

God is Faithful

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody. The few, the faithful, the ones that survived the parking lot.
This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day.
This is the day. That the Lord has made. That the Lord has made. Let us rejoice. Let us rejoice.
And be glad in it. And be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us pray.
- [1 : 0 2] Holy God, we enter into your sanctuary with praise on our hearts, praise on our lips, that you may be exalted. We pray that your presence will come and fill this place and fill us with your blessings.
In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. I'd like to invite you all to stand, if you're able, as we sing together, Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise. Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise.
Your name is full. yogis. Most blessed and most glorious. The ancient of days. Almighty victorious.
Thy great name we praise. Unresting, unhasting. And silent as light.
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might. Thy justice like mountains, I soaring above.
- [2 : 3 0] Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love. To all life thou givest, to both great and small.
In all life thou liveest, the true life of all. We blossom and flourish as leaves of the tree.
And wither and perish, but not change in thee. The Lord be with you. And also with you.
Please be seated. I just want to let everybody know or remind everyone that this evening is the Hanging of the Greens. So with the Hanging of the Greens, all the information is in your little good news.
And we gather together with a potluck dinner. And then kids go off to Santa's workshop. And we decorate the whole church up. We have a great time together. And then we gather all together and sing some Christmas carols.
- [3 : 3 3] So I invite you to that this evening. There's clipboards being passed around. And that is for cookies for the cantata. So the cantata will be December 15th. And after this amazing event with wonderful singers and an orchestra and such, we go out and we have a wonderful reception with lots of cookies.
So I invite you to not only attend that, but to bring some cookies for that as well. And I am thankful to see you all here safely this morning. And I'd like to hear from you.
What are you all thankful for? What are you thankful for this morning? Yeah. We're thankful the choir made it.
And the accompanist made it. Morning, y'all. We're thankful for that. Yes. Thankful for it. Thankful for pastors. Yes. Thankful for all pastors. Jam.

Thankful for having Thanksgiving with family you don't normally see. And they're all thankful for one. Yes. So thankful for all the family at Thanksgiving and people you don't normally see, which is great.

[4 : 42] And everybody's here this morning. Yes. What else? Yeah, Becky. Becky. Yes.

Yes. It's also... safe. I was really thrilled to see salt already on the parking lot and really thrilled about that.

Anyone else want to share? Yeah, Sue. My daughter's being induced on Wednesday. Okay. So she's being induced. When is she being induced?

Wednesday. She's being induced on Wednesday. So new baby coming. And so we'll keep in prayer. A girl, baby girl coming. So that's an incredible blessing. And do we have any other things we want to lift up today?

Thanksgiving. You know, I am thankful that today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent's a time of preparation. And so we light our Advent wreath. And so as we light our Advent wreath this morning, hear these words from Isaiah chapter 40, verses 3 through 5.

[5 : 58] A voice of one calling. In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up.

Every mountain and hill made low. The rough ground shall become level. The rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

And all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. And so as we are thankful to God for so much in our lives, we give back with gratitude.

And so we're going to be taking up our offering of gifts, tithes, and giving to God. Amen. Amen.

The light will come, and hope will fill your eyes. The light will come, and peace will come the night.

[7 : 28] The light will come, and love will shine. Lift up your voice, sing and rejoice.

The light will come. The light will come, and hope will fill your eyes.

The light will come, and peace will come. And peace will come, and hope will come. The light will come, and hope will shine.

The light will come, and hope will shine. Lift up your voice, sing and rejoice. The light will come.

The light will come, and peace will come. The light will come, and hope will fill your eyes.

[9 : 11] The light will come, and peace will come the night. The light will come, and hope will shine.

Lift up your voice, sing and rejoice. The light will come. The light will come. The light will come.

The light will come. The light will come.

The light will come, and hope will inspire you, and hope will feel your eyes. Thank you. And pour it out.

The light will come, and hope will feel your eyes. Thank you. O Lord, we are so thankful to you for all that you are, for all that you give, for all that you continue to do in our lives.

