

Where Can I Go?

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Preacher: Pastor Scott Johnson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

So if you are able to donate some goods, if you are able to donate some or even financially for that, please keep that in mind as we have our Super Bowl Sunday drive.

So also make sure you have a note for Angel Wings is doing some really good work around creating cards for shut-ins. If you want to have a conversation about that or contribute to that work, there's a clipboard in the back.

You could also talk to Becky. If you don't know who Becky is, Becky, just wave your hand and you can find out more about how to engage in that ministry. So again, my name is Scott.

[4 : 34] I'm one of the pastors here. For those of you who are joining us online, please take a moment and fill out a friendship card. Let us know where you're worshipping from or if you have any joys or concerns to share so that we might connect with you and be church family for you as we are able.

For now, let us shift our minds out of the more day-to-day things and into what it means to follow and worship our God together. You know that we are on this sermon journey called God is Holding Your Life.

We are in week three of this series. Today, we're going to talk about the idea of where can I go? Where can I go? This week, oh, I forgot one really important thing.

I'm sorry. And if I blow past this, I'm going to hear about it forever. Louie's going to come up here and talk about fish fries for a minute. So before I do that and have to pay that price, let me just make sure Louie does that thing.

Louie, Louie, we're going to get you a mic, Louie. That's great. Good morning. Good morning.

[5 : 52] Good morning to those of you online. Actually, I got a call this week. I was just saying from Arizona. Guess who called me from Arizona? He said we need to get things rolling. All right.

So we've got clipboards coming around. If you don't know anything about us, we do fish fries. And there are seven of them coming up all through Lent. We have a lot of need. There's a lot of activities that go on and places for people to sign up and help out.

So the main thing is we want to bring some smiles to the people in our community. And we know this is a big thing for us. So on the clipboards, they're just starting in the front.

Please pass them to the back. If you haven't participated before, pick a time that you're available. There's times on the sheets for when we need people.

All right? And another thing that I was suggested to remind you is if you need child care, make a note of that. We don't have anything set up yet for child care.

[6 : 51] But if you don't put it down, we won't know what the needs are. All right? And I think the rest of it is kind of self-explanatory. If you're not sure where you can work or anything like that, there's a page way at the back that says Pies.

Just put your name there and say, I want to help and maybe give us an idea of what time you can help. But other than that, February 24th is when we get rolling. All good?

Thanks, Carl. Yeah, we're going to trust that Carl is watching us online. So we know he's got plenty to say. So I'm going to see if I can remember where I was.

So we're in week three of this sermon series. And as I said, we're talking about where can I go? We are using the Psalms to help us understand how God holds us tenderly in the palm of his hand.

When we're facing adversity, when we're facing challenges, sometimes we let that slip away from us. And it's really important to remember that God is indeed holding our lives. This week's Psalm text brings home this message, that we are in an intimate relationship with God.

[7 : 59] There's nowhere we go that God is not already present. No state of our being that results in our being abandoned. God has knit us together, has woven us, knowing us from before our very beginning.

God is indeed holding our lives. Let's come together around this prayer. Dear and near God, you never leave our side.

Open us this day to feeling and knowing your presence. Deepen our hearts so that we might show forth love with the same confidence. Offering your reign of right relationship here on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen. We praise you for your close attention. Holding our lives together in the air. Amen. Good morning, everyone.

Good morning. And good morning to everyone online. One of the words in that text that Pastor Scott just wrote, an intimate relationship with God, sometimes that can be a little scary.

[9 : 03] I don't know if any of you know anyone well enough, maybe some of you married couples, where someone might say to you, I know you better than you know yourself. And there might be those places in ourselves where we want to hide.

Well, in the Psalm 139 that we're going to be talking about later, David talks about the big three O's. Omniscience, omnipresent, and omnipotence.

So there is nowhere that we can hide, and God knows us at that level. He really does know us better than we know ourselves. And he will shine light into those dark places of our soul, but he will also tell us that he is our refuge and our strength.

So we're going to open this morning with protector of my soul, and yet not I, but Christ in me. So I invite you to stand if you're able. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Wow.

[10 : 47] Thank you. Give me this video. Give me this video. When we don't hear each other, it's a marriage. We want to see you.

Oh Holy Spirit come Show the world where life comes from May they always see you alive in me Oh Holy Spirit come May they always see you alive in me Oh Holy Spirit come A gift of grace is Jesus Very deeper There is no more for heaven now to give

He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace To this I hope, my hope is only Jesus For my life is only about to hit Oh how strange and divine I can see all is mine Yet not I, but through Christ in me The night is dark, but I am not forsaken

For by my side the Savior he will stay I labor on in weakness and rejoicing For in my need his power is a slave To this I hope, my shepherd will defend me Through the deepest valley he will lead Oh the night has been won And I shall overcome Yet not I, but through Christ in me Oh the night has been won Oh the night I dread

I know I am forgiven The future sure the price it has been paid For Jesus blood and suffered for my pardon And he was raised to overthrow the rain To this I hope, my sin has been defeated Jesus now and never is my plea Oh the chains are released I am saved I am free I am free And not I, but through Christ in me With every breath I long to follow Jesus

[15 : 17] For he has said For he has said that he will bring me home And day by day I know he will renew me Until I stand with joy in my throne To this I hope, my hope is only Jesus All the glory evermore to him When the race is complete Still my death shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me Yet not I, but through Christ in me

Yet not I, but through Christ in me Through Christ in me You may be seated Good morning I'm Jennifer, I'm one of the pastors here And it's so nice to see you all here today And those of you who are online If you look at our bulletin And on the front when it shows it It shows God's hands holding the world God holds us softly He holds us tenderly And we are called to go out and do that into the world

And one way that we're able to do that Is through our offerings each week So I invite you to give generously To give with a happy, loving heart To give so that we can go out and help others The way God helps us The song we're going to share this morning Is called Just Be Held by Casting Crowns You'll notice in your bulletin I've shared an insert From an experience that I had In response to prayer It was kind of like a song Downloaded itself into my mind So whether God was bringing out those things That had been stored in my heart all along Or speaking to me I can't quite be sure But I wanted to share that with you And this song is in that same vein Something that God might say to us In asking us to surrender And just be held Okay, please

And just be held Hold it all together Everybody needs you strong But life hits you out of nowhere And barely leaves you holding on needs you strong life hits you out of nowhere and barely leaves you holding on and when you're tired of fighting chained by your control your straight arm and surrender lay it down and let it go so when you're on your knees and answers seem so far away you're not alone stop holding on and just be held no, it's fine, I just forgot what the thing was the way I had to look at this is fine not a problem okay I'm on the throne, stop holding on and just be held just be held just be held just be held if your eyes are on the storm you wonder if my love is still but if your eyes are on the cross you know I always have and I always will and not a tears wasted in time you'll understand

I'm painting beauty with the ashes your life is in my hands so when you're on your knees your knees and answers seem so far away you're not alone stop holding on and just be held just be held your world's not falling apart it's falling into place I'm on the throne, stop holding on and just be held just be held just be held just be held just be held hold your hands lift your eyes lift your hands lift your eyes in the storms where you'll find me where you are hold your heart hold your heart Come to me, find rest

[21 : 06] And the young ones of God will let go So when you're on your knees An answer seems so far away You're not alone Stop holding on and just be held New worlds are falling apart It's falling into place Come on the throne, stop holding on And just be held Just be held Just be held Just be held Just be held

Just be held Just be held Just be held ■ Amen.

God, we give back some of what you give to us each week. We give back to you not only monetarily, but we give back to you your love and our gratitude.

And we thank you for each and every day. In your name we pray. Amen. Thank you.

So we come to a time of lifting up our joys and our concerns to God. And we want to start today by lifting up Memphis and the need for change in our country and in our world.

[23 : 50] And certainly the family of Tyree Nichols and anyone who is affected by the loss, the senseless loss. So do you have any joys or concerns that you would like to raise up, Kelly?

