

God's Love

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [0 : 00] Rb FOX Video It's just aCIENDIC Yourangle with the google is a ksi Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hi, welcome to Pendleton Center Church. We are the Menahem.
- If this is your first time here, be sure to pick up a welcome bag at the connection site or the Welcome and Information Desk. I hope everyone will put their name on the friendship card that is in their bulletin.
- If you would like to receive the church newsletter or need to update any information, be sure to fill out your address and phone number. On the back, you can write prayer concerns, blessings, or notes to the staff.
- Please enjoy the service and have a good day! Good morning, everybody! This is a day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.
- Especially since there's no snow. This is the day that the Lord has made.
- [1 : 43] Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- This is the day that the Lord has made. Oh, Lord, come into our presence. Fill us with your love. Help us to experience you. Open up our hearts, open up our minds to know you more. May this service of worship glorify you. In Jesus' name, amen.
- Amen. I'd like to invite you all to stand if you're able as we worship together singing, Hail to the Lord's anointed. ■ Deus is Roland-maier to sing ladies who KRSV-R per Y presumably sing■■■, set in hand...
- I'd like to pray for you to... Well, I vote for you today... ..3... stärsk lutins... I love you to sing.
- Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son.
- [3 : 12] Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun. He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free.
- To take away transmission and rule in equity. He comes with softest feeling to those who suffer on.
- To help the poor and needy, and with the weak he's strong. To give them songs for sighing, their darkness turned to light.
- Whose souls condemned and dying, are precious in his sight. He shall come down like flowers upon the fruitful earth.
- Love, joy, and hope like flowers bring in his path to birth. Before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go.
- [4 : 38] And righteousness like fountains from hill to valley flow. To him shall prayer unseason, and daily boughs ascend.
- His kingdom still in prison, his kingdom without end. The tide of time shall never run, his covenant with whom.
- His name shall stand forever, and then to watch his life. The Lord be with you.

And with you. Please be seated. And this is the first week of Advent. And so I'd like to invite the Wok family to come on up. As we light our Advent wreath this morning.

And hear the words from Luke chapter 1, verses 46 through 55. Mary's song. My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

[5 : 50] For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him. From generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped serve his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. And we do have a couple of clipboards to pass out with you this morning. And it's just the one, actually.

And it's for Christmas cookies. 'Tis the season to bake cookies. And we need cookies for lots of different things. For the Advent play that's on the 17th of December, and for the cantata that's on the 10th of December.

[6 : 58] So if you're a cookie baker, we would love to have some of your cookies for some of our receptions for things. And we are thankful for so many things. I'd love to hear what you are all thankful for this morning.

It's a good day. The sun is shining. I'm sure you all came with thanksgiving in your heart. Come on. Judy, what are you thankful for?

Amen. What are you thankful for? Amen. Amen. What else?

What else are we thankful for this morning? Yeah. Thankful for this church and all the people in it and all the ministers.

We appreciate you. Thank you. We are thankful for this church family. Yeah. I'm sorry, who? He's saying no.

[8 : 00] He's saying no, no, no. Yeah, Jen. Jen. Time with family. Yeah, absolutely. Where you're pointing.

Oh, over there. Carol. The music ministries in this church. Absolutely. People giving of their gift of music. It's wonderful. What else?

Oh. How about, yeah. A totaled car, but a healthy and safe son.

That's good. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, as we go through our time of offering, please take some time to reflect. God is so good.

If you were to really count how good God is in your heart, in your soul, the thankfulness would be overflowing. So, as you give, as a reflection of your love, as a reflection of your thanksgiving, as you give this morning, reflect on God's goodness and your thanksgiving and gratitude.

[9 : 06] Let's return our gifts, tithes, and offerings to the Lord. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

Now I've heard about this baby boy who'd come to earth to bring us joy.

And I just want to sing this song to you. It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor third, a major lift.

With every breath I'm singing, Hallelujah. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

- [10 : 48] Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
- A couple came to Bethlehem. Expecting a child, they searched the inn. To find a place for you were coming soon.
- There was no room for them to stay. So in a manger filled with hay, God's only Son was born.
- Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
- Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
- [12 : 04] Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The shepherds left their flocks by night to see this baby wrapped in light.
- The host of angels led them all to you. It was just as the angels said, you'll find you in a manger bed.
- Emmanuel and Savior. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
- Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Alleluia. I know you came to rescue me This baby boy you wrote to be A man and one may die for me And you too My sins would drive the nails in you That rugged cross was my cross too Still every breath you drew was Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah
- Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- [14 : 40] Hallelujah!
- Hallelujah, Lord. You are good and you are mighty and you have blessed us with so much. We give back to you, Lord, a reflection of our love, of our gratitude, and we pray that you will bless these gifts, that they will go out and transform the world in your name.
- For it's in Jesus' name that we pray and honor. Amen. Please be seated. We have a few prayer concerns within the church family that I'm aware of.
- I wanted to share with you. Please pray for Sally Reed. She has been diagnosed with lung cancer. Also pray for Sandy Gehrig. She has some serious health concerns.
- And for the family of Nona Goodrich, who passed away and her service was yesterday. So pray for Tim and Karen and the rest of their family. So are there any prayer concerns in the hearts of our church family this morning you'd like to have lifted up?
- [16 : 12] Judy. Nicholas. Two people named Nicholas for healing. Yes. Anyone else?
- Yeah. Ernie Rose, yes. So pray for Ernie Rose.
- He had just had surgery. He's going to be coming in for more surgery with his heart. So please pray for him and for Nancy. Anyone else? Okay.
- Let's pray. Gracious and loving, Lord, you are so good. We come here this day to worship you because you are mighty, you are strong, and you love us.
- And we love you, Lord. We pray that you will hear our prayers as we trust in you for all things. We pray for those that we have named with health concerns and those on our hearts, Lord, that weren't named.
- [17 : 24] We pray that your healing touch will be upon them. We pray for healing. We pray for healing. We pray for healing. We pray for healing. We pray for healing to happen.
- Diseases to be diminished and cast away in your holy name. Be with doctors and nurses. Give them your wisdom. And be with those who are in the position of caregiver, that you'll give them encouragement and strength.
- Help us all to be a family of comfort to those in need. As we walk through times that are difficult, Lord, give us your strength.

Give us your peace. Give us your presence. We know that you're there and trusting in you. We lift up, Lord, those in our families.

We pray for any hurt to be taken away and for healing to happen within our families, within our church family, within our communities, within our workplace.

[18 : 36] Lord, we pray for healing. May your protective covering be upon us and upon our families. Draw us closer to one another, closer to you.

And we pray that your love will abound. Lord, we lift up to you people who don't know you yet. That you will open their hearts to receive you and surround them with people who will witness in your name.

We offer up those we love who are struggling with their faith, struggling with their life, struggling with their health.

Lord, we lift them up to you. Heal our broken hearts. Be with us as we walk through dark times.

Lord, hear the prayers on the hearts of our people. Lord, give us your discernment.

[19 : 59] Give us your wisdom. Lead us in your direction. Make your voice strong and open our ears to receive you and know which way you are leading us.

Set us on the right path. Lord, we thank you and we trust you for all things. And we will praise your name in all times.

For you are good and you are mighty and you are loving and we trust in you. This day and every day. Amen. Now let's hear from the word of the Lord.

Good morning. This is Luke chapter 1 verses 26 through 38. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, Greetings you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

[21 : 21] But the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son. You are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His kingdom will never end. How will this be, Mary asked the angel, since I am a virgin?

The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come on you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age, and she who is said to be unable to conceive in her sixth month.

For no word from God will ever fail. I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May your word to me be fulfilled. Then the angel left her. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks to be God. All I want for Christmas is my two fronties, my two fronties.

[22 : 23] You know, I've been going to the dentist. I get more worried that that song is going to be true. What do you want for Christmas? What gift are you looking for? We've got gifts over here by the tree.

What kind of gift do you want? Does it come in a big bag like this one? Or maybe in a little tiny package. Some people say the best things come in little boxes.

This is actually our Good Samaritan effort to help the people who might not get gifts this year, our children. So there are tags out there. And if you'd like to help someone for Christmas, I think there's still some left.

So this is the last week. We'd appreciate you helping with that. You know, the truth of the matter is we all like gifts. It's nice to open something up. It's nice to have a smile on your face, especially when it's one of those, you know, just perfect gifts that was chosen for you.

Christmas is about what God gives to us. He gives us his love, which gives us confidence and hope and peace and purpose and joy and value. In the book of 1 Corinthians, it says faith, hope, and love.

[23 : 31] But the greatest of these is love. So this morning and through this series we've been looking at, I want to talk about how we experience God's love in our lives and how we then learn to love one another.

Because God wants to have a love affair with you. God chose Mary before Mary chose God. And God chose you.

You know, God chose you before you were even born. God knew you before you were even born. In the book of Jeremiah it says, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as a prophet to the nations. Before you even came into existence in this world, God chose to be in love with you.

God came to Mary. In the form of an angel who said, God is with you. God is with you.

[24 : 36] And because of that, you are highly favored. Now actually, in this little verse, there's two Greek words. One is chiero and the other is chierito.

Chierito. I don't know. I'm not Greek. You know, something like that. Chiero simply means rejoice. Marry. Be glad. Be like amazingly, overwhelmingly glad.

Because God has chosen you. It says that she's highly favored. But actually, the word means highly graced. Highly graced by God.

The love of God is amazing. When we experience the living God, it transforms our entire way of thinking. In fact, I don't know how you really get through this life as a Christian without the experience of the living God in your life.

Because it's so truly amazing. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul talks about it and says, Praise be to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

[25 : 49] For he chose us. For he chose us in him. Before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. God chose us.

Before he created any of this, he chose you. And decided that he was going to be in love with you. As a holy and blameless part of his creation.

The gifts of God are amazing. Take away our sin and our guilt. Offer us eternal life. Peace and goodness and hope and purpose and joy. And especially his presence in the Holy Spirit.

It's the most wonderful time of the year. We love that song, don't we? Kind of lifts us up. Why is this the most wonderful time of the year?

Because it's at this time of the year, especially that we remember, that Jesus is Emmanuel. He's with us. We don't come to worship some dead deity.

[26 : 51] We come to experience the living God. Amen? And that's a powerful experience. And what God calls us to is a love that in the Bible, he uses the Greek word agape, which means a love that goes both ways.

A relationship. An experience of love with God. God chooses us. The amazing thing is that the God of the universe wants to be in relationship with us.

It's like when my wife took an interest in me. People say, why did I get married so young? Because I did get married young. I was 19. And I said, because when someone that incredible decides they're interested in you, you don't pass for somebody else.

It doesn't work that way. Hello? I knew I was going several grades above my station. God has chosen us.

And that's even more incredible. Jesus was willing to give up who he was for us. It says in here that Jesus is called the Savior.

[28 : 04] What does it mean that he's a Savior? It means that he saved us from our brokenness. Saved us from our corruption. Saved us from our pain and our hopelessness.

In the book of Romans chapter 5, it says, God demonstrated his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God didn't go to the cross for us because we were so good.

God didn't choose us because we somehow were wonderful people. It says Mary was troubled by this greeting as we might. Highly graced. Highly favored.

How do you get to that status? We don't get to that status. God gives that to us. He was willing to die to his right to have only perfect creations.

So that he could be in relationship. Be in love with us. We're highly favored. Highly graced. A choice of God. The problem is, is some people see that as a one-way relationship.

[29 : 13] God loves us. We do whatever. God gives us great gifts. We just say, give me some more. And the unfortunate part is, is one-way relationships, they lead to abuse.

If one party is giving of themselves completely and sacrificially and loving the other person completely, and the other party is only loving themselves, we end up with a relationship that is hurtful, painful, abusive.

And the truth is, is some people actually want to have an abusive relationship with God. Real love. Agape love requires both parties to be in love.

That's true with God, even. That we need to love God as much as he loved us. The greatest commandment of all is to what? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

God asks us to love in return. I want a hippopotamus for Christmas. Only hippopotamus will do. Can you imagine that? Just imagine you wake up in the morning, there's a hippopotamus in your living room.

[30 : 28] What would you even do with such a thing? And I can't even imagine the mess it would make. In many, many ways, on many, many levels, which we're not even going to go into. Why would you want a hippopotamus?

Well, because I want it. You see, this is the way we become. We become a culture that's about, what do I get out of this relationship?

God offers his grace. And in the Christian faith, we say it's free. It's a gift that God has given to us, which is true, because we can't take it. We can't seize it.

We can't earn it. We can't buy it. It's only something that we receive because God is gracious enough to give it. But it comes with an expectation.

It comes with some sort of price. But the price in and of itself is a blessing. I make the coffee in our house.

[31 : 29] You know, I don't know how many of you make coffee, but I make the coffee, because without the coffee, we don't go. That's kind of the way our world works. I admit I am addicted. All right? I need this stuff to wake up in the morning.

So I set the coffee maker at night, and I make the coffee, and I set the timer, which I love the timer, because I'm old enough to remember the time there was no timer. There's nothing worse than getting up in the morning and having to make the coffee.

Every once in a while, my wife will get up, and she gets up far before me to go to work with the military, and she will let me know on a little note, you forgot to set the timer on the coffee.

Every really rare circumstance, it will say, you forgot to add the water or even make the coffee. That happens, too.

I don't make the coffee because my wife forces me to. It's not like she somehow said, if I don't make the coffee, our marriage is over or something like that. I make the coffee because I can imagine what it feels like to get up in the morning, and have a great cup of coffee.

[32 : 40] You know, that's why we give gifts at Christmas. Believe it or not, we give the gifts so that we can see somebody go, this is perfect. You know, when I have the opportunity to have a cup of coffee in the morning with my wife, sometimes she'll say, coffee doesn't taste right this morning.

I go, oh. At other times, she'll go, boy, the coffee's really good this morning. I'm like, do you know what I'm saying? The truth is, is that we do this, and there is a cost to relationships.

We give of ourselves, but we give of ourselves in such a way that we also have that gift returned to us. The Bible says it's better to give than to receive.

Mary was offered a gift. As she said in her own song, she will be the most blessed woman of all history because of what she does here. Is there any woman that has ever existed on the face of the earth that's more famous than Mary, the mother of Jesus?

Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come on you and make you pregnant. What? Can you imagine this?

[33 : 55] A young woman, and she's sitting there. She's engaged to be married. She lives in a kind of remote little village called Nazareth, and an angel says to her she's going to get pregnant by God.

Right about there, I'd be going, wait a minute. What's this going to mean? How's Joseph going to receive this news?

Will the people in the village rejoice that God made me pregnant, or will they say that I was, you know, not faithful to Joe? Which they did say, by the way.

There was a cost. She had to give birth to the baby in a barn. How many of you women would like to give birth to your child in a barn and have your midwives be shepherds?

I don't think so. I don't think so. But it says that Mary actually treasured these things up in her heart.

[34 : 58] It wasn't always easy. Her husband died young. And even more, her son died. A difficult death on a cross, and she was there to watch.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy was going to go through all of this? The problem is, is that we oftentimes believe that what we want is a relationship that's one way.

Give me all the bennies, God. Be my magic genie in heaven that will fix all my problems and give me everything good. If you're a real God.

Mary is asked to prove her love. Respond to grace. By living into the purpose that God had defined for her before she was even born.

Because God has a specific purpose for each of us. Before we even take our first breath. Remember that passage from Jeremiah?

[36 : 09] Jeremiah, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart. And created something absolutely amazing for you to do.

Each and every one of us gifted with something totally incredible that God is hoping we will do. Our response to love.

Now she did say to Mary, or the angel did say to Mary, Mary, he's going to be a king. He's going to reign forever. He's going to be a savior. It's going to be amazing.

That's kind of a promise I'd love to hear from my child. You know what I'm talking about? What a wonderful, amazing thing. God's grace. But it comes with an expectation that we will decide to live into what God wants us to live into.

God took the first step, offered us grace. But the grace comes with an expectation that we'll take the second step and return it by living into the purpose God made us for.

[37 : 17] It says in verse 37, God's word will happen. It cannot fail. It's not a question of whether God will succeed in the purpose for your life.

It's a question of whether we will accept that purpose. Did you know that if you do what God made you to do, you cannot fail? Now, the truth is, is our problem is we don't look at what God thinks.

We look at what the world calls success or failure. We look at whether we've accumulated a stash of money or whether we have a nice house or whether we have a lot of friends or we're popular or we do the things that we can see that have an impact.

God is offering us something more incredible. To live into a purpose that will make our very soul sing as Mary sang before God.

An incredible purpose. And in doing that, we return our gift to God. Because love is a two-way street. God offers us grace.

[38 : 20] And yes, it's his free gift to give to us. But he gives it with an expectation that we will love him in return. And we don't just love him, heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We also love our neighbor as ourself. Because you see, by this loving relationship with God, we learn how to love one another.

We're reading a lot of disturbing stories these days. In the newspapers and on TVs about people who have been living with an abusive lifestyle.

Now, folks worry that maybe they're the ones who have made a mistake or misjudged or misspoke. And we all do that. That happens even to the best of people.

But there's a big difference between that and people that live in a predatory way towards other folks to hurt them and harm them and cause them pain.

[39 : 19] And the reason for that is because we're developing a culture that says, It's all about my satisfaction and my pleasure.

As if somehow this was ever right. It's never right to be in an abusive, predatory relationship with someone else. Not just with the things we read about or see on TV.

But in any situation. Relationships, just like our relationship with God, are two-way streets. Not one-way street. It's not a call for you to love and for the other to not love.

Or for you to take and the other to love completely. That leads to abuse. And we've lived into a culture that somehow seems to think that that's okay.

That's not the love that God wants us to have with each other. Now, years ago, there were two favorite scriptures for almost every wedding I did. I would say at least nine out of ten weddings came with one of these two scriptures.

[40 : 29] The first was 1 Corinthians 13 and the second was Ephesians chapter 5 where it says, Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. That's an interesting scripture, isn't it? We don't get that request for that much anymore.

We really don't. And the truth of the matter is, it's one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible because what does it say? We're supposed to love each other. We're supposed to submit to each other.

We're supposed to care about each other and be concerned about each other and love each other the way God would love us. We're supposed to give of ourselves.

Knowing that the other person is doing the same thing. It's a wonderful passage, but nowadays we say, I'm not submitting. No way somebody's going to tell me what to do.

[41 : 30] I'm not going to become less in any way. And I know my husband's not going to be telling me what to do. Well, it goes the other way too, right? This is submit to each other.

Because imagine if your primary concern is how can you make life better for the person that you love.

I've got to tell you the truth. I make coffee, usually at night. All right? It's one of the last things I often do. And sometimes I'm like, you know, doing this kind of thing.

But I know that my wife appreciates having that cup of coffee in the morning. There's probably only one thing I dread in the morning more than making coffee. You know what it is? Walking out to the newspaper place.

Across the street. Why? Why is it across the street, right? You know, like, ah, is there a car cover? Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

[42 : 29] You know what I do? I actually do this little thing where on the way back this time of year I say, one less day of winter, one less day of winter, one less day of winter. It gets me through.