[10 : 43] And we give back to you a reflection of our gratitude and of our praise. We pray that you will bless these gifts to be a blessing to others, that they too may come to know you through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Let's turn to the Lord in prayer. Loving, loving God, we come to you this day rejoicing, celebrating, and yet at the same time carrying concerns and burdens, the troubles in our lives and the troubles in people around us.

Lord, we come to you knowing that you are our heavenly parent who loves us and cares for us and hears us when we call. I pray that you will respond boldly, Lord.

Open our eyes, open our ears, open our hearts to be able to see you in our midst. That we may all experience you through trying times.

That we will know that you are there with us through it all. Lord, I pray for those who are struggling physically with all of the different issues with the body.

[12 : 04] And we pray for healing. We pray for healing through the body, Lord. May you bind up all of the cancer, all of the diabetes, all the diseases, and cast it out in the name of Jesus.

And Lord, we pray for pain to be gone as people struggle with mobility issues. I pray for pain to be gone in the name of Jesus. Lord, we pray to you this morning for people who are struggling in many areas of their lives.

People who have grieving hearts. Heavy hearts, Lord. Lord, from people who have passed and gone on. And yet, at the same time, for people who are grieving from broken relationships.

And from losing jobs. And from all sorts of grief, Lord. People have heavy hearts. And I pray that you will be with them.

Lord, we come together knowing that you are there. And we surround these people with prayer. And knowing that you are there. May you provide your peace, your comfort, your sustenance as people grieve.

[13 : 20] And may you provide direction. We pray, Lord, for people with clouded minds. Whether they be struggling with mental illness.

Or just facing incredible decisions. Life-changing decisions. Lord, we pray for you to clear people's minds. So that your will will be made known.

And you will give boldness and clarity. And people will walk firmly in your way. By your will. Through your grace and in your power. Lord, we continue to pray for this church.

We pray that you will be with the bishop. And the bishops and the cabinet. And for this church, Lord. That decisions that are made as we move forward may glorify you.

Lord, we pray for people who are traveling this day. That you will have your traveling mercies upon them. And that they may be safe. Lord, we open up our heart to you.

[14 : 25] That we may receive you. And we pray for those who do not yet know you. May we be a witness for them. May we reveal your light and your grace to them.

We trust in your grace, Lord. And we long to participate with you. Thank you, Lord, for what you're doing in our lives. And in the lives of the people we love.

And in the community. And in the world, Lord. Open our eyes to see it. Open our mouths to rejoice in it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Now let's hear from the word of the Lord.

Good morning.

Good morning. Luke 1, 5 through 25. In the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abahad.

[15 : 34] His wife, Elizabeth, was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Once, when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as a priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.

He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

[16 : 40] He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zechariah asked the angel, How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years. The angel said to him, I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

And now you will be silent and not able to speak until this day this happens, because you do not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time. Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.

When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs of them, but remained unable to speak. When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

After this, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. The Lord has done this for me, she said. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.

[17 : 55] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Anna. This morning we're starting a new sermon series looking at these Advent passages, and this is a series about what we can learn about who God is.

Who is God according to these passages that we read as we have Christmas approaching. It is the Advent season. And one of the things we know about God is that God brings us good news.

I have good news for you. A child will be born to you, the angel said to Zechariah. Good news. The good news of God is listed for us in Acts chapter 16, where it says, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Not just saved for all eternity, although God promises that. Not just saved from our sin, although God promises that. But saved from brokenness, meaninglessness, a life of despair.

And Gabriel brings the message. Gabriel, the same one who blows the trumpet at the end, the archangel declares, I have good news. Advent is the season when we prepare for the coming of God.

[19 : 13] We prepare for the coming of God that happened in Bethlehem and celebrate that, but even more so we prepare for God coming into our heart in this life, and the God that will take us into eternity forever and forever and forever.

A life without pain or suffering or sorrow or a new creation that God has prepared for us, and that's good news. They're outside the temple.

We're not exactly sure because it doesn't state explicitly, but we think that Zechariah went into the Holy of Holies, a place where only the priest went in for a short time, and he was supposed to go in, light the incense, and come out.

