

April 24, 2016

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Date: 24 April 2016

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody.

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. If any kids would like to come up, we'd love to have you join us. This is the day that the Lord has made.

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

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

Welcome to Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. I'm Scott Dabb. If you are new to our church, please pick up a gift at the connection site in the back of the sanctuary after worship. And please fill out your friendship card to get on the mailing list, sign up for activities, and for prayers and concerns or notes for the staff.

[1 : 3 5] Enjoy the service. We are glad to have you here with us at church this morning. On the clipboard, you will find a sign-up sheet for our prayer vigil, which is a 24-hour prayer vigil. And we ask people to sign up for an hour, which might sound like a lot of time, but it's not.

Once you get here and you get the experience of it, it goes by faster than you can imagine. It's not like when you pray by yourself and you sort of fall asleep and doze off. It really is a different experience.

So we do encourage that for your participation. If you want to order carnations for Mother's Day, I understand you need to do that this week. So just mentioning it, if that's a part of your tradition, order those this week.

Let's turn our hearts and our souls to the Lord in prayer, shall we? Dear God, we thank you for this morning and we thank you for the blessing of this night. We pray now that your Holy Spirit would gather with us. Empower and wonder that we might experience the presence of God Almighty in this place.

Touch us, move us, live within us. For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand as we're going to sing together, Christ for the world we sing.

[2 : 3 8] Christ for the world we sing.

The world to Christ we bring. The world to Christ we bring. With loving zeal. The poor and damp and born.

The faint and overborn. Sin sick and sorrow born. Whom Christ doth heal. Christ for the world we sing.

The world to Christ we bring. With love and prayer. With love and prayer. The faint and overborn. The faint and overborn. The lost.

Thy restless passion's cross. Redeemed at countless cost. From dark despair. Christ for the world we sing.

[3 : 4 9] The world to Christ we bring. With one accord. With one accord. With us the word to share.

With us the word to share. With us the word to share. With us the cross to bear. For Christ our Lord. Christ for the world we sing.

The world to Christ we bring. With joyful song. The newborn souls whose days.

Reclaimed from ever's grace. Inspired with hope and praise. To Christ be born. The Lord be with you.

Take a moment if you will and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit. Children come up. Any children want to come and join me?

[5 : 16] Any other kids want to come up? So if you had a choice and you could have this candy bar or this candy bar, how many would you want this one and how many would want that one?

How many this one? Well, the ones who want this one are the smart ones. You know why? There's nothing in this one. It's just a wrapper. It looked good, right? But it's empty.

This one's got a real chocolate bar inside. Might be small, but it's real. You know what? There's a lot of things in life that look really fancy and look really special. There's even people who look like they're special and they've got something great about them.

But it's not what's on the outside that matters. It's what's on the inside that matters. That's true for candy bars. That's true for people. That's true about life.

So make sure you're good on the inside and make sure that you spend your time with people that are good on the inside. And always check to make sure that there's something inside the wrapper. Because otherwise it's just a piece of paper.

[6 : 22] What do you guys think for this morning? Raise your hand if you want to share. Friends and family. My family. My sisters and brothers.

Friends and family. Friends and cousins. Friends and family. Ladies. My mom and dad.

Everything. All right. Lord, we thank you for all the blessings of life. For the people we love. For the life you give us. And for the good things we share. Bless us, Lord, always to be a blessing.

For it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You guys can go out to church school. All the kids are welcome and invited to go out to church school at this time. The mosquitoes are coming.

The mosquitoes are coming. Ah! We could get fed. You may have noticed the mosquitoes out there. And the net. We are as a church.

[7 : 32] The whole United Methodist Church around the world is collecting money to help wipe out malaria. And our children have decided they're going to push this. That's why they made mosquitoes for you.

You're welcome to have one if you didn't get one on the way in. On the way out. The point is that we believe that in the next two to four years we can wipe malaria off the face of the earth.

And we've already made a good start. So the kids are encouraging you to make an extra gift. That's why you have an envelope in your offering or your bulletin to share with that. So we give that for your consideration.

And this is for your understanding. I really just wanted to say thank you to the supporters of Imagine No Malaria.

We've really been able to do some really incredible work. What excites me about this initiative of the United Methodist Church is that it's really been one of those places where we have seen a really clear need.

[8 : 31] And together we have rolled our sleeves up and decided to make a difference. We had a mom contact me. And her daughter, rather than having a birthday party, wanted to do a fundraiser for Imagine No Malaria.

