

Growing In Faith

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [0 : 00] Hi, I'm Linda Barzikowski. I'm a certified lay minister and lay leader of the 1115 service. If this is your first time here, be sure to get a welcome bag from the connection site or the welcome and information center.
- I hope everyone will fill out their friendship card that you find in the bulletin. If you have any updated information, please be sure to fill out the card with your address and phone number.
- If you'd like to receive the newsletter, we ask that you do the same. On the back, there's a section for prayer requests, blessings, or notes to the staff. If you'd like them to stay confidential, we can do that too.
- We hope that you enjoy the service and have a wonderful day. We do welcome you to Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. Please join me in the call to worship. This is the day that the Lord has made.
- This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- [1 : 20] 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 pray. Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to gather together in your house. We pray that you will fill this house with your Holy Spirit, that we will encounter you in a powerful way.
- May what we say and do and sing to you this day be a blessing. May you be glorified through this worship. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you're able as we sing together God of the Ages.
- God of the Ages, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty all the starry band.
- God of shining birds, whose shining birds, whose splendor through the skies. God of grateful songs before thy throne all rise.
- [2 : 53] God of love, thy love divine hath led us in the past. In this free land with thee our love is cast.
- God of gates and light up. God of waarum, thy heart would I T yogin' bloodth 205th. God of sin as blind ■■■■■ hob■, being and deaf of thy source bilge.
- Refresh thy people On their toils of prayer Lead us from night Till ever-ending day Fill all our lives With grateful joy And glory, Lord And praise be evermore The Lord be with you.
- And also with you. Please be seated. If there are any kids who are from ages 3 through 3rd grade who want to go over with me to the junior church, they're welcome to join me right now in the back of the sanctuary.
- And as the choir goes up into the loft, we're going to talk about what we're thankful for because we come into worship wanting to praise God. And so one of the things I'm thankful for is that this church is so incredibly generous.

[4 : 35] You've already given over \$5,000 to Hurricane Relief. And I want you to check in your bulletin. There's another envelope we're asking for for those who are feeling called to give toward Hurricane Irma.

We're taking up another offering for more hurricanes. If you do make a check, make it payable to PCUMC, and it'll all go to UMCOR, who's already on the ground and working there.

And as a supportive, connectional ministry, we're going to be able to help some people. What are you thankful for this morning? Okay. Yeah. Mommy's coming with her.

So help down in Florida for family members. Absolutely. Yeah. What else are we thankful for? Good morning, Robert. Oh, I know it's on your hearts. Come on.

I know it. Good morning. Family, yeah. All living things, right? What else? He was in the sanctuary. Mothers, absolutely. Sunshine.

[5 : 48] He's children, yes. Say what say it is, yes. Yeah. Sorry, what? All living reptiles.

Okay. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. A new heart. Praise God. Yeah.

Yeah. Oh. Cleaning, we weren't expecting. Always a good thing. Come to my house.

Wonderful. Yeah. So as we reflect on just how good God is, just how thankful our hearts are, let's return our gifts, tithes, and offerings to the Lord.

Amazing grace How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me I once was lost But now am found Was blind but now I see T'was grace that taught my heart to fear

[7 : 36] And grace my fears relieved How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed Through many dangers Toils and snares I have already come T'is grace that brought me safe thus far And grace will lead me home When we've been there ten thousand years

Bright shining as the sun We know that stays to sing God's praise Than when we'd be first begun Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Try it Why you sinn Lord, we thank you for your many gifts, for your love, your mercy, your many blessings.

We give back to you, Lord, a portion of what you've given to us, a reflection of our great love for you. May you bless these gifts to go out and be a transformative presence in the world.

May people's lives be changed through these gifts. Direct us, Lord, and show us how to use them, and may they be filled with your power and your strength, your peace, and your love. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen. And please be seated.

We have some prayer concerns I want to share with you. Please pray for Dick and Sandy Roseland.

[10 : 37] Dick Roseland has been put on hospice care. Also, we have a couple of grieving families. Pray for the Salino family. Larry Salino's mother passed away this past week. Also, pray for Sue Mayer and her family. Sue Mayer is the one who is usually the accompanist for the choir, but her father-in-law passed away just a few hours ago. So, please pray for her. And Mary Zupo is in the hospital. So, please pray for Mary for swift healing. What other prayer concerns do we have to lift up today?

Okay. So, pray for Aunt Wanda so that she can have hip surgery and be well enough to have the surgery. What else? Elizabeth? Oh, poor baby. So, please pray for little Elizabeth. She's still having ear problems. Yeah. San Mateo. Yes, absolutely. Safe travels to Florida. Absolutely. Yes.

So, pray for Catherine and pray for Amy as she steps into the position of caregiver. Yeah.

Oh, shout it out, honey. Yes. Everybody in hurricane zones. Absolutely. Yeah. Any others?

Okay. Let us pray. Gracious and loving Lord, we thank you for your mercies and your care and your love. And we come to you to this day knowing we are your children, dearly loved by you.

[12 : 50] And so, we trust in you. And we're putting our confidence in you. And we know that you are there with us. We pray that you'll take away our fear, take away our struggles. We pray for those who are struggling with their health, Lord, that you will have a supernatural encounter with them, that they will receive healing in a powerful way, and your name be glorified through it.

We pray for pain to diminish or be gone completely. We pray for diseases to disappear and for people to just proclaim your name through all the healing that you are doing in people's bodies.

We pray for people who are struggling in their minds, in their hearts, in their relationships, that you'll bring healing there as well, that you'll bring unity, caring and love, wisdom and guidance. Lord, we pray that you'll open up our eyes, open up our hearts, open up our minds, open us up to your spirit, to how you would have us to be, to bring us wholeness and wellness. Lord, we pray for those who are grieving, that your peace will be upon them, that your comfort will surround them, and that they will have supportive, loving community.

Lord, we pray for those who are grieving, that they will feel your support and encouragement, and see you in the midst of all the struggles.

We pray for those who are near hurricanes and going through all sorts of different things with the weather. Lord, we pray for safety, covering of protection, and we pray for the people that are responding to it. Lord, we pray for safe travels, and for our families as well. Lord, we pray that you will fill our families with your presence, help us as families to put you as a priority, and to grow closer to each other through you. We pray for our church, that you will show us the way, Lord, to become an even greater transformative community, transform us individually and as a community of faith, that we will go in the direction you send us, lead us strongly, show us the way.

[15 : 35] And we pray, Lord, for our country, for unity and peace. We pray also for the people that don't know you yet, the people in our hearts, that we lift up to you this day.

Amen. Lord, we thank you and we praise you, for you are good and mighty, and we glorify your name this day and every day. Amen.

Now let's hear from the word of the Lord. Amen. Today's reading is from the book of Acts, chapter 18, verses 24 through 28.

Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the scriptures.

He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.

[17 : 13] He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Judy. For our sermon series this fall, we're studying stories about faith from the book of Acts.

And this one is about a man named Apollos and a couple named Priscilla and Aquila. And the key verse for our study together these weeks is this from 1 Corinthians.

[18 : 17] Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last. But we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

We all want the Buffalo Bills to win the Super Bowl, amen? But really, winning the Super Bowl is not winning the greatest prize of all. Gaining eternal life, the favor of God, changing the way our world is, is the prize.

Change your life, change our church, change the world. We're also talking about some of the changes going on in our congregation. And we've been going through a number of different ones. Last week, we spoke about the change in our schedule and how it affected worship.

Because our worship, we found, is the key issue as to whether our young people as adults are part of a church. So we've changed things around to make sure that our Sunday school is not competing with our worship experience for our young people so that they will be in worship.

But at the same time, we've also found that our worship was complicating our Sunday school. So we have discovered that most of our adults haven't been to Sunday school for most of the time we've been around as a church.

[19 : 30] So we've decided that Sunday school isn't for children alone anymore. It's for all of you as well. So we've changed the schedule so that you can have a time to go and learn about God.

Because growing in our faith, growing in our faith together is one of the key things that will strengthen our faith and give us the path towards that victory that we seek. Deuteronomy chapter 6 has these wonderful words.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God. The Lord is one. Love the Lord with your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And we would add, as Jesus did, with all your mind.

We're supposed to love God in every and all ways. But what does it mean to love God? How are we supposed to do it? We want eternal life.

We want the forgiveness of our sins. We want the power of the Holy Spirit. We want the blessing of God. But how do we know that we know what we're supposed to know that we know? You know what I mean?

[20 : 31] How can we be sure that we understand what we're supposed to understand? The key figure in this little passage is a man by the name of Apollos. Wouldn't you love that name?

Apollos! I'm surprised we don't have even more people named Apollos. Now, I don't want all the babies named Apollos now. But, right? Well, I mean, that guy walks in the room and his name alone says something.

Apollos. It describes Apollos. It says, He was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and he had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately.

Apollos. He was an educated person from the city of Alexandria in Egypt, where the largest library in the ancient world was located. He was a man who was persuasive.

When he talked, all ears were on him. He was a man who understood the Scriptures and had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. And did I mention he had a terrific name?

[21 : 35] But somehow he was wrong. It says that he only knew the baptism of John and that it was necessary for Priscilla and Aquila to take him home and explain to him the way of God more adequately.

He was wrong. How can we be wrong when we have a thorough knowledge of the Scripture, when we've committed our lives to understanding God?

How could we possibly be so confused? And we don't really know what he didn't understand. Some people say he didn't know about the resurrection. Others say he didn't know about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Some say he didn't know about the death and resurrection of Jesus. He says, we don't really know. A smart, passionate man.

A talented man, if you will. But talent only takes you so far. I played football when I was a little kid. Anybody else play football in the street? We played street football.

[22 : 35] So when you got tackled, it hurt. Okay? But here's what the plays were. We'd get together in a huddle and we'd go, okay, everybody run around and get open. Break.

And everybody would run around all over the place. And the fastest, most talented ones would get open, catch the football, run for a touchdown. Right? And the ones who weren't quite so clever or quite so adept at movement, clumsy in other words, where the ones who weren't very fast usually stayed on the line, just blocking.

Because the truth is, talent ruled the day in that time. But you see, in actual organized football, once you get into playing it in school, playing it in college, playing it as pros, you find out that there's a lot more that you have to know than just being talented.

I don't know that most people are aware, but football is a sport of educated men. In the NFL, most of the players have at least a college degree.

Some of them have a master's degree or more. These are not a bunch of uneducated men that just wander around the field and try to get open. They have a plan. They know what they're doing.

[23 : 52] And we need to have a plan. We need to know what we're doing. It's good that we learn about God. And to the surprise of many people, a lot of smart people, educated people believe in God.

I happen to be one of them. In Deuteronomy, it goes on to continue to say, Put sticky notes all over the place about God.

So that everywhere you go and everything you do will remind you of God and teach you about God. And it's good that every day you take in the Word of God. You should be studying the Scriptures on a daily basis.

You should read the whole Scripture so that you can be like Apollos and have a thorough understanding of Scripture, not just little bits and pieces of it. I would ask how many of you have read the whole Bible, but my understanding from statistics is that only one in five people who go to church have read the Bible.

So I don't want to embarrass anybody. That's not my goal. We want to give you a plan for how to improve your life. Read a little bit of Scripture. You know, if you read a chapter a day, you'll get through that book faster than you realize.

[25 : 12] Just take a piece of it. If you don't know where to start, start with the crib notes. Genesis, Exodus, Luke, Acts, and Romans. You read those five books and you'll have a pretty good idea of what the Christian faith is.

But don't stop there. It should be a part of our daily desire. And you should read what other people have read and written about it. So commentaries and having people share with you.

You could even go on the Internet and learn a lot about God. But you do know that not everything on the Internet is true. You realize that, right? Just as somebody wrote it down doesn't make it right.

That's the problem. We can study on our own, which is good. That doesn't mean we'll necessarily get it right by ourselves. But studying the Scripture is important. In the book of Psalms, it says to us, Blessed is the one who does not walk and step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers.

[26 : 25] You know, there was someone who once taught that if you study Scriptures regularly, and you get to know them and understand them, as Apollos did thoroughly, you'll be like a person standing in a stream of water looking for something to drink.

If you don't, you'll be like the person who goes to the well and sends down the little cup, and it goes down into the well, and it brings up some water, and it's hitting the walls, and on the way up, and by the time it gets to your lips, you get a little taste, as compared to the one standing in the stream that drinks as much as they want.

That's the image of the psalm, that we're planted in such a way in the Scripture that we take from it whenever we want, and we drink fully. This is why they practice in football.

Because the idea is not to have some idea of what the play is. The idea is not to go out and do something or whatever, but to make it so natural, so regular, so much a part of who they are, they don't even think about what they do, they just go and do it.

Which is why teams that are together for a long time have a better success rate than those that are not. Practice, practice again and again and again.

[27 : 41] But it's not just what we do, it's what we allow God to do. In the book of Ephesians, it says to us, I keep asking that God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know Him better.

The greatest truth that you'll ever understand doesn't come from what you discover, doesn't come from what you read, doesn't even come from what you taught, it comes directly from God. I could give you the examples where I thought I came up with something clever, where I thought I had a great idea, where I thought I had wonderful insights, only to discover that God gave those same insights to thousands of people everywhere that were listening.

If we listen to what God has to say, He will teach us, He will guide us, He will bless us, He will give us the information directly. And that's not just to the pastors, that's not just to the people who are leaders, that's to every single person who follows God, no matter what their age, no matter what their background.

If they desire God, God will bless them. We don't know what Apollos was missing. Maybe he was missing the Holy Spirit. Maybe he had the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance, but he didn't understand the baptism of having the Holy Spirit teach us and guiding us, letting the Holy Spirit come upon us and the power and wisdom that He wants to share with us.

That's why we don't study alone. Because the truth of the matter is, is if God is downloading information to everybody, then the chances are that there's something He's going to say to you that He won't say to me.

[29 : 17] Hey, I've studied the Bible more than most of you. But that doesn't mean God can't tell you something amazing today that I never thought of. When I teach a Wednesday night Bible study, it's very common that somebody will share a thought and an idea and I'll be like, oh, that's a cool way of looking at it.

I never thought of that before. Because we learn from each other and we grow with each other. That's why we need to be gathered together in our studies because otherwise we'll be like Apollos.

We might have studied thoroughly. We might know the Scriptures in and out. But we're missing something. We're missing something that someone else could give us. Priscilla and Aquila could share that with him. That's why I invite you to join me in Sunday school after church today.

Spend a little time visiting with some people. Get to know them. Talk with them. You'll learn a little more because of what they've had revealed to them as we do this faith journey together.

After all, that's what the Bible is anyways. It's a story of people's experience with God. See, somewhere in America, we've gotten the idea that our faith is an individual thing.

[30 : 31] Me and my Jesus. Like we can put them in our pocket and keep them to ourselves. God never intended us to go on this journey alone. The whole point of having a church is that we have a community of people that help us to stay on the trail in the right way.

Otherwise, we find ourselves just going off in our own directions. And oftentimes, the voices we're hearing are not the voice of God. They're just our own personal desires. And it takes humility to learn from other people.

In the book of Proverbs, it says to us, when pride comes, then comes disgrace. But with humility comes wisdom. It's not easy.

Imagine Apollos. He's a learned man. He knows what he's talking about. He's fully versed in the Scripture. And yet he's wrong. How do you correct a man like that?

And how do you be corrected if you are a person like that? The other night, I was up in Niagara Falls and I had a young man come up to me after our service there.