I can't stand getting the newspaper in the morning. But now that my wife gets up quite a bit before me, she has coffee. And sitting in my chair is the newspaper.

This is great. You see, that's what it's about. How do we help each other? Genesis says that what we need in life is a suitable helpmate. Someone to walk through life with us.

This isn't just about spouses. This is also about friends, about family, about parents and children. About the people we go to church with, the folks we work with, the people in our lives where we can love as God taught us to love.

Which is a two-way street, not built on what can I get out of the relationship, which leads to abuse. But how can I make the other person have a better life?

[43 : 41] And in doing so, we lift them up. And you know what happens when you lift other people up? They tend to want to pull you up, too.

Build a life. Knowing that there's someone out there that knows you completely, and you can trust them to love you anyways.

That's what love is. We have lots of relationships like that in our world. Here's some. And I, I will always love you.

I, I will always love you. I, I, hope love treats you kind.

And I hope you have all you've dreamed of. I, I, and I wish it's joy and happiness.

[44 : 56] But of all this, I wish you loved. Love. And I, I, will always love you.

I, I, will always love you. I, will always love you.

I was going to sing that for you. Yeah, and a few people say I shouldn't do that. You see, there's relationships we're born into.

And there's relationships that come across in our lives and form. But all of them have the same thing in common. Even the ones we're born into, we have to choose.

We have to choose to accept and receive. God chose Mary. Just like God has chosen you. And has a special plan for your life.

[46 : 11] And a special joy intended for you if you accept and receive and experience that God into your heart. But Mary had to make a choice.

She could have said, Nah, no thanks God. I got a husband. I, I really don't need this right now. It's not convenient for me. I don't think it would go very well.

I don't think so. Or she could even have just simply said, like probably most of us would, Could you give me a couple of months and I'll get back to you? It's kind of a pretty big decision.

Can I let you know, God, in a couple months, what I think, after I talk to some folks and get some other opinions on this? Probably what we would have said, right? Mary said, I'm the handmaiden of the Lord.

Let it be to me as you have said. Wow. Is that who we are? Are we what God wants us to be?

[47 : 14] It's not always easy. We see that. It's not even always fun. But it's an amazing experience that God offers to you. I can tell you sometimes, when you do what God wants, we do question whether it was worth it.

I was preaching the same sermon last night. I was tired. So I started complaining. So we do it when we're tired, isn't it? Well, it's what I do. Maybe you don't. I don't know.

Maybe you're just really good people. I don't know. Probably better than me. But I have to tell you, the opportunity to do what God wants is an amazing thing.

To be in people's lives. I was sharing with one family about visiting their mother. It was such a delight. Another opportunity to go visit someone in the hospital who's struggling with an illness.

Listen, have you ever been in a hospital room alone for day after day? Another family who just needed someone to talk to. Yesterday, we gave Nona over to the Lord and let their family walk through the valley of shadow of death, and they weren't alone.

[48 : 29] That's what I do for God. And you say, well, I'm not a pastor. No. No. But all of you do all those things and can do all those things and other things.

Maybe it's a gift you buy for a little child that you don't even know, but the amazing experience of having them light up on Christmas morning because they received a gift from someone they've never met.

God gives us amazing opportunities if we love. And I know that love makes us vulnerable.

We have to be careful who we love. I understand that. You can love God. You can take a chance on experiencing the living God in your life because he will never leave you nor forsake you.

He had a plan for you before the beginning of the world. And he's so excited about the possibility that you'll receive that gift.

[49 : 34] It may not be as good as getting a newspaper in the morning or having somebody make your coffee. Or maybe it'll be so much more fantastic than you can't even imagine what God intends to do.

God's calling us to an amazing life. God's calling us to an amazing love, an amazing grace. Jeremiah says, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Before you were born, I set you apart. I have a dream for you. An amazing dream for you. God calls us to the joy of Christmas if we will join him and the blessing that he gives to us.