Every birthday she takes that opportunity to have kind of a fundraiser event and sends all of that money straight to us. So those kind of things really hit home for me.

And it makes it all worthwhile. People of our church heard the deadly buzz of the mosquito. And we said enough.

We've responded with our hearts. We've responded with our work. We've responded with our generosity and our creativity. We are acting like disciples of Jesus Christ.

And we are bringing transforming healing and hope to and with and for our neighbors. The money that has been donated to Imagine No Malaria has been used to provide bed nets.

[9 : 37] It's been used to drain standing water that breeds mosquitoes. It's helped provide infrastructures and medical centers so that they can achieve that help.

I got to go to a family's home and help them hang their nets. There I met a little boy who met us at the doorway and was a little suspicious about us. As he saw his mom warm up to us, he decided that we might be worth trusting.

We got to pray with his family and hang nets above their beds and really celebrate the work that we were doing together. And as we were leaving, the community health volunteer who was with us, she leaned over to me and she said, Torai, his name, do you know what it means?

She told me that his name means speak up. And every day I think of that picture of Torai that I have, who is now living and thriving because of a simple net above his bed, because he had access to care.

Malaria is preventable, treatable, and beatable. So let's finish the job. And we can finish this together. So many things that we can do together as the church.

[10 : 44] And let us prayerfully bring this morning our gifts, tithes, and offerings as the Lord leads us today. The more I trust him, the more I love him, nothing good for me he'll deny.

The longer I know him, the better I can show him. I couldn't stop now if I try. Oh, it gets sweeter as the days go by.

It gets sweeter as the moments fly. The moment he saved me, his good grace he gave me, he placed his love down deep in my heart.

It's great joy in knowing, with him by and going, and every more for him to depart. Oh, it gets sweeter as the days go by.

It gets sweeter as the moments fly. It's sweeter, sweeter, sweeter, sweeter as the days go by.

[12 : 46] responses police during 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.

[14 : 57] Thank you. Thank you. as we become members of Christ's Holy Church. On behalf of the church, I present Katie and Sue Kemp for baptism.

These questions are for the parents. Do you reject the evil powers of this world, repent of your sin, and accept the freedom and power God gives you?

Do you resist Satan? If so, answer, I do. Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? And promise to serve as Christ's representative through faithful participation in his church?

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

[16 : 03] And will you who sponsored this child encourage and support him in the Christian faith? If so, answer, I will. And will you, the Church of Christ, renew your own vows of commitment to Christ, and accept the responsibility to assist these parents in fulfilling their vows?

If so, answer, we will. We will. We just promised to babysit just so you know. Hell, welcome. He is on the así. Should it?

Shall we pray?

Lord, bless this water as a symbol of your sanctifying and renewing grace. As you have used water to bless the saints of history, let it now bless your child. Pour out your Holy Spirit on this gift of water.

Bless this child with your grace that leads to eternal life. Help us to know that as we die to this world, we become alive to Christ and share in this final victory over sin and death.

[17 : 12] Amen. Caden Pax Yucca.

I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord bless you and keep you this day and on.

Amen. Brothers and sisters, shall we welcome our newest member into the family of God? Applause What a blessing it is always to welcome our new little ones into the family.

of God and to be of support to a family that wants to raise their children in the Lord. Isn't it a wonderful blessing? Amen. Amen.

So we rejoice. We rejoice with the Yucca family and just all that has happened this morning in their lives. And we have some concerns we need to bring before the Lord as well.

[18 : 41] Of course, Melissa Rada, who is here with us this morning, she's been having a lot of pain from an injury to her neck and her shoulders. So we want to keep her in our prayers for healing. Sue Wilson is also in need of healing.

She's got a very painful tooth infection. You all know how tough that can be sometimes. Elena, Deanna Clapsaddles, was diagnosed with leukemia.

Elena is 23 years old. And we want to keep her in our prayers as well. Mary Licata will be having surgery on Wednesday. And Sarah Mayer, who accompanies for our choir, is in the hospital.

So with these prayers and concerns, and those concerns that are in your hearts as well, let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we come before you so grateful.

So grateful that you are a God who desires to be involved in our lives. You're not a far off somewhere else just watching over us to see what we'll do.

[19 : 53] You want to be involved with us. And you want us to praise you and worship you and to come to you in all things.

Knowing that you are with us, that you walk by our side, that you rejoice with us when we rejoice, and that you mourn with us when we mourn, that you worry.

With us when we worry so that we'll know your great love in that way. Lord God, we come before you on behalf of all of those we know who are sick and infirm.

All of those who are in need of a healing touch from you, and we ask that by your Spirit you would touch them and make them whole from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet.

And their spirits and their souls and their bodies, Lord God, touch them. Bring them healing. Bring them peace. And pray also, Lord, for those who are grieving losses.

[21 : 03] How difficult that can be, Lord. Just pray in Jesus' name that you touch them. That you bring compassion and peace into their lives.

That you help them to remember those things that are joyful and wonderful. The things of beauty of their relationship with their lost loved one. Lord God, we pray in Jesus' name for all of those people in this world who do not know you.

Those who need to hear the wonderful news of salvation in Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord God, that as we hear your word, as we hear the message this morning, as we worship in song and prayer and fellowship, that you would give us what we need so that we can be your hands and your feet, your voice and your words to people who are lost and in need of salvation.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name for all of those people in the world who are recovering from all kinds of natural disasters, Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering injustices of all kinds. We ask that you would touch them. Bring them peace and healing. Let them know that you are with them.

[22 : 43] No matter what's going on around them in the world. Now, Lord, we just take a moment to lift up in the silence of our hearts those things that you have put on us that are our concerns.

Amen. Amen. We thank you for answers to prayer, Lord God, that we have seen come into being.

We thank you for the answers to prayer that are coming because we have prayed. We know you hear us and answer us. And now, Lord, as we hear your word, as we hear the message, give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts and minds to understand and receive all that you have for us.

Be with Pastor Tom and bless him as he delivers the message. Let all of our worship be a blessing to you. That is why we came.

It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[24 : 04] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. Today's scripture reading comes from Acts chapter 4 verses 32 through 37 and chapter 5, 1 through 11.

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions were their own, but they shared everything they had.

With great power, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there was no needy persons among them.

[25 : 10] For from time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas, which meant son of encouragement, sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife, Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Then Peter said, Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing?

[26 : 25] You have not lied just to human beings, but to God. When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. A great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

Then some young man came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

Peter asked her, Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land? Yes, she said, that is the price.

Peter said to her, How could you conspire to test the spirit of the Lord? Listen, the feet of the man who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.

At that moment, she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young man came in, and finding her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband.

[27 : 31] Great fear seized the whole church, and all who heard about these events. This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Paul.

Yeah, I think great fear would seize me, don't you? You don't give enough money to the church, you're dead. That would change the equation a little bit, wouldn't it? Aren't you glad I had this after the offering, and not before?

What are we afraid of? Proverbs in chapter 9 says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One. It's understanding.

Are we afraid of God? Are we afraid of not having enough money? Are we afraid of failure, of pain? Disappointing our loved ones. Not having any love at all.

I have to be honest with you, I don't like this story. I wish it wasn't in the Bible. My preference is to preach about love, the grace, the joy, the wonder, the blessings of God.

[28 : 35] That's what I like to preach about. That's what you like to hear about. They say that in preaching, you're supposed to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. So today we're doing a little afflicted.

Everybody's bringing their gifts. Ananias and Sapphira have seen amazing things happen. People are getting healed. Miracles are occurring. There's this great community that's filled with love and care and charity for each other.

And they're going, we want to be a part of this. They don't want to be left out. So they sold some property. Doesn't imply they sold their house or anything. Probably some investment property.

And they brought the gift and laid it before the apostles' feet. And Peter said, is this all the money for what you sold the property for? And they said, absolutely. Peter says, really, dude?

You know, you're lying. And he drops dead. Whoa. Whoa. Harsh. So what's it about?

[29 : 37] It's not about the money. I'll tell you that. That's what people think. It's never really about the money. The stories in the Bible are not about money. Jesus talks a lot about money because it's a tool.

It's a tool that shows us what we really love, what we really care about, and what we don't care about. Because it has so much influence in our world. Money is really worth nothing. You can't redeem it for anything.

You used to be able to redeem it for gold. Now you can redeem it for absolutely nothing. It only has the power we give it. We're showing images from eternal life. These are just like replicas.

You know it won't look quite like this. But they talk about the streets of gold. And you wonder why they would include such a small thing as the streets were made of gold. It's because we've come to believe that there's so much power in wealth that God wants us to know that to him it's nothing.

He walks on it. He thinks it's really of little value, about as much value as one pebble from a stone driveway. And yet we give it such great power.

[30 : 44] We treasure it. Matthew chapter 6 says to us, where your treasure is, your heart will also be. Where's our heart? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

And love your neighbor as yourself. These are the great commandments of Jesus. But do we understand what love is? And do we understand what it means to love someone with all that we are?

This is what we think love is. Hi, John? Sorry I'm late.

Hi, you must be Scarlet. Yeah, it's nice to meet you.

The pleasure's all mine. Oh, here, take a seat.

[32 : 02] Yeah, sure. Yeah, I hope you're hungry, because I already ordered our food. Oh, great, I'm starving. I got us something that's low in carbs and high in antioxidants, so you won't get fat.

Excuse me? Oh, it looks like you don't have that problem. Have you done some money? You've got amazing eyes.

Sweet accent. That's French, isn't it? Um, no. More like Wisconsin. Pure-born cheese head here.

Have you ever had any cheese from Wisconsin? Oh, no. Cheese makes me gassy. Oh, dinner's here.

Let's spice these up. I hope you're excited for the main course. I know I am. Whoa. Dinner is served.

[33 : 01] Oh, my God.

Are you okay? Oh, my God. Are you okay? Oh, my God. Are you okay? Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Hey, my son's playing. Time for some real dancing.

Oh, hey. It's been moving. I love you. Jazz hands. What do you say?

Time for some dessert? What's wrong with you? All the same.

All the same. All the same. Whoa, wait.

[34 : 22] Scarlet! What do you want? Scarlet, look. I'm sorry. I was an idiot back there. Yeah, you were. What was all that? Look.

I know I seem crazy, but my mind was all over the place trying to be someone I thought you'd like. But I'd like to show you the real me.

Uh, I don't know. We could go dancing. I like the sound of that. Did you have anything else in mind?

I guess. I guess. I guess. So, about that second date.

Forget dating. Let's start a family. You see, we misrepresent, misunderstand, misengage love.

[35 : 35] And we create broken relationships on the wrong kind of love. In the Greek, they had three different words that they used for love. Eros, from which we get the erotica love, the passion, the thing that draws us to one another, built in our emotions.

And they had filios love. And they had filios love. That partnering, that sense of paying attention and being close and watching for the cues from each other, so that we can partner through life.

And this is what we think we get from it. But the truth of the matter is, is genuine love comes in the third one that God talks about. Agape love. Agape love.

Which is a self-giving love. Agape love. A love that offers itself up without worrying about what it might get in return. a love that's genuine a love that's vulnerable based on trust they had everything in common nobody was in need because if someone needed something they would sell the property they had and put it in with the rest they became vulnerable they became open they were in a situation where they knew that they could they could give everything that they were because they could trust the other person to be there to pick them up love is opening ourselves up and taking a chance that we can trust the other person and trust is the is the keystone of any relationship i trust my refrigerator to work every day you know it's no good if it works 30 days out of 31 right would stick it to the curb when we say the wedding vows we don't say to have it to hold from this day forward except the third friday in february and the fourth saturday in october when i can go wild and do whatever i want that's not love love is all in and these people weren't all in peter says to ananias you haven't lied to me you've lied to god you've lied to others you've lied to yourself you self set your self-serving desires above other people they could have brought less they could have just claimed that they didn't have enough what they wanted was they wanted the benefit without the commitment does that sound familiar our culture is building a world on benefit without commitment when i was uh very young a teenager we had something we called going steady i don't know if they do that anymore and what that meant is that you would go out only with that one person and to signify that a boy was supposed to buy the girl a ring so i went to miller's drug store where for five dollars and 23 cents i could buy them a ring which would last for three weeks before it turned their finger green now you've heard that before okay that's benefits without commitment that that's being someone who wants everything and wants to offer very little love must be sincere as romans says hate what's evil cling to what's good be devoted to one another in love honor one another above yourselves can we love someone so that their interests their concerns their needs their worries and their troubles are more important than our own but the problem is we can only do that if we have a relationship that's built on mutual love so that we can trust them and and the problem is is sometimes we don't have that this story it's so startling because of how it appears in chapter four we've got this whole thing about how they love each other they were giving to each other they were giving to each other they cared for each other miracles and blessings and all this stuff you're you're seeing the unicorns dancing around in the streets and all of a sudden the next chapter it's and you're dead because you didn't give it up we're like oh harsh right but you see what what it's really pointing out is that love without justice it's not real love mercy without a sense of judgment and righteousness is empty grace comes with some cost and if we have one person who's offering mercy and love and caring and the other person is simply

taking for themselves that sets up not love but abuse 20 some years ago in my previous parish i was shocked when i arrived there and found that one-third of the women in the community i lived in were getting physically abused every week one-third every week and i talked to the women and they would say well i love him so i forgive them and they get beat up again the next week and their husband would say i'm so sorry that i hit you and then hit her again the next week that's not love that's abuse if one side is giving all and the other side is giving little that's not love that's the situation that's sad and that's the situation that we have exemplified here you see love is proved out in the actions this story talks about how they share all their possessions could you imagine could you imagine if you saw a community that would give to anybody in need take care of them watch out for them do to them how we would want done to us i think that's a golden rule isn't it do unto others as you would have others do unto you matthew in chapter 25 has this statement at the end of a story jesus says truly i tell you whatever you do for the least of these brothers and sisters you do for me if you take care of anybody who's made in the image of god you're taking care of god do we love god enough to really love our neighbors as ourselves to care for them to watch out for them to share with them in a couple of weeks we're going to start a different series which will be about the platinum world do unto others as you would have god do unto you can we be loving even when we get nothing in return can we be loving in spite of the fact that people haven't done anything to deserve it can we be loving and caring for those who are just so desperately in need that they have little to offer in return it's one thing when when we have people of equal partnership but sometimes we have people that just don't have much to give can we be good to them some of our people are trying that's our mission that's our mission there is many many different missions here um i believe it's through the joshua connection and um this one particularly that we do on thursday night is a community dinner and we have people from all kinds of different walks of life coming to it people who need fellowship people who need a hot meal we have a clothes closet that goes with it where they go into the closet and they're able to go through and find clothes that they need coats pants tops sweaters shoes boots we have a lot of different people from different churches come over and help and it means a lot to these people uh coming to get a hot meal because sometimes it's the only hot meal that they have they also come for fellowship because it's the only touch of society or fellowship they get from their community and it's really nice to see the sort of family that they're starting to become i think one of the miracles of the dinner is that no matter what and especially in the beginning we always wonder what are we going to serve what are we going to serve and food has never been a problem sometimes you wonder where the food is going to come from but it's always there we do a community rummage sale there and we've done it

[44 : 21] different we do it in the parking lot and we don't have any prices on anything we just let the people decide what they want to give us and we'd be happy to give it to them for free because that's our main objective is just to get this stuff to people who need it they're they're really generous even when they can't afford to be generous we also do special holiday stuff and we see a bunch of people come to those the holiday dinners christmas time we give gifts to the kids i think that we're there's so many different personalities in the community there and they're so accepting of one another which is great to see we have a gentleman here that was uh probably nobody would ever sit with him because he's he has Tourette's yeah he's changed the most i think of anybody who's come to this dinner over the years yeah he makes anti-social to social yeah he makes a point of making sure that he says goodbye to me now every time when he leaves there's other people that actually enjoy sitting when i'm talking to him i'm just so happy that he has found his blossom uh right a new life here it's just it's it's a pleasure it's a pleasure to to minister to these people we receive when we give we give out love we receive love in return we share with people in naga falls at a dinner or buffalo where we feed people nicaragua around the world all sorts of places i think there's even a table out there that shares a lot of it why do we do that we do that because god's already given to us that's why we take up these mission moments so often people ask me why do we do that we have to have some place where we can give it away and it doesn't come back to us so we can show the love for god that he's shown to us nobody was in need they cared for each other they looked out for each other now they may have been in want but they weren't in need do we love do we love as we're supposed to love do we give up what we care about and go deep into our love when i proposed to my wife i went to my bank account and i emptied it out i'm not suggesting this to all young people some of you have more money than i have okay but i didn't have that much but whatever i had was hers it all belonged to her i realized that if she would love me it was worth everything i have now you can look at that diamond she still wears it it's a tiny little thing she doesn't wear it because it's impressive not to you but means something to us do we give of who we are all in as god has given to us most of you know what john 3 16 is but first john 3 16 says this this is how we know what love is jesus christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters if anyone has material possessions and sees a brother and sister in need but has no pity on them how can the love of god be in that person dear children let us not love with words or speech but with actions and truth anybody can say love but when we act out love then we participate fully in love love doesn't ask what's the minimum i have to give love says what's the most i can afford because god gave it all for us the most i have to give love to us and that's what i have to give you a little bit of love to give you a little bit of love but i would tell you where your heart is your treasure is actions come from what we love we give to what we love real love agape love which in the king james version is translated charity i like that i think it fits better because we messed up the word love i love chocolate that doesn't mean the same