They were wondering what was taking so long. It doesn't take that long to light up some incense. What's he doing in there? Is he okay? They even had a custom at one point in time in the Jewish history where they would tie a rope around the priest because they weren't allowed to go into the Holy of Holies, and if something happened to him, they want to be able to pull him out.

Do we need to pull the rope? Is Zechariah okay? What's taking so long? Anticipation. This is the season of anticipation as we wait for Christmas to come.

[20 : 33] And during this season, we look to this reading from Isaiah which tells us a voice was calling. In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

And the reason we're even studying this story is because it's about the boy, John, that's going to be born who will call out from the wilderness that what we need to do in life is prepare our way for God, prepare our life.

Make it what it's supposed to be. Liz, Elizabeth, and Zechariah lived a righteous and obedient life. It says that they were always doing the right thing.

Wow. Can you imagine? I can't. I don't always do the right thing. These people made it their life to do what God would want for them. They were obedient and faithful, which is exactly what God calls us to do as we wait.

As we wait for the blessings of God, we don't just sit still, just kind of hanging in a corner. We're supposed to prepare our lives like preparing a superhighway.

[21 : 40] It says every valley will be lifted up, every mountain made low, and all the crooked paths will be made straight like a superhighway for God to come into our lives and give us blessings. John's life.

John's life was a calling to the people to prepare for Jesus to come. Jesus is coming, and that's the message of Advent. Advent. This isn't the Christmas season.

Christmas season starts December 25th. This is Advent season when we prepare and we wait. And I don't know about you, but I don't like waiting.

When I see a shorter line at the grocery line, I will rush over to get in it, only to have it go slower. We know how that all works, right? And we have to wait again. And we don't like waiting at Christmastime either.

It's hard. Did anybody notice that they're getting more and more impatient about Christmas? It used to be that we'd wait for Santa Claus to come down the parade trail at Macy's Parade for the Christmas season to begin, at least get past Thanksgiving.

[22 : 44] Now, as soon as we put the spooks away from Halloween, we're getting out the Christmas decorations, right? As soon as we get to the 1st of November, just hear those sleigh bells ringling, jing, jing, tingling, too.

And we're going like, really? Really? It's 60 degrees outside. But they have goods to sell. They have things to market to you.

According to the statistics, at least half of you were nuts enough to go out Friday and go shopping. I can't imagine how many more of you were shopping with your finger online this weekend.

Because we've got to get it done. We're impatient. We're in a hurry. And I understand that. It's hard to wait. In fact, the decorating for Christmas is part of that whole experience.

As we anticipated, we put up the decorations. We decorated our house this weekend. We put up the decorations. We put up the tree. We put up the ornaments. We put up the ribbons.

[23 : 47] I didn't go outside. I didn't feel like it. You might see lights. You might not. Who knows? But in my house, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

And it just helps us to feel that this wonderful time of the year is truly coming. But unfortunately, sometimes, this time of year, it doesn't feel like the most wonderful time of the year.

Sometimes, troubles and pains and struggles we have in life make this more of one of those blue Christmases. And we don't feel like it's so wonderful. And yet, oddly enough, we have this weird movie that we tend to watch at Christmas time.

You remember this one? It's called It's a Wonderful Life. I'm not sure why we watch it, but it does remind me of this episode with the archangel Gabriel and Zechariah because Zechariah had trouble believing the angel, just like George Bailey did.

Hey, what's with you? What did you say just a minute ago? Why do you want to save me? That's what I was sent down for. I'm your guardian angel. I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

[24 : 58] Ridiculous of you to think of killing yourself for money. Eight thousand dollars. Yeah, now, just things like that. How do you know that? I told you I'm your guardian angel. I know everything about you.

Why do you look about like the kind of an angel I'd get? Sort of a fallen angel, aren't you? What happened to your wings? I haven't won my wings yet. That's why I'm an angel second class. I don't know whether I like it very much being seen around with an angel without any wings.

Oh, I've got to earn them. And you'll help me, won't you? Sure, sure. How? By letