Never hold me back I want a day like that I want a little like that I want a shoulder The love you gave for me Longing for the world to know The glory of the King I want a little like that

Give it all I have So that everything I say and do Points to you If you're just who I am This is where I'll stand Recklessly abandon Never hold me back I want a little like that I want a little like that I want a little like that I want a little like that I want a little like that I want a little like that I want a little like that But sometimes I don't Sometimes the cell phone goes off at the wrong time

Or I say the wrong thing Or I neglect the opportunity Or I miss the moment Or I miss the moment And I want my life to change For the better Don't you?

Amen? So we turn it over to God Because God is the only one That can fix us And guide us And make us go the right way Let's pray before God Shall we? Dear God in heaven I have sinned By some of the things I do That hurt others That hurt my soul That hurt you And by the things I don't do When I forget the love When I forget you When I live the wrong way When I hurt other people By not doing what I should do Forgive me Lord Change me Transform my actions And my words To love others As yours love me In Jesus name we pray Amen

[70 : 46] God Change my heart and soul When I'm angry at you I'm not trying to prove something I don't get it all right But God turned me from Heading in an angry Hurtful direction To trying to find a way To bring love into this world And God will do that for you too In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen God loves us so much God wants to meet with us here God is among us Inhabiting all of our worship And praise God is here At the table Where God has invited you to come Me to come Every one of us No matter where we've been No matter what we've done God wants to fill us With God's love

Because God is love Amen When God comes into us Love comes into us And it's that kind of love That isn't about what we feel like It's that kind of love That gives Without counting the cost So come to the table this morning You're welcome You're welcome to receive All the love God has To pour into your heart You are welcome at the table If you love him If you repent of your sin And seek to live in peace As a disciple of Jesus Christ You may come Whether it's your first time In this church Or you've been coming To church all your life If you're seeking After the love of God To come into your heart You are welcome At the table this morning The Lord be with you Lift up your heart Let us give thanks

To the Lord our God Blessed are you Our Alpha and Omega Whose strong and loving arms Encompass the universe For with your eternal word And Holy Spirit You are forever One God Through your word You created all things And called them good And in you We live And move And have our being When we fell into sin You did not desert us You made covenant With your people Israel And spoke through Prophets and teachers In Jesus Christ Your word became flesh And dwelt among us Full of grace and truth And so with your people On earth And all the company Of heaven We praise your name And join their unending hymn Holy Holy Holy 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

He gave you thanks and praise And gave it to his disciples He said drink from this All of you This is the cup of my blood It is the blood of the new covenant Poured out for you Poured out for many For the forgiveness of sin Do this as often as you drink it In remembrance of me And so in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ We offer ourselves In praise and thanksgiving As a holy and living sacrifice 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 That in the breaking of this bread And the drinking of this wine We may know the presence Of the living Christ And be renewed

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 forwardests from evil talkin■ Let's pray Amen Amen You Amen Amen Everywhere Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

I read a book one time.

That we're supposed to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. It was a good book. You should try it sometime. It's available in most bookstores, even out in our lobby.

[84 : 05] We would recommend it to you. And it's a wonderful book to read. But it's even more a wonderful book to live. So go and live as a people of God.

Don't go out and practice anger. Don't go out and practice judgment. Don't go out and become part of the problem. Don't go out and become part of what God has intended for the solution.

So that on that day he might say, Good sheep. Come and enter into your reward. May the Lord bless you, be with you, and strengthen you, and give you his grace and peace.

In Jesus' name, amen. Yellosial Forever ■ viewing the rest of your trips, The Father is rebranding you. Female with you. About unique goddess. May the Lord bless you, be with you.

Because on that day he kaikki FILLED but discharging you, and also■■rals more than enough that you will win. Not that day you are women are only willing to