thing does it charity i give of myself freely why because i'm a different person from what god's done to me see actions prove out a transformed life in the bible it says by their fruits you'll know who they are by their actions you'll know who they are what did god do well and here it's interesting that that they said that the power was in the grace we usually talk about the power being in the holy spirit the power being in faith the power being in all sorts of things but power in the grace the power of love is in god making the ultimate sacrifice god got up on a cross and made himself completely vulnerable he opened himself up and he said go ahead do your worst to me throw your sins on me beat me abuse me attack me and i will love you anyways he became vulnerable and opened his heart for us so that we can know what love was how do we respond to a love like that do we do we respond by taking advantage by asking what do we get out of it that's cheap grace we got a lot of people who want cheap grace they want they want a savior without a lord they want the blessings without the commitment grace was freely given they shared with one another they had no hidden bank accounts they they they didn't keep a separate little accounting or or or or say that mine was mine you know how it works in marriage what's mine is hers and what's hers is hers not really you know that my wife and i we share everything together because that's what love is there's no separation there's no where i begin and she starts we're all one but not everyone wants to live that way i went out with a group of friends one time this is a number of years ago and uh we were we were out for just some beverages and snacks and things and the bill came and everybody there were seven of us everybody threw in a twenty dollar bill now the the tab was ninety five dollars six of us put in the twenty dollar bill but one guy threw in three bucks he looked at the tab and decided that's what he owed okay that's fine whatever we didn't care until he started taking out change he said well well you put too much in that's too big of a tip it's not your money you know we're looking at him just like totally stunned this is not your money but you're giving him too much it's not your money now do you know what that does to your relationship from then on out we're still good friends to this day but every time i go out with him i got to check to see what he put down for a tip it's not your money the streets are made of gold to say to you god can make anything out of nothing it's not yours this world doesn't belong to you all the things you've built up all the stuff you believe you won't it's not real do you know how quickly everything you have can vanish my wife and i were talking the other day as people my age tend to do about are we prepared for retirement will we have enough that's one of the big questions we carry and the real question is will it make any difference ask the people in syria one day they had a fine life everything was good they knew what their world was going to be the next day it was all destroyed on the other hand god can make something out of nothing so he can take your life that's in ruins and turn it into blessings it's never about the money we make it about the money because we're afraid we're afraid

we're afraid of the wrong thing and so we want to take from god and we don't give anything back or in other words we want to abuse our god and be in an abusive relationship with him that actual passage from matthew 6 begins like this this don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also is your heart in eternity is your heart with the one who can make things work when it seems impossible is your heart with the one who can do miracles or is your heart with ananias and surprise i gotta keep some in my pocket i can't give all of me i can't make that commitment have you ever noticed we say those words real quickly love the lord your god with all your heart so mine love the lord your god with all your heart all your soul all your mind all your strength all in commitment that's what god asked for we're not living in that anymore these people came with selfish ambitions trying to buy power and salvation it's a sad story they saw the blessings of god and they wanted a piece of it but they didn't want to make any commitment to it we're seeing that in our world today i've talked a little bit about how the churches seem to be a bit in decline well the truth of the matter is the churches are a bit in decline but if you look closely you'll see what it is i saw it on easter on easter we had about a hundred less people here for worship than in the years before the same thing happened in niagara falls the same things happened in a lot of churches around our community you know what it was all the people who sort of kind of once in a while come and show up for church didn't all the people who come regular were here if they could be they were here and if they weren't they were here the week before what's happening now is people are deciding they're either all in with god or they're not sad part is these people had stored up their treasures on earth and neglected the place that it really mattered you know they didn't just die what happened when they died they went to meet their maker do we live every day and every decision based on the idea this may be the day every day and every decision based on the idea this may be the day we meet our lord are we afraid of the god that cannot only destroy our life in this world but the one to come as the scripture says are we not afraid because we're living in a loving relationship all in with our god first john chapter 4 the next chapter says this is how love is made complete among us so that we have confidence on the day of judgment in this world we're like jesus there's no fear in love but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment and the one who fears is not made perfect in love christians love because of whose we are because we know what christ did already for us we know that god is all in for us and so we can be all in with god and if we are we're loved by god and the story and the story really doesn't mean anything to us if we are then we're the people in the chapter four not the people in chapter five the power of grace is a new beginning an eternal blessing with a god