[31 : 37] And he wanted to share with me a word of wisdom. I was in a hurry. I wanted to get to where I was headed. Have you ever been that way where you're trying to get somewhere and somebody's trying to talk to you and you just want to get somewhere?

So you give them the yeah, yeah, yeah. And basically what he said to me is he said, I've learned people don't listen when you talk. Wow.

Hello. I get it, Lord. I get it. Through the words of that man came the message of God. Slow down, Tom.

Because if you're in such a hurry to get to all the things you think you're doing for God, you may miss what God is saying to you. You see how that happens? God will speak to us.

Through other people if we let him. So Apollos let Priscilla and Aquila, people that were just regular folks in the church, teach him something. He didn't say, I know everything.

[32 : 39] He said, I need to learn from everyone who God could be speaking to today. And Priscilla and Aquila, what a wonderful pair they are.

They didn't get up in the middle of the service and say, hey, guy, you're wrong. What a fool. You don't even understand things correctly. Let me tell you how it is.

What would they have accomplished? Embarrassed Apollos? Created a scene? Caused an argument and a disagreement? Instead, they took him quietly, privately, not wanting to show off, but wanting to help Apollos.

People willing to make the sacrifice of their own pride so that in humility they could teach someone else something wonderful.

You know, football actually, being a team sport, just like Christianity, requires sacrifice. It's one of the things we wonder if maybe Apollos was missing about the resurrection and the sacrifice on the cross of Jesus.

[33 : 43] We're not sure. Let me describe to you something called a pick play. They're illegal now, so they've changed the name and called them a rub play. It's the same thing. Okay? Basically, it works like this.

The play is that this is the receiver, and he's going to go over here and catch the ball. All right? But this guy, as soon as he comes out, is going to start following him, and so is this guy.

And so they're going to be trailing behind him pretty close. So the idea is to have these two guys run out and get in their way. You see that? So then what happens is they get in the way of the people defending him.

He gets out here, he's wide open, and the quarterback throws the ball. That's called a rub play in the NFL. A pick play is when you actually tackle the people trying to defend, or you hit them, or you do something where you actually kind of push them out of the way.

But a rub play is when you just get in the way, and this guy breaks free. Now, do you think these receivers don't want to catch the ball? Do you think that they're untalented people?

[34 : 50] Do you think that they don't like having their statistics, or have their name up on the screen that they caught the catch? Do you think they don't want to run around out here and get open so the quarterback will see them and throw the ball to them?

Of course they do. But they're willing to make the sacrifice so that they actually look like they did nothing, when in reality they caused the other one to shine.

Maybe Priscilla and Aquila understood that. As we should as Christians, that what we do, we do to help others come closer to God, not just for our own selfish pride.

Because that pride leads to mistakes. If all you do is worry about your individual statistics in football, if all you do is worry about whether you get your name up on the screen, the team will lose.

I actually have a lot of hope for the Buffalo Bills. Do you know why? There are a bunch of no-names. Have you noticed that? Anybody who had a name, they're ditching. The truth is, they're still professional football players with a lot of skill.

[36 : 01] But they don't realize that they don't have to make the sacrifice. They don't realize that they're not superstars. So they go out and play as a team.

Which is what God wants us to do. Priscilla and Aquila could have been really rotten folks. Turned Apollos off, left him ignorant. But instead, they corrected him privately, quietly, at home, and it became encouraging.

And he learned. He learned. He learned. Not because he wasn't a smart man. Not because he wasn't a talented man. But because we all make mistakes and we need to learn from experience. That's what experience does for us.

Is each of our experiences teaches us something else about God. So that even we can see what's coming down the line. It's called vision. In football, they learn it by watching and watching and watching football until they see what's going on.

And so they don't get some kind of trick play like this one that will surprise us. What's he doing?

[37 : 23] The walking touchdown. You gotta love it. If he was a pro, somebody would have destroyed him. But these guys aren't so experienced, so they need help to see these things coming.

Worship is the power of a church. It excites our souls and brings us together to express our love for God. But the small groups give us the opportunity to grow with each other so that we become better together than we would alone.

It's called synergy. Worship gives us passion. And they understood worship and they worshiped together and Apollos worshiped and led worship. But they also understood that they need to spend time with each other so that they can learn and grow and support each other.

Apollos not only learned what he was supposed to, it says that the people encouraged him and supported him in his journeys and in his work. You know, the thing about church is you can go to worship every week and not really know anyone in the room.

You can come here week after week after week after week after week and barely recognize the faces of the people in the pews with you. This is a large church.

[38 : 45] church. We couldn't possibly expect that everyone will know everyone. I even struggle with your names. But we can know someone and someone can know us and in doing that we develop a power as we know each other, we know about God, and we learn to trust in each other.

In football, the quarterback has to trust the receivers. And the receivers have to trust the quarterback. You may not be aware of it, but a professional football quarterback has approximately five to six seconds to get rid of the ball before these big, huge guys kill him.

Run him over. Let's walk through that. One, two, three, four, five. Bam. The ball's got to be gone. You think he has time to look around for somebody running around trying to get open?

Have you ever watched the quarterback go back and throw a ball where it seems like there's nobody when there's a guy wide open over here? There's a reason for that because he's following the play.

You see, he knows that his job is simply to get the ball to here. And if the receivers do their job, all of them, there'll be a guy there to catch it. When you see the ball thrown to here and there's nobody there, it means somebody else messed up the play even though we always believe it's a quarterback who messed up, don't we?

[40 : 11] What's the matter with that bum? Nothing. He threw it exactly where it was supposed to be. We have to trust that the other people will do their part in a football game and especially in life.

The brother of Jesus wrote a book named James and he says in it, the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

If we're really seeking God's wisdom, we'll seek something that will build us up together. Christianity is a team sport. It's something we do together. We win together.

God is not going to say, well done, good and faithful servant to somebody who had a solitary Christianity and did nothing with anyone else. That's not in the Bible.

And it's not even healthy. There's a legend about a baker and a farmer who lived in this small village. The baker made his goods and the farmer bought his bread and the farmer, he did his work on his dairy farm and he sold butter to the baker.

[41 : 28] The kids grew up together, went to school together, they played in the streets, they knew each other, they had seen each other, they had talked to each other briefly, but they really didn't know each other closely. They simply were aware that each other were part of the town they lived in.

One day, as the baker was making his bread, he looked at the butter he was getting and somehow he just felt this wasn't right. so he decided that he needed to weigh it because somehow he thought the farmer was cheating him.

So he put a one pound weight on the scale and he put the butter on and sure enough it didn't measure up. Day after day after day it didn't measure up.

And so the baker became incensed at this. How could the farmer cheat him? This is so wrong. I can't believe he would do this to me. So he called the judge in town and brought the farmer before the judge and the judge looked at the farmer and said, so how do you determine your butter that it's the right amount?

Do you have weights that you measure out each pound? He said, well, you know, Your Honor, I never really bought any weights. What I simply do is I take a one pound loaf of bread from the baker and I put it on the scale and measure the butter to be.

[42 : 51] Ouch. But you see, the worst part about this story is these were neighbors. They should have been close. They should have been friends.

They should have been able to go and say, I don't understand what's going on. Instead of the baker being embarrassed, instead of the baker made a fool, he would have discovered that he was the one who was wrong after all.

See, this is why we need each other. Because together, we get to the goal. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul talks about Apollos.

He said, I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, God made it grow. None of us actually make anything grow. That's God. God gives the growth.

But together, we make our faith happen. It's good to grow in faith. It's a work of God. I invite you to come and try out Sunday school today.

[43 : 47] Something a little different. Instead of just sending your kids to Sunday school, go out to Sunday school yourself and see if you can't grow in your relationship with God, in your relationship with other people.

We want eternal life. We want the forgiveness of our sins. We want the power of the Holy Spirit. We want the blessing of God. Amen? Amen? Well, it's something we do together as a team with humility.

So that we're not looking to embarrass each other, but we're looking to support and encourage each other. So we're not trying to promote ourselves, but we're trying to promote God and lift each other up so that we can learn about God, but also learn to trust and love and support each other.

The writer of the Proverbs, who is King Solomon, one of the wisest men in the world, has ever known because he was open to the wisdom of God and had that gift, he wrote these words years ago to us.

He said, Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She's more precious than rubies.

[44 : 59] Nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand and her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her. Those who hold fast will be blessed. God is calling you to victory, calling you to change your life, change your church, and change the world.

1 Corinthians 9 says to us, Everyone who competes in that game goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last but we do it to get a crown that will last forever by studying the ancient words of God.

Holy words of reason were our blood in this world.

We resigned to God's own heart Oh, let the ancient words in love Words of life Words of hope Give us strength Help us hope In this world where we roam Ancient words will guide us home Ancient words Ever true Changing me And changing you We have come With open hearts Oh, let the ancient words be in part Holy words of faith

[47 : 13] The ancient words Of faith And it down To this age King to us Through sacrifice Oh, hear the faithful words Oh, hear the faithful words Of Christ Mother's blood States each page They have died For this day Hear them cry Through the years Hear these words And hold them And hold them dear Ancient words Ever true Ancient words Ever true Changing me And changing you We have come With open hearts With open hearts With open hearts More than the ancient words

In part Ancient words Ever true Ancient words Ever true Changing me And changing you We have come With open hearts With open hearts Oh, let the ancient words In part Give us ■ In part In part Apart In part Is upon all this world reveals and wars to all all our wants sought gain

I have counted loss spent and worthless now compared to this knowing you Jesus knowing you that it is so great with me you're my all you're the best you're my joy my righteousness and I love you Lord now my heart's desire is to know you more to be found in you and all that's yours to possess my faith Lord I could not earn all surpassing give all righteousness knowing you Jesus knowing you you can gain you I'm how you

I hum You're the best. You're my joy, my righteousness. And I love you, Lord.

God loves us enough to want to be in relationship with us. And the only way we can do that is if we come to him forgiven. And so we ask for forgiveness each week, getting right back on the right path. So won't you say a prayer of confession along with me? Lord, I am a sinner.

[51 : 34] Lord, I am a sinner. And I need your grace. And I need your grace. I've not always been loving to others. I've not always been loving to others. I've not always loved you. I've not always loved you.

I've been selfish. I've been selfish. I've been unkind. I've been thoughtless. I have sinned in many ways. Reveal the sins to me, Lord. And take them away from me. Forgive me my sins.

And set me on the path of righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. And this proves God's love for you and for me. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God.

Amen. And now as a forgiven body of Christ, let's share the peace of the Spirit with one another. Remind you parents that kids are supposed to be coming back in the next couple minutes. So watch for them if you could.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. This is the air I breathe.

[53 : 37] This is the air I breathe. This is the air I breathe.

Your holy presence living in me.

This is my daily bread. This is my daily bread.

Your very word is spoken to me.

And I am desperate for you.

[54 : 40] And I am lost without you.

You are the air I breathe.

You are the air I breathe. Your holy presence living in me.

You are the air I breathe.

Everyone who seeks after Christ in their life is welcome at the table of the Lord. It doesn't matter if this is your first time here or you've been here all along.

[55 : 49] It's a condition of the heart. It's a condition of the soul. Welcome to the Feast of Forgiveness. The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through the 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.

[56 : 53] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always in the power of your word and Holy Spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took the bread, and he gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread.

He gave it to his disciples, and he said, take and eat. He said, take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

And when the supper was over, he took the cup, and he gave thanks to you, and he said, this is the blood, my blood, of the new covenant, poured out for you, poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

[58 : 32] Drink of this often, remembering me. And so in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world, the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in his 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 it is in heaven.

[59 : 50] Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Will those who are serving please come forward. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Welcome to the table. Welcome to receive.

[62 : 06] Come forward and receive the Christ blessing. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[64 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[66 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.