My dad is really close with his first cousin, Al. And Al's grandson passed this week at the age of 18 after a respiratory illness that they couldn't figure out for weeks and weeks.

So we can just lift up his mom and dad and Al and Gene, his parents. The young man's name was Ethan. But they have a great faith and we just want to hold them close.

Thank you. I just want to hold up Debbie Jameson had her hip surgery this week. She's doing well, but she's all by herself. So cards would be nice.

My grandma, Jean McMorris, just turned 90 yesterday.

[24 : 58] Okay. Yes. It's still a celebration when you turn 90. Okay. My son, Nick, surgery was a success.

So thanks for all the prayers. Okay. My friend Susie's in the hospital.

Okay. All right. Will you please join your hearts with mine in prayer? Okay. God, we know that you hold our lives in your hands, that you hold us so tenderly, that you love us so much.

And we thank you for that. God, we lift up the need for change in our world, change in structures, change in people's hearts.

We lift up those who are feeling loss. We lift up all those that we have named today, those who are struggling with mental illness, those who are having family issues, those who just don't know where to turn.

[26 : 25] Be the light for them. Help us be the light for them. Guide us along our path. God, we know that you walk with us each step of the way.

And when those times are tough, you carry us. And when things are too heavy, you drag us. And we thank you for being there. God, we ask that you watch over our families, our loved ones, our community.

That you guide our leaders to make right decisions. That you guide us back to you. Because we're in a world that needs you oh so very much.

God, we're here to worship and celebrate you. Help us to go out and be that worship, that celebration into the world.

Help us bring your word and your light to places that are dark. Help us to bring your love to those who need it.

[27 : 42] Who feel like they're not part of something. In your name we pray. Amen. Thank you.

Our scripture reading today is from Psalm 139, verses 1 through 18.

And Matthew chapter 6, verses 25 through 34. You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise.

You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before. And you lay your hand upon me.

[28 : 57] Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. Too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me.

Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me, and the light becomes night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to you.

The night will shine like the day. For darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being.

You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful.

[30 : 11] I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book, before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

When I awake, I am still with you. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what will you wear.

Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

[31 : 24] Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about your clothes?

See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon, in all his splendor, was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith?

So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

[32 : 43] Each day has enough trouble of its own. This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen. Let's join together for a word of prayer.

Almighty and gracious God, we are indeed awestruck as we come to this time. We're moved in this moment, and our hearts are open to you as we have felt your spirit among us today. So, now move in us, Lord.

Plant a seed in each of us that will grow and bear fruit for the honor and the glory of your name. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. So I'd like to start this morning with a story.

The year is 1984, and a certain pastor that you know and love is feeling really good about himself as he's a senior in high school. And on one lovely weekend afternoon, he gets a call.

This call is from a young lady that he has started going out with. And, turns out, that they had recently decided to go to the prom together, and she wants to come over to his house, talk about what we might do with the prom, and hang out.

[34 : 07] So, it's a lovely afternoon in his mind. Now, not only is it a lovely afternoon in his mind, because on days like today, his mom likes to spend her afternoon pretty much in her room.

She reads a lot, and usually takes nice long naps. So the day is looking better and better from his point of view. So, young lady comes over, and they're in the living room.

And they're having a conversation on the couch, and let's just say things are beginning to proceed as planned. When there's a sudden click, and all the lights in the living room come on.

Now, mind you, it was late afternoon, so the sun was still up, but all the lights in the living room come back on. And to which we hear, y'all sure y'all don't need a little light in here?

Kind of hard to look at dresses when there's no lights on, don't you think? So, yeah, you can imagine what was happening. It's funny how parents can be so wonderful, is it not?

[35 : 20] That we can have that extra sense of timing, that extra sensory perception that says where we need to be, at particular times. Now, the thing is, when you're a kid, and you're trying to get away with something, and you're trying to do something that you really hope that mom or dad doesn't see, you hate that reality.

I'm sure most of us sitting here have had moments like this with those who loved us, yes? I've had those times when you thought you were getting away with something, only to be, shall we say, humbled.

Now, the reason why I bring this up is it's the strange tension in which we live. Because on the one hand, you may love these people more than life itself.

But then there are always moments when you really just don't want them around. You want to be able to do what you want to do. You want to be able to have a little fun that they won't find out about.

And that happens no matter what age you are. Like I said, whether you're a high school senior thinking about the prom or having a little fun on an afternoon, whether you may be 10 years old or whether you're three years old and you just want to play in your room and you don't want mom and dad around, there's always that time when you just want to do your own thing and you're hoping that they're somewhere else.

[36 : 44] Now, the irony of this thing in life is that we also know that there are times when you are utterly dependent on their presence. Times you go running to them and you're wondering, what is going on?

Why can't I get what I want? And you're in their face constantly. Hey, help me with what I need. Did you do this thing yet? Et cetera, et cetera.

We've all experienced that push and pull. Now, I want us to sit in that for a moment because we know what that's like. We know what that's like, especially from the kid plays.

And some of us, I'm willing to bet all of us, also know what it's like from the other side of that equation. Because as a dad of who's been through three teenagers, there were times when I was worried about how much light was on in the living room, too.

And the thing about that, when you have that kind of pure love for people and you want to make sure that the right things are happening and the best things are happening and that you want to make sure that their steps are protected, and they don't always appreciate that.

[37 : 59] But when you've experienced love on both sides of that dance, I want you to be in touch with those feelings as you think about the message that we're wrestling with today.

Because this idea of where can I go is an interesting question around how much we love God and what we say we want from God. Because on a certain level in our heads, we get it and get it pretty easily.

That we serve a God who is, as you heard Nancy say, omnipresent. God is everywhere. God can be everywhere simultaneously.

We serve a God who is omniscient. A God who is all-knowing. Knows all things. Knows your deepest secrets. Knows what you're thinking. Knows all things.

Knows all things. And we serve a God who is all-powerful. God can do whatever God wants to do. And yet, we know that on a certain level, but when we think about that same thing we say about mom and dad, I know that every human being has had that time when they wanted to do something that they thought they could actually keep a secret from God.

[39 : 19] And maybe God won't see this thing. Maybe God won't care about this thing. Maybe I can just do this and God is gonna, you know, maybe he's paying attention more to what's happening over here than God is watching me.

We've all had that moment. And we know it doesn't work. Like I said, we can have it all up here, but it doesn't work.

And that's why that question of where can I go to flee from your presence doesn't always make us feel good. And when we're aware that we mess up, when we're aware that we chase the things of the world, when we're aware that we decide we want to do this instead of what God said do, we know those things.

There's times we do it and we're perfectly clear about it, and there's times we do it and we're not sure we messed up. And there's times we did it in the moment and then we have to look back and go, oh yeah, I probably shouldn't have done that.

But none of it escapes God. None of it. despite how hard we try, despite how hard we would like that to be the case, where can I go to flee from your presence?

[40 : 37] Doesn't actually produce that great a feeling. And if you thought your mom had eyes in the back of her head, well, what would you say about Jesus? So again, what does that do to us?

But what's interesting about that fact, think about the other side of the equation, like we said. When we have those moments in life, those situations in life, when we go running back and looking for God, those times when it's like, this is big, God, I need you now.

Hey, where are you? What's taking so long? Why is this so difficult? Aren't you supposed to handle this for me? We have those moments too.

And we're usually pretty in touch with those moments. We get a diagnosis of some kind. A life circumstance shows up. A bill shows up.

Or something happens in our world that we're utterly shaken by, like has happened to us this week. And reminds us that we still have so much farther to go than we would like to imagine.

[41 : 47] and we're like, hey, what's going on? So we live in this push and this pull.

And when we hear that and when we wrestle with that, about how do we become the best disciple we can be? How can we be in the best relationship with God we can be in?

The challenge for us is to listen to the psalm differently. And how we can hear the psalm differently also comes with what we were talking about in the scripture from Christ.

When we listen to him give us that teaching we're so familiar with about worry. Because we live in a time when worry seems all too common.

You know, I did a little research on this. Just a little quick thing. I don't sit here and pretend to be an expert. But according to the National Institute of Mental Health almost a third of adults in the U.S.

[42 : 53] and almost a third of adolescents in the U.S. live with some anxiety-related disorder. Think about that. That's one in three. An anxiety-related disorder.

And that's really key that you hear it that way. Because we're talking about having the problem to the degree that it has a significant adverse effect in your ability to function. So this isn't just having a little bit of worry.

This isn't just stressing out about a problem. This is this at a much more significant level. And then we have the rest of us who have just normal anxiety.

anxiety. When we're worried about something that's happening in our world. And think about what causes worry. I want you to really wrestle with that question for a second.

What causes worry? We start to worry because the situation has shown up that we don't have an answer to. We're not sure how we're going to fix this thing.

[44 : 02] It's big. It's persistent. And it seems to be way beyond our own capacity to address on our own. And if an answer doesn't show up relatively quickly, then the fear of the worst case scenario puts us in this place where we start to do this thing we call worry.

And it persists. It stays with us. And the thing about worry and if you want to shift it to consider just a really rough period of stress or anxiety.

If you want to do that and you want to sit in that space, one of the questions that naturally pops up is where can I go?

But that's, again, where we want to hear that psalm differently. Because a lot of times we hear that psalm, we hear it like David's the kid who just got busted.

But actually the psalm should be read in a way that provides hope. The idea of an omniscient and an omnipresent God actually should be good news, not bad news.

[45 : 24] because when you wonder about this problem, when you wonder about the source of your anxiety, when you wonder about the situation you're worried about, we say our prayers, you know, sometimes we say this jokingly and you'll hear me say it from time to time when I'm doing the pastoral prayer.

It's like, God, you already know all things. So like when we say this thing about did you know, we pray to Jesus sometimes like, did you know that so-and-so was in the hospital, Jesus? I want to make sure you heard that.

Of course Jesus knows they're in the hospital. But we still pray because we want to understand what God is doing.

We want to rest in God's power. We would seek the peace that comes from walking in alignment with God's will. And yes, we come and we ask for a restoration to health and wholeness.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. But when we are connected to what God is doing, when we are walking in God's will, when we are trusting in God's ever-present love, then whatever happens, we know that we'll be okay.

[46 : 36] And that, friends, is the answer. That's where we get lost. See, this idea that God is holding our life, when we hit those moments, when we hit those situations, and we start to descend into something like worry, that idea that God is holding our life feels so far away, feels foreign, and feels sometimes flat-out false.

But it's never false, because God is with us. Hear that again. God is with us. God is with us in a way that is not just some sort of intellectual exercise.

God is right here in the moment. And that's why I said you need to hear this differently. So what I want to do is I want to read it again, and I want you to hear it in a way that is hopeful. Hear it in a way that is reassuring, and not in a way that makes it sound ominous.

Like, uh-oh, I'm going to get in trouble. But hear it in a way that says, God is with me for real. You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

Just sit with that for a minute. God knows who you are. God knows who you are better than you know yourself. And best part is God loves you anyway.

[48 : 03] Sometimes we just need to hear that and say that out loud. That in spite of our flaws, in spite of how the world has made us feel, in spite of everything we know we do wrong, God is still God, and God loves you anyway.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down.

You are familiar. with all my ways. That bad habit you wish God didn't know about. That thing you do that you know keeps you separated from God sometimes.

That thing you hope nobody asks you about when you're having coffee in church. God knows. There are no secrets from God. And God loves you anyway.

And so do we, by the way. before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before and you lay your hand upon me.

[49 : 10] You probably have all heard the phrase that someone's got your back. You hem me in behind and before. God is protecting you as you leave.

