

December 27, 2015

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Date: 27 December 2015

Preacher: Pastor Lisa Taylor

- [0 : 0 0] This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. If any of the kids want to come up and sing, that'd be wonderful. 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. Amen. 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 Pendleton Center.
- We do welcome you to Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. Just a couple of quick announcements. Please check the Little Good News for scheduling. Many programs are not meeting this week.
- [1 : 1 8] I've been asked a couple times, is youth meeting? Youth is not meeting, so there's a lot of things that are not meeting this Wednesday night, so check out that. Also, the one thing that is meeting is a new group that's formed.
- It's called the Guardians, and they're meeting Monday at 7 o'clock, and this is a support group for adults who are dealing with aging family members. So those who are in doing that or have done that know that it's incredibly stressful, and having a support group is going to be a wonderful thing.
- It's going to be not only for support and encouragement, but for information as well. So that's, again, Monday, this Monday, the 28th at 7 o'clock, called the Guardians. So check that out in the Little Good News as well.
- So as we proceed into worship, let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Let's pray.
- I'd like to invite you all to stand, if you're able, as we sing together, We Three Kings. We Three Kings We Three Kings of Orient are Bearing hymns we traverse afar Heal that mountain, floor and mountain, following yonder star Oh, star of wonder, star of light Star with royal beauty bright Westward leading, westward leading, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light For the King on Bethlehem's plain, all that rain to crown Him again
- [3 : 4 2] He forever ceasing, never longer was called to reign Great incense to honor our light Great incense to honor our light In incense also, dear and deny Prayer and praising, voices praising, worshiping God on high Oh, star of wonder, star of light Oh, star of wonder, star of light Star with royal beauty bright Westward leading, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light Myrrh is by its bitter perfume Breeze of life, a gathering room Sour and sighing, pleading, dying
- Sealed in a stone full tomb Glorious thou behold Behold Him, O Christ King and God And sacrifice Alleluia, alleluia Alleluia Down to the earth and skies Oh, star of wonder, star of light Star with royal beauty bright Star with royal beauty bright Star with royal beauty bright As we're leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light The Lord be with you And with you Please greet one another with the peace of the Spirit And with you I'd like to invite any of the kids to come on up Any kids, why come on up? Come on guys!

I'd like to invite any of the kids to come on up I'd like to invite any of the kids to come on up
Any kids, why come on up? Come on guys!

Good, did you all have a nice Christmas? Yeah? You did? Now what did you like better? I
have to ask What did you like better? Did you like all the waiting and getting ready And
baking the cookies and buying the presents And wrapping everything and getting ready?

Did you like that better? Or did you like Christmas morning better? Christmas morning! I
like both! You like both? Yeah! How do you think? What do you think Christmas morning
would be like?

[6 : 41] If you didn't do all the getting ready that you had to do first What do you think would
happen Christmas morning if you didn't get everything ready?

It would be kind of boring, yeah And it would, yeah It wouldn't, yeah Well, you know, we've
got over here We've got the three kings The three kings have made it to see baby Jesus,
haven't they?

They traveled a whole long way, didn't they? To get to Jesus Do you think, do you think
that they just hopped on their camels and started riding toward the star?

No, what do you think they probably had to do before they got on their camels? What do
you think? They had to get some presents They had to get the presents, right? The gold
and the frankincense and the myrrh, right?

Yeah, what else? They had to get ready They had to get ready What kinds of things do
you think they had to do to pack up and get ready? Yeah, they had to pack in everything
They had to have everything that they needed to go on the journey That's, it works that
way with God too, you know We have to be ready We have to be prepared for what God
wants to do in our lives And what God wants to do through us Because God wants us to
be a blessing to people Did you know that?

[8 : 04] God wants us to reach out and bless other people But we can't do that if we're not ready
We can't give people presents if we haven't got the presents We can't share cookies with
them if we didn't bake the cookies, right?

Alright, so that's what we want to do with God We want to make sure that we're ready and
that we're prepared What's a way that you can prepare and be ready to do what God
wants you to do? What can you do to get ready?

You can look at, you can get your Bible and make sure you've got it And make sure you
know what it says inside, right? Make sure you know what it says inside What else can
you do? To be ready You could You could make sure in case you want to give food to
hungry people, right?

You can praise God When you spend time praising God It makes your spirit really, really
strong And then you can do all kinds of things for God What else can you do? What else?
You could So that you could travel, right?

That's good How about what we're about to do in a minute? What about praying? And
asking God To give you what you need So that you can give other people what they need,
right? What are you thankful for this morning?

[9 : 17] Anybody want to share? Friends and family Mom and Dad My cat Mom and Dad Mom and
Dad Mom and Dad The world Mom and Dad Mom and Dad Mom and Dad All right Let's
pray Father Father, we pray in Jesus' name right now That by your Holy Spirit You would
touch each one of these children Prepare them To be a blessing Wherever it is that you
send them Help them to be a blessing in their house With their families And with all their
friends In Jesus' name we pray Amen Amen!

Church school, right? Wonderful Wonderful For close to 20 years Families have been changing their futures through Financial Peace University I started it with a bad suit and an overhead projector I set the room for 135 people, four people came And now today we've had over one and a half million families go through this course That's over two million people across this nation You may be wondering, what is it?

What Financial Peace University is about is a return to God's ways of handling money But in a very practical, step-by-step game plan showing you exactly how to do it FPU is about learning how to control your money When you make these dollars behave You're going to get this sense of power over your money that you've never ever had Don't move into a home with 62 debts or 6 debts or 2 debts and no money You move into a home broke with a bunch of debt around your neck Murphy will move in your spare bedroom Bring his three cousins broke, desperate and stupid Marriages are being made stronger Couples are learning how to talk to each other about money And getting on the same page The closest statistical correlation to success going through this program Are those that actively engage in this budgeting process And for those that are married, they're doing it together You change your life when you get sick and tired of being sick and tired When you get disgusted and you have that moment where you say I've had it! I'm not going to live like this anymore!

We're done! We're changing this thing! Talk about the why, talk about your dreams Ask your spouse, what would we do? Where would we travel to? What would we buy? What would we buy? What would be changed if we became something as a couple Where we were working together on that?

Now man, I'm sure you know this and we've been talking about it for the last few minutes But it's very true, women are different, aren't they? Say yes! Yes! One of the things you may or may not know is they have a gland right in here that you don't have It's called the security gland And when she is feeling insecure due to money issues, that gland spasms And it is attached to her face This 9 lesson 90 minute class will challenge you Now this is a boot camp, I'm your coach And so I'm going to make you uncomfortable sometimes You're going to go home and go, I don't really like him tonight Now if I agree with that, which would make you wrong That's what happens when the coach coaches you, doesn't it?

[12 : 39] He kind of rubs you the wrong way, there's a little friction on there, right? I've had some good coaches and they lit me up a time or two But it caused me to go places I couldn't go otherwise Life change is never easy, but you won't be alone You'll watch a DVD each week and discuss it with your small group Your classmates will encourage you and help you take those first steps You'll walk away from FPU knowing how to relate with money You'll learn how to pay off debt and save for the future And you'll learn how to protect your plan We aren't born knowing everything we need to about money We learn, and there's no better place to learn than the Word The Bible offers more than 800 scriptures on money And Financial Peace University is based on that solid foundation You are literally going to be doing things every week differently Than you ever have based on biblical principles Things like doing a budget, things like working with your spouse Things like singles having an accountability partner Things like teaching your kids so that a godly man leaves an inheritance to his children's children It's not theory, this is actual application on everything

What would happen if the people of God started handling money God's ways? What would happen? What would happen to the kingdom of God if the people of God were out of debt?

All you need is a plan Financial Peace University is that plan And, you know, we do know that God wants us to be good stewards of the resources that God has blessed us with Everything we have is from God and it belongs to God Last year when we did the Financial Peace University course Here we had over 30 people who came out for it and who were blessed by it I got nothing but positive feedback about that And we're going to be doing it again starting January 23rd It's going to be on Saturday mornings this year Last year it was on Thursday nights So this year Saturday mornings from 9.30 to 11.30 beginning the 23rd As I said, they said on the video it's nine weeks long, it's not forever And we're going to be doing another preview on January 10th out in the fellowship hall between each service So if you want to talk to Scott Dabb is going to be running the course again as he did last year He did a great job with that If you want to pick up some information and find out who to contact and whatnot

There is a table with a display out in the main entry way by the board with the pictures on it Everybody's pictures, so please feel free to stop by and pick those up And sign up for the course if that's something you're interested in doing I do recommend it strongly, it's a great course And with that, as a part of our worship, we do return back to God A portion of the gifts that God has blessed us with So as an act of worship, let's bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord Thank you Thank you

Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Let's pray We are one more than 5000 Please We are one more than 6000 Then next class Hello What do you want to play there are Once you find some of the benefits maybe Here are the benefits of Dios 1000 Air You have a hoarder You have many more than 5000 factors This class canime Thank you.

[17 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[20 : 00] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[21 : 52] May I Canteen they have May love abound.

We pray for a community that we pray light shines and your gospel enters in. And we as a community remember what's really important.

We pray for our nation that wise choices be made godly choices. And we pray for our world that your light may shine through.

That your gospel will change lives and transform a world that is filled with brokenness. Lord, we pray for those on our hearts who don't know you.

We pray for those who need you. Lord, please listen as we lift those people up. Lord, we are trusting in your love and in your mercy.

[23 : 42] Help us to lean back. And know that you're there with us, high, holding us and guiding us. Show us the way.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Let's hear from the word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[25 : 05] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. him to the Lord as it is written in the law of the Lord every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the law of the Lord a pair of doves or two young pigeons now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon he was righteous and devout he was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on him it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying sovereign Lord as you have promised you may now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all nations a light for revelation to the

Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel the child's mother and father marveled at what was said about him then Simeon blessed them and said to marry his mother this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken again so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too there was also a prophet Anna the daughter of Penuel of the tribe of Asher she was very old she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage and then was a widow until she was 84 she never left the temple but worshiped night and day she was 93 she never left the Catholic jarring her youalar she died in health care for them and night and day after a child after a person came to an entire life and forced to dunno I read thekeit canalizing and said uplifted belong against this narrative that she believed told me that she rested in jail to myrien know that Leist éen had toignen ye and said there's no weakness for me since her, there were also too, this is life after me, bone of God. And truthfully untilocate the man's Pandaeng above the domain of to their own town of Nazareth.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Julie.

Merry Christmas. No, I haven't been able to sing a single Christmas carol all season long. It's coming back. It's bad, but it won't sing.

It'll sing in a much lower register than what I normally would sing at, but I don't know how to sing alto. I've tried. People have tried. I don't know how to sing alto. It's just bad.

[28 : 29] But, yeah, so we're going to do what we can to make it through this message today. God is good. All the time. Did you get everything you wanted for Christmas?

Am I hearing crumbling? Did your Christmas day meet all your expectations after all the preparations and waiting?

Was it worth it? Did you enjoy the waiting and preparing time? Or was it rushed and hectic and stressful?

Yes. I sometimes have trouble with waiting times. The trouble I have is that I want it now. Not material things.

That's not something that's troubling for me anymore. But things that I have to see progress in. I need to make progress in. And things that need to get done.

[29 : 34] I want them done already. I'm like that about traveling. Whether I'm driving or flying. However it is that I'm getting from one place to another. I just want to be at the destination.

So that I can do the things that I went there to do. I am impatient with travel time. I am impatient with preparing time.

Ask my husband. He'll tell you. But carrying out God's plan for our lives is a lifelong process.

Sometimes it seems like we do a lot of waiting and preparing as Christians. The thing is we live in a world that calls for action and doing and now.

Is the wait worth it? Is fulfilling God's purpose worth it? In this passage in Luke we see a contrast.

[30 : 46] An example of two different ways of relating to God. Two ways of working together among God's people in Israel at the time of the story that Julaine read.

And two ways of working together that apply to our Christian lives today. We see Mary and Joseph doing what their holy religious law.

The law of Moses requires of them. And we see two other people. Simeon, a righteous and devout man who heard from the Holy Spirit.

And Anna, an elderly prophetess who spent her time constantly at the temple in worship, in fasting, and in prayer.

Four Jewish adults. Four Jewish adults. Each one called by God. And each one having responded to God's call by saying, Yes!

[31 : 49] And then living their lives according to God's calling. These four people had the privilege of being with Jesus, of knowing who he was even as an infant.

Mary and Joseph were bringing up Jesus as a good Jewish child. Doing everything to fulfill God's law. As Jesus was sent to be the fulfillment of God's law for all people.

What has God sent you to do? Some Christians see their relationship to God as a fulfillment of religious obligation.

Trusting that God will see their efforts and honor them. Trusting that when Jesus comes back to judge people, and he will, he will remember all that they have done for God, and that will be enough.

They do the things required by the Christian rulebook, but do not see the need for a personal relationship with God. They forget that prior to circumcising Jesus, prior to bringing him to the temple to consecrate him, prior to offering their sacrifices, Mary and Joseph had each received from God visions and messages from angels of God.

[33 : 28] God. Those messages, those visions, let them know what they were called to do as part of God's plan. Do you know God's plan for you?

Simeon and Anna each lived a different kind of life. Luke says of Simeon that he was righteous and devout. For Luke, to refer to Simeon that way indicates that like Mary and Joseph, he too fulfilled the requirements of the law in his daily life.

But God had called Simeon to be a witness to the arrival of the Messiah, the Savior of all people. God had told him, told him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

Who knows when God called Simeon to this assignment? The scriptures don't tell us that. But, in verse 25, we read that the Holy Spirit was upon him and that he was waiting for the consolation of Israel.

On the day Mary and Joseph were bringing Jesus to the temple, the Holy Spirit moved Simeon to go to the temple. The Holy Spirit moved him.

[35 : 04] How? How did he know to go there? How come he was able to discern what God wanted him to do?

How do you know what God wants from you? People in the church ask this question a lot.

I can't tell you how many times people have asked me, Pastor, how can I hear God's voice? How do I know it's God speaking to me? They sincerely want to know how to prepare to receive God into their lives in miraculous ways.

But there are other church people I hear from too. They say, people don't hear God talking to them. It's all in their imaginations.

Either they don't believe the Holy Spirit moves in miraculous ways today in the same ways as in biblical days or they believe that the accounts of the miraculous in the Bible are all made up stories.

[36 : 18] They want to do the good things that they have learned that Jesus did. But they think they can do it on their own without the power of God that comes from a holy relationship with God.

They want to imitate Jesus, not work with him in the way he actually really worked by the power of the Holy Spirit. Simeon had a relationship with God that came from a devout and righteous life.

He did what was expected of him according to God's law, law, but he had more. He had the Holy Spirit on him. Like the Old Testament prophets who did so many miracles and knew the messages God wanted them to bring to the people so that the people could be saved when Simeon took Jesus into his arms.

Can you imagine? being there that day and taking Jesus into your arms. His relationship with God must have been made more real than it had ever been before.

God's promise to him was fulfilled on that day. He saw God's Messiah and out of the Spirit came an offering of praise to God, a prophecy about who Jesus is a light of revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory to God's people, Israel.

[38 : 00] Christians today don't have the Holy Spirit on us. We have the Holy Spirit in us.

How do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life? Anna spent most of her adult life in the temple.

The scripture says she never left there. She had been widowed at a very young age and may have become someone similar to what we would today know as perhaps a nun.

someone who chose to live apart from everyday life and devote herself exclusively to serving God. There have been men and women with this kind of religious devotion throughout history in all kinds of religious settings, not just Jewish and Christian.

People who want to draw close to God by separating themselves so that they can focus fully on God. How do you draw close to God?

[39 : 19] We don't have a record of what Anna said as she spoke about Jesus.

But she was speaking to people who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel. Pretty much the same thing Simeon was waiting for. She also praised God as she spoke.

How did Anna and Simeon know who Jesus was? How did they have the patience to wait and hope all that time in the midst of Roman oppression?

They had been waiting for the Messiah who had been anticipated by their ancestors for centuries. How did they happen to be there at just the right time, in just the right place, Jesus?

And have the ability to recognize him when he arrived. I believe one of the key qualities of Anna and Simeon's faith, being able to recognize Jesus and to prophesy, had to do with being willing to be different from the people around them.

[40 : 41] Luke's gospel is clear as it singles out Simeon, calling him devout and righteous, one with the Holy Spirit upon him, waiting for God. Anna is among those who are worshiping, fasting, and praying as they look forward to what God is going to do in their world.

Think about the way people today live. whether church people or not, most people choose to live the way they want, especially in this country.

Do we fail to hear from God and experience God's miracles in our lives the way Mary and Joseph and Anna and Simeon did?

God isn't doing that anymore today? Or is it because we're just not ready for that today?

Because we'd rather not have God interfere in our lives beyond what we are comfortable with. when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, there wasn't just a handful of people there.

[42 : 08] This was the temple in Jerusalem, the one and only place where people could go in Israel to practice their sacrificial religion and to make their offerings to God.

There were a whole lot of people there doing business in the temple, whatever it was that they had to do, offering their sacrifices and worshiping God and milling about.