You stood before creation, Eternity in your hand.

You spoke the earth into motion, My soul now to stand. You stood before my failure And carried the cross for my shame My sin weighed upon your shoulders My soul now to stand So what can I say?

[51 : 35] And what can I do? But all of this time I've run And we bring to you I want upon salvation Your spirit abide in me My heart to declare your promise My soul now to stand So what can I say?

What can I do? But I'll burn this love on God Completely to you Now lift our arms in the air as a praise to God and a fun rebellion to Him I'll stand with arms I have abandoned In awe of the one who gave it all I'll stand my soul now to surrender I am is yours I'll stand with arms I have abandoned In awe of the one who gave it all I'll stand Cause all of you surrender

All I am is yours All I am is yours I am is yours I'm is yours I am is yours I am■■■■ I am Obs Barnstep Oh Lord, you searched me You know my way

Even when I fail you I know you love me Your holy presence Surrounding me In every season I know you love me I know you love me At the close I know my name Where your blood once shed for me There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave Glory fills the highest place

What can disappoint me now You go before me You know before me You shield my way Your hand upholds me I know you love me And when the earth fades Falls from my eyes You stand before me I know you love me

[56 : 28] I know you love me I know you love me At the close I found my name Where your blood once shed for me There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave You have overcome the grave Glory fills the highest place What can separate me now You tore the lamb You made a way When you said that it is done You tore the lamb You made a way When you said that it is done You have overcome the grave Where your blood once shed for me

There's no greater love than this You have overcome the grave Glory fills the highest place What can separate me now I know you love me I know you love me You know, we say we love God We love God so much We're here worshiping God But sometimes there's just a disconnect In our life and the way we're living it And what we're saying with our mouth And what we're saying with our voice Sort of like singing I lift my hands up And nobody's arms go up There's a disconnect there, you know What are the things in our lives Where we're out of step Not connected Walking in a way that's not right with God

And if we were to really examine it We would find many things in our lives Where we need to realign And get back on track So I invite you to a prayer of confession Along with me Lord, I am a sinner I need your grace I've not always been loving I've not always been giving I've been selfish I wanted to do things my way And not your way Forgive me, Lord Set me on the right path Fill me with your love Give me your guidance Give me your guidance That I may be a blessing I may be a blessing To you and others To you and others Proclaiming your name Proclaiming your name With my very life With my very life As I give myself to you As I give myself to you In Jesus' name we pray In Jesus' name we pray Amen 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 So 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 we're right with God Let's become right with one another Becoming the body of Christ As we prepare for the table Won't you greet one another With the peace of the Holy Spirit Right after communion Come here May we amen We're■■ible Amen Amen

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free, From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in thee.

[61 : 22] Israel, strength and consolation, Hope above the earth are wild, Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart, For thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king, Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring, By thine own eternal spirit, Rule in all our hearts alone, By thine own sufficient merit,

Raise us to thy glorious throne. Every one of us, God calls us all to a relationship of love with the Father that loves us, with a Savior who gives for us.

And so whether this is your first time here or you've been here all along, if you desire the love of God in your heart, to be in relationship with God, you are welcome at the table.

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.

[63 : 39] And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you. And blessed is your son, Jesus Christ.

Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

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 Jesus gave himself up for us, he took the bread and he gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, and he said, this is my body given for you.

[65 : 05] Eat of this often, remembering me. And so in remembering me, and so in remembering, he gave thanks to you, and he gave thanks, 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.

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, and your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen. Now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[66 : 51] 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. Join us at the table of the Lord, set by God, particularly for you.

Whoever you may be, you are welcome here at God's table. We also invite you, if you'd like to come forward, for prayers for anointing and healing, or to light a candle.

And if you have little children, they can put an ornament on the tree. You might want to actually go up that side of the church. That's up to you, but you're welcome to come on over, and put an ornament on the tree, all the kids are.

[69 : 20] Come and join us with the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[72 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[74 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[77 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.