God is waiting for you as you arrive. God walks right beside you as you travel. That's what it means to have an omnipresent God.

And I said, that's reassuring, not ominous. If you trust that God is who God has always promised God would be for you, that should be good news, not bad news.

That doesn't mean bad things don't happen, but when bad things happen, would you rather God be somewhere else or right here with you?

That's what it means to have an omnipresent God. And when you lean into it, that's the good thing.

[50 : 23] See, hear that question again, right? Where can I go to flee from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. So when those things show up, those circumstances that make us all crazy, those things that would descend us, that drag us into worry, and you're thinking, where can I go?

You already know the answer. See, instead of running from God because you're worried that God is going to get you in trouble, really what we should be doing is running to God because God has what we need.

I want you all to hear that again. Rather than running from God because we're worried about being in trouble, we should be running to God because God has what we need. And hear that on every level.

If it's the answer to your question or direction on what you should do in this moment, you're going to run to the world or you're going to run to God? When you're looking for someone who can heal a problem, someone who can heal a wound, physical or emotional, and yes, you should take care of yourself in an earthly way.

[51 : 49] Of course, you could go to therapy, go to your doctor. No one's saying don't do that, but at the same time, if you really want to be healed, are you going to run away from the great physician or to him?

And when you think you've done something that's unforgivable, when you think you've made the mistake that actually ruined things, when you're sure you are headed, as someone once said, to hell on an elevator in underwear with gasoline, when you think you've made that kind of mistake, where are you going to run?

Where are you going to run? Where are you going to run? you going to run? Because God's message to you is, I've handled that problem. Are you going to run to the person who's handled it, or are you going to run away from it?

Where can I go to flee from your presence? Friends, don't hear that in the bad way.

Hear that in the loving way that God wants you to hear it, the loving way that God needs you to hear it, the same way when you think of those people in your life, whether it's your kids or everyone else that you love.

[53 : 24] Don't run away from me in your time of trouble. I'm here for you, but I'm doing my best to make sure that you understand how loved you are. Not, I'm here to mess up your world.

I'm here because you are loved. When you understand that truth, that image that we've been using, that you are tenderly held in the palm of God's hand, that is your greatest source of strength and comfort, not a source of fear and guilt.

Let it be so, and know how deeply and amazingly you are loved. Where can you go? Go to Christ.

You see that thing about worry, that scripture we read so often, did you hear Jesus say, and I want you to hear these words well, so do not worry saying, what shall we eat, or what should we drink, or what should we wear, for the pagans run after these things.

And your heavenly father knows that you need them. all knowing, all present, all love, all the time.

[55 : 04] Where can you go? Go to God. That's good news. Amen? And amen.

Loving and gracious God, we are indeed grateful for the ways in which you are at work in our lives. That you show us time and time again, that yes, you do care about sin, but your love has taken care of sin, if we would only trust and believe.

So Lord, help us to understand that. Help us to rest in that. Help us to know that your presence is with us. Let us be mindful of it.

Let us rest in it. Let us trust in it. And let us receive it with joy because it is you who will show us the way. Just as we have sung today that it is not us, but through Christ in us that difference is made.

The world will tell us many things. The world does not give us justice. The world does not treat us fairly. The world does not love us, but you do.

[56 : 16] So let your presence be our source of strength, of reassurance, of comfort, of peace, and of joy. Let us indeed know you in all the ways that you would have us know you.

That we might indeed know this life and know you with love and experience it with abundant joy. Amen.

We are all invited to the gift of the table of grace.

The world often would have us feel separated from God, but we know that God continues to hold us tenderly. One way God invites us to remember that loving and grace-filled embrace is to remember that Christ's love and sacrifice through joining in the sacrament of communion.

As response to the invitation, we are asked to let go of all that separates us from God and accept his love and grace. So we're going to take a moment in silence as we confess the ways that we have placed hardship in the hands of others rather than peace.

[57 : 44] in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Amen. 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, Lord God, creator of heaven and earth.

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.

[58 : 54] 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.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and 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, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this, all of you.

This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.

And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

[60 : 02] Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on all those gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup.

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 to 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 your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

And now with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray. 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 to temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[61 : 15] For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. We invite those who are going to help serve to please come forward. Thank you.

Thank you.

[63 : 32] Thank you.

the table of christ is open we receive communion by intention so we invite you to come down the center aisle receive the gift of the bread dip it in the juice and then return to the outside aisles the remembrance prayer station is open if you like to light a candle we do have pre-packaged elements and gluten-free available at this side if that's what you so choose so please come as you feel led and eat and feel the love of christ so so oh soul oh soul are you weary and troubled no night so dark that our eyes cannot see there's light so bright as we look to our savior life more abundant and free life more abundant and free turn your eyes upon jesus and the things of earth will go strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace your grace you are with us in darkness your word your life is leading us on our hearts can hear your heavenly fire calling us all to your son calling us all to your son oh we turn your eyes upon jesus we turn your eyes upon jesus we're full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will go strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace in the light of his glory and grace we turn our eyes to you beholding all your beauty you are holy we turn our eyes to you beholding all your beauty you are holy turn your eyes upon jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will go strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace

in the light of his glory and grace in the light of his glory and grace we turn our eyes upon jesus we turn our eyes to you beholding all your beauty you are holy we turn our eyes to you beholding all your beauty beholding all your beauty you are holy you are holy you are holy we turn our eyes to you we turn our eyes to you we turn our eyes to you we turn our eyes to you we turn our eyes to you

So where can we turn?

One of the things that impresses me about Psalm 139 is after David gets done talking about how powerful and omniscient and omnipresent God is, he has the bravery to say, search my innermost being, knowing that he's going to shed a spotlight on those places we might want to hide from.

[70 : 02] And I think what he understands is that in turning to God, he won't be met with condemnation, but he'll be met with healing. And we have a God who meets us where we are, and who is a way maker and a chain breaker.

So we're going to end today with chain breaker. I'm going to invite you to stand if you're able. Thank you. If you've been walking the same old road for miles and miles, If you've been here in the same old voice, tell the same old lies.

If you're trying to fill the same old holes inside, there's a better life, there's a better life.

If you've got pain, he's a pain taker. If you feel lost, he's a way maker.

If you need freedom, save it, he's a prison chain container. If you've got chains, if you've got chains, he's a chain breaker.

[71 : 38] If you've got chains, he's a chain breaker. Don't have venir. You've got chains and■■■■■, operar 974 new days, Him share in the same old days, Again, we need help from 2.

Redsisfaction nesse■■■, to the same pediatrician. It's been a very ■■■■one calendar. We use the system reviewers, and you need help moyenne. We don't have any benefits. We use the individual news outs a better life.

If you've got pain, he's a pain taker. If you feel lost, he's a way maker.

If you need freedom or saving, he's a prison shaking savior. If you've got chains, he's a chain breaker.

If you believe it, if you receive it, if you can't feel it, somebody testify.

[72 : 58] If you believe it, if you receive it, if you can't feel it, if you can't feel it, somebody testify, testify.

If you believe it, if you receive it, if you can't feel it, somebody testify.

If you've got pain, if you've got pain, if you've got pain, he's a pain taker. If you feel lost, he's a way maker.

If you need freedom or saving, he's a prison shaking savior. If you've got chains, if you've got chains, he's a chain breaker.

If you need freedom or saving, he's a prison shaking savior. If you've got chains, he's a chain breaker.

[74 : 04] If you have chains, he's a chain breaker. Isn't it a joy to know that even though you might wanna run and hide from God, you can't.

It should be if it's not yet. Because remember, whether you need saving, whether you need help, whether you need answers, it's running to God where you get them instead of running from God.

Trust the God that is always with you to know that and to be that. Rest in it and let it bring you what you need. Now in the name of God, our Creator and King, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and our Sustainer, may God bless us as we leave to love and serve God and all God's children.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

[75 : 59] Thank you.