It was probably like the mall on Christmas Eve. Simeon was taking a huge risk standing in the temple proclaiming to an audience of Jews that baby Jesus was the Messiah and that he was going to save Gentiles.

Well, it's Jews. The Jews were oppressed by the Gentiles. They were looking for a Messiah who would rescue them from the Gentiles and maybe even put them in charge over some of the Gentiles.

They also said, he also said that Jesus was destined to cause some in Israel to rise and some in Israel to fall. not words that would have been popular among the religious folks at the temple.

[43 : 30] How would you feel? Some prophet walks in here some morning and says, people, I see you. Some of you will rise and some of you will fall in the judgment.

How would you feel? Simeon took a risk. But Christian, have you talked about Jesus lately with someone who you think really might not receive the message very happily?

Have you been called the fool that the Bible says we all are for actually believing in God's miracles and having the nerve to tell people about it?

God's love. If we don't want to do the hard stuff, if we only want a convenient Christianity that's about feeling good and doing a few things in the world that seem to be good, we're not going to be open to God getting involved in our lives in any truly significant way.

And we might just miss God when God shows up. Anna and Simeon didn't.

[44 : 52] They were waiting. They had lived lives of being prepared. When they came face to face with Jesus, they knew him. And they praised God that they had been ready to see.

They fulfilled their call to witness to Christ when Christ came. They waited and prepared each in their own way, apart from the world.

What's your call from God? Are you willing to prepare? Are you willing to wait to fulfill it?

When God says to you, now, now is the time. Here's the healing I want to work through you. Here's the word I want to speak through you.

Here is the water I want you to walk across to reach the lost. Here I am. Do you see me?

[46 : 08] Will you step out in faith? Church, we have to be prepared to answer God's call, whatever it is.

We are supposed to walk by faith, not by sight. And most times, that means waiting as we're living lives of being prepared.

Church, God will interfere in the world through us if we're prepared, if our eyes are open, if we're sensitive and available when God calls.

It takes both the willingness to faithfully do the work and the willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to move in us and through us.

people have a part in the way God moves in the world. When Jesus called each disciple and said, follow me, each one had a choice about whether or not to follow.

[47 : 19] We must choose to follow. But when we choose to follow, it also means to follow through. Be prepared.

Seek God. Wait. and when God's ready to move, pray God finds you alert and ready. Like Anna and Simeon.

Are you willing to commit your lives to prepare for Jesus interfering in the world through you? To wait in readiness no matter how long, not losing your faith and not believing the world when they tell you you're full of nonsense?

Simeon and Anna didn't just believe for the miracle of seeing the Messiah. They expected it. Can you commit your life today to living in expectation of whatever God sees fit to call you to in your own life?

Let's pray and ask God to forgive our sin and prepare our hearts for the rest of what God wants to do today. Heavenly Father, I have sinned.

[48 : 50] I have not loved you with my whole heart, with my whole mind, with all of my strength, with my whole heart, and I have not loved my neighbor as myself.

Forgive me. Forgive me, Lord, especially for the sin of failing to be fully prepared and patient as I wait for you to reveal to me your will and fulfill it in my life.

Teach me to approach you with expectation. Teach me to honor you, Jesus. like the kings and the people of old.

In Jesus' name I pray. And now, Lord, I just lift up those sins I have in my heart.

I lift them up in silence to you. God loves you so much.

[50 : 29] He sent his son that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have eternal life. God loves you. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Glory to God. Amen. Will you stand as you're able and honor and worship the God who loves you so much. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. may we evermore be led to thee. As with joyful stars they spread to that lowly manger bed, there to let the need be for him whom heaven and earth adore.

[51 : 59] So may we with living beard ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at that major, rude and bare, so may we with holy joy pure and free from sin's alloy.

All our thoughts and treasures bring, Christ to thee our heavenly King.

What child is this who lay to rest on Mary's lap?

His lap is sleeping, whom angels scream with an anthem sweet, while the shepherds watch are keeping.

[53 : 40] This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.

Haze, haze to bring him, Lord, the maveless son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and earth, the peasant king to own him.

The king of pain, salvation brings, like loving hearts and throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.

[54 : 37] Haze, haze to bring him, Lord, the maveless son of Mary.

Christ gave us his son, and we give back an offering of worship, of praise, of our entire lives, as a reflection of our great love in return.

O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven appears to us.

O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven appears to us.

O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven appears to us.

[56 : 25] O Lord, the skies and earth. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven appears to us. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heavenhe does not say that. As you can not look to us. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven appears to us. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven are bad, but heaven appears to us.

O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven ■■■ alg lie. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, but heaven reaches to us. O Lord, the skies and earth are bad, soachsen of a battle, but heaven■at on us.

No shadow in your presence. No more joy they would dare to stand before your throne.

Before the only one will have my life. It's only by your blood.

And it's only through your mercy. Lord, I call. I bring an offering of worship to my King.

[57 : 34] No one on earth deserves the praises that I sing. Jesus, may you receive the honor that you're due.

Oh, Lord, I bring an offering to you. Oh, Lord, I bring an offering to you.

Oh, Lord, I bring an offering to you. Please be seated. It seems a long time ago now.

Back in 1982, I did not go to church. I didn't have any kind of a religious, spiritual life at all. And one day, I was in Washington, D.C. at a business conference.

And I wound up going to a worship service with the people I had traveled. I didn't want to go. I wound up going. They didn't make me go.

[58 : 53] They just said, well, we're leaving at such and such a time and you'll be there. And instead of sleeping in that morning, I got up and I was there. And over the course of the message that was preached in that worship service, I came to Christ.

I realized that I needed God in my life. I didn't know what it meant, really, as an adult. I had been raised a Christmas and Easter Catholic kid.

I knew Jesus when I was little. But I had forgotten. I had forgotten. And at that moment, at that service, I knew that I needed God.

And I felt this rush of God over me and in me and through me. Now, about that time, too, for about a year and a half to two years or so prior to that, I had begun developing a really, really nasty condition of bursitis in my shoulders.

You know me at all. You know that I have a ballet school in North Buffalo. That's my other life. And I needed my shoulders. I needed my arms to work.

[60 : 10] There were times that my shoulders would seize up so badly that I was afraid to drive. It would happen when I was trying to, like, drive the car and I couldn't move my arm. And when I accepted Christ at that service in Washington, one of the people I was with said, you know, there's a guy down there.

His name's Mike. And if you go with me, he'll pray for you. And God will heal that bursitis. I had no idea God did that.

Like I said, see any Catholic kid, I didn't know people laid hands on the sick and God, you know, they recovered because God healed them. But I went. But I went. I went down. And this man put one hand on my head and one hand on my shoulder and he prayed.

And I felt like they describe on those TV shows electricity tingling through my whole body from the top of my head to the bottoms of my feet. And I didn't know what it was.

When I went home, long drive from D.C. with my friends, I wasn't driving because I was in a Holy Spirit fog.

[61 : 29] I didn't quite know what that was, but I was. I woke up the next morning and the bursitis was gone. Gone completely. I had full range of motion.

I had no pain. I was fine. Gone. After almost two years. And it's never bothered me since. Never come back. Never been a problem.

One day, about two, three weeks after that happened, I was in a new church. And I was having a lot of problems at that time.

You know, God came in three weeks ahead of time. That's good. Everything was good. I felt great. It was wonderful. I still had problems. I still had the stuff that was going on in my life. And I was having a big one at that point.

And I knew I had been told, pray, God will answer you. Pray, God will answer you. Well, I didn't know anybody in this church yet. You have to realize that. I hadn't talked to anyone about this.

[62 : 29] They didn't know I had a problem. And this woman walked up to me. She came up while I'm sitting in my seat waiting for the service to start. She comes up behind me. She hands me this little slip of paper.

And she says, hi, I don't mean to bother you. And I hope you're not, you know, you don't take this wrong or think it's weird or anything. But I was praying. And God put it on my heart that I should pray for you.

And God told me you needed this. She went back and sat down. I thanked her. And I opened it up. And it was a scripture verse. Now, she hadn't written it out.

I had to look it up. Okay? She just gave me the book and the chapter and verse. It was the answer. It was the answer. What was in God's word told me what I needed to know.

Because that woman listened to God and prayed for me. And followed. And I said in that moment, God, I want to do that.

[63 : 32] I want to be able to touch people and they get healed. I want you to do that through me. I want to be able to help people with their problems and talk to them and know from you.

Not just me trying to figure out what I think they should do. I want to know from you what they should do. And God began to do that in my life.

And for most of my Christian ministry, I have been a lay person. This clergy thing is new. This is recent. For most of my life, as a Christian, I have ministered to people as a lay person.

I have prayed for people and seen miracles happen. I have seen all kinds of healings and deliverances. That's not me. That's God. People ask me, why doesn't everybody get healed every time you touch them?

I don't know. I have no idea. This is God's business, not mine. I do know that if I am not showing up prepared and willing, I won't be ready to do what people need when God shows up to do it.

[64 : 50] I want to be ready. Do you? Do you? Do you want to be ready for whatever God wants from you? There's a prayer that Methodists use.

It's an old, old prayer. I have it in more modern language. It's based on John Wesley's teaching. And it's usually prayed at something we call covenant renewal.

And that usually happens around New Year's. So I chatted with Pastor Tom and he said, yeah, do that. And I want you to know that it's a heavy prayer.

So I'm not going to tell you you have to pray. But if you want to pray, God will meet you in a way God's never met you before.

Let's pray. I am no longer my own, but yours.

[65 : 57] Put me to what you will. Place me with whom you will. Put me to doing. Put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you.

Praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full. Let me be empty. Let me have all things.

Let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, creator, redeemer, and sustainer, you are mine and I am yours.

So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven. Amen. God invites all of us to come to God's table.

Come expecting and you will receive. Come asking. Seeking. You will find God. Everyone is welcome. If you love God and earnestly repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ you are welcome at the table this morning even if it's your first time in this church or any church for that matter if you seek to follow Jesus and follow through with the spirit of God that he pours into you you are welcome at the table.

[67 : 42] Come. Be blessed. Receive God. The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks to the Lord our God. Thanks for your grace. 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 and 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 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 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.

[69 : 09] 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. On the night in which he gave himself up for us he took the bread and he broke the bread and he said to his disciples this is my body which is broken for you.

Eat of this often in remembrance of me. When the supper was over he took the cup and he gave thanks to you Father Almighty and he said this is the blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink of this often 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 this blood.

[71 : 05] 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 and your holy church all honor and glory is yours almighty father now and forever.

Amen. Now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us saying our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as days of heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen. For those who are serving please come forward at this moment. Amen. Amen.

Amen. The table is ready.

Come. Worship God. Come expecting to receive. If you'd like prayer at the rail we'll be there to anoint you with oil if you like and to pray for whatever your needs are light a candle as you say your prayer as well.

[74 : 12] Come to you whatever God is leading come and worship the Lord. Amen. It's easier to give you the gift of gold than give my heart for another to hold it's easier It's easier to give you the things I do than to open my life and let you walk through It's easier Yeah, easier Do I hide behind my offering while you're hoping for the heart of me?

Am I the only gift that you long for me to give?

The weary wisdom The weary wisdom The brokenness It's only a fool The rush is in Only a fool So it's easier to give only a part To risk it away my whole heart It's easier Yeah, easier Yeah, easier Yeah, easier Overcome my innocence My wisdom becomes foolishness Oh, let's rest Before the tide I want to give myself away So let by light of a star sweetly gleaming

We go in hearts by His cradle we sing Fall on your knees Fall on your knees The conqueror comes in peace Only a child could heal the wound or the fear It keeps me away from you Only a child Only a child It was only a child It's closing hymn. I think it's the first Noel. Is that right?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[78 : 14] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Where they, they eat green and sheep On a cold winter's night that was so deep Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel Born is the King of Israel With a river and a star Shall give these beyond and far And to the earth it gave great light And so it continued all day and night

And by the light of that same star Three wise men came from country far To seek for a king was there intent And to follow the star there ever it went Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel Born is the King of Israel The star tonight to the northwest Overbound the heaven and took his breast

And there it did all stop and stay Right over the place where Jesus lay Then entered in those wise and free Who reverently upon the King And offered there in his presence Their gold and butter and frankincense Noel, Noel, Noel Noel, Noel Born is the King of Israel Now Anna and Simeon and Mary and Joseph

[81 : 47] They were all Israelites There was a time in the history of Israel When they were in captivity in Egypt That they had been in captivity so long That they all but forgot who God was They forgot how to worship They forgot all kinds of things So God took them out into the wilderness And in the wilderness God spent 40 years Reacquainting himself with them And them with them That's what Pastor Tom is going to be preaching About starting next week It's time Church For us to be reacquainted with who God is And how God really wants to move In and through God's people As you go may the Lord bless you and keep you May the Lord make his face to shine upon you And be gracious unto you May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you And grant you love And joy And peace that passes all understanding Not to hold it in for yourself

But to empty yourself of it For the blessing of everyone you come in contact with In Jesus' name we pray Amen