who's loved us completely and calls us to love him in return with all our heart with all our soul with all our mind with all our strength something that isn't just on the outside but wells up within us and we want to do today today the power of grace is in loving god the power of grace is in loving god thousand times i've failed still your mercy remains should i stumble again still i'm gone in your face Everlasting, your light will shine when all else stays.

Ever-ending, your glory goes beyond all things. You will love from all else, my purpose remains.

[57 : 51] Beyond losing myself, in bringing you praise. Everlasting, your light will shine when all else stays.

Ever-ending, your glory goes beyond all things. My heart and my soul, I give you control.

Build to be from the inside of all. Let justice and grace become my embrace.

To love you from the inside out. Everlasting, your light will shine when all else stays.

Ever-ending, your glory goes beyond all things.

And the pride of my heart is to bring you praise. From the inside out. From the inside out.
For my soul cries out.

[58 : 56] My heart and my soul, I give you control. Consume me from the inside out.

Let justice and grace become my embrace. Let justice and grace become my embrace.
To love you from the inside out.

Ever-ending, your glory goes beyond all things. Ever-ending, your glory goes beyond all things.
Your glory goes beyond all things. Your glory goes beyond all things.

And the pride of my heart is to bring you praise. Is to bring you praise. From the inside out.
Lord, my soul cries out.

From the inside out. Lord, my soul cries out. To you, Lord. God is a great joy.

[59 : 52] And we don't just follow God out of obedience, because that's just a mind game. And
there's nothing in our hearts that go with it. We don't just follow God because we're afraid
of judgment, because that's selfish.

It's just out of self-protection. We follow God with love, a deep, bielidded love. And I
worship Him.

The God that we love, the God that we adore. I love the world You step down into
darkness Open my eyes and we see Beauty that made this heart I adore you, hope of my
life Stand with you So here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I am to say that
you're my God You're all together, lonely All together, working All together, wonderful to
be

Be your bold angel So highly exalted Lord, I sit there and I'll fall Humbly you came to the
earth You created all for love Say he came for So here I am to worship Here I am to bow
down Here I am to say that you're my God You're all together, loving All together, worthy
All together, wonderful to be And I'll never know How much it costs How much it costs To
see my sin

Upon that cross Upon that cross And I'll never know How much it costs To see my sin
Upon that cross Here I am to worship Here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I
am to say that you're my God You're all together, loving You're all together, loving You're
all together, loving All together, wonderful to be Here I am to worship Here I am to worship
We are one in the Spirit We are one in the Lord We are one in the Spirit We are one in the
Lord We are one in the Spirit We are one in the Spirit We are one in the Lord

[63 : 19] We are one in the Spirit We are one in the Lord And we pray that all unity May one day be
restored And they'll know we are Christians By our love, by our love Yes, they'll know we
are Christians By our love We will walk with each other We will walk hand in hand We will
walk with each other We will walk hand in hand And together we'll spread the news That
God is in our land And they'll know we are Christians By our love, by our love Yes, they'll
know we are Christians By our love We will walk with each other We will walk side by side
We will walk with each other We will walk side by side And we'll guide each one's dignity
And save each one's pride

And they'll know we are Christians By our love, by our love Yes, they'll know we are
Christians By our love Please be seated All praise to the Father From whom all things
come And all praise to Christ Jesus His holy Son And all praise to the Spirit Who makes
us one And they'll know we are Christians By our love, by our love Yes, they'll know we
are Christians By our love Please be seated Sometimes we have to kind of question our
motives You know, why are we following God?

Are we really doing it because we love God? We have to sometimes reflect on If we really
love God And we really have decided to follow God Then why are we making the choices
we do?

We're all sinners And we all need grace And so we come again to God For His love, His acceptance His mercy His forgiveness As we pray Let's focus on the God who loves us Dear God in Heaven Dear God in Heaven I have sinned I have sinned I have not always loved you I have not always followed you And I have not always followed you I have not always been committed to you And I have not always been committed to you I have not always treated others with love I have not always treated others with love Forgive me Lord Forgive me Lord Fill me with your presence Fill me with your love Help me to show love to you And to others In Jesus' name we pray Amen.

Hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This proves God's love for us. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

[66 : 29] In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Your compassion is a spare.

Stirring us to tireless driving. Your abundant life to share. Amen.

Your salvation in our worship. So this is to remind us of our sister Nicole on that day so that we can take who we are to be with her on the blessing of that day.

Even for those who can't be present, they can be present in spirit. The Lord be with you. And also be with you. Lift up your hearts.

[68 : 59] And lift up your hearts of the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and prayers. It is right. It is a good and it is a joyful thing.

Always and everywhere to thank God. God gives us everything. We just forget about that. God gives us everything.

And God has given all that he is for us. He is all in for us. All he wants us is to be all in for him. So we come to worship him to remember whose we are and what we are.

To share in the blessing of his presence in our midst. And so with all the people on earth and all the angels in heaven, we praise his name and join their unending hymn saying, Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the high. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the high. Hosanna in the high.

[70 : 03] They sang to him on that Palm Sunday. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. And just five days later, hung him on a cross.

And God could have sent angels to destroy them, which is probably what we all deserve. But instead, he stretched out and offered himself on a cross. And said, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. And so he gave us this meal to remember him and remember what he's done for us.

So that we would always know what we're doing. And make the right choice. He took the bread, gave thanks to God, and he broke the bread. He gave it to his disciples and he said, take and eat.

This is my body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins. Eat of this in remembrance of me. When the supper was over, he took the cup and gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples and he said, drink from this, all of you.

[71 : 04] This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of this, often remembering me. And so in remembrance of these mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise.

And in thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ offering for us. As we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ has risen.

Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, Lord. Fill us up completely that we might love completely. Fill us up to be the body of Christ. Signs and wonders, miracles.

Not to do anything more than to prove the glory of God. Bless us, Lord, to be a blessing to this world around us. Help us to see love and grace and hope.

Help us to be the people who give and the people who receive. Lord, change the world to your grace and love.

[72 : 05] For we offer these prayers in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus taught his disciples to pray a prayer that we share in together.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen. For those who are assisting with communion come forward at this time please. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[74 : 41] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[78 : 53] I chaired with the other congregations that this next song I remember from when I was a kid, we had an associate pastor who couldn't sing worth a lick, but whenever he got to this song, he would turn on his mic and belt it out.

Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart So on this song For those of you who can't sing I give you absolute permission Go ahead, belt it out You'll just bring back childhood memories We can all sing Lord I want to be a Christian Please stand if you're able Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart In my heart Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart In my heart In my heart Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart Lord I want to be like Jesus In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

You know, I tell these tales of some of the woes of the church and even the struggles we might have. But I don't want you to misunderstand. Good Friday, there wasn't a seat in the house. It was hard to find any place to sit because the Christians came out for that celebration.

Now, if you would have gone back 10 years ago, nobody came out on Good Friday. That was just crazy. Who would do such a thing? But now the Christians have said, we're going all in. We're going a little deeper. Last week, we had a meeting at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

[80 : 59] It was 72 degrees out in April. Nobody was coming, right? We had a meeting because we wanted to talk about reaching out to Jesus and how can we take the love of God out there. 20-some people show up.

Now, if you would have asked me if I would have gotten four people three years ago, I would have said no way. The church has gone all in. That's the difference. We're seeing the separation. You don't want to look for relationships where people are sort of with you.

Nobody wants a kind of love. Nobody wants a sort of kind of committed person to be in love with. Go find people that will really love you, that will care for you and nurture you, that you can give of yourself completely to.

And be that way with one another. You know, yesterday, my grandson got a hamburger with his grandmother at Nina's. It's a favorite thing of his to stop and get a hamburger.

He took it home. He was looking forward to eating it. He went in the other room and he came out with dogs and eating his hamburger. Broke his little heart, you know? 14-year-old boy has a hamburger, his precious stuff.

[81 : 57] So he called up his grandma and grandma called up Nina's and told him the story and said she needs to pick up another one. So she went in there and she reached for her first and they said, oh no, no, no, this one's on us.

Now listen, Christians, we can't let Nina's out to us. Amen? If Nina's can be loving and caring and charitable and show the love of God, we certainly can too.

Amen? Go and be the people of God. Be blessed to be a blessing and may God lift up your heart and fill your heart with love and those who will love you in return. Go in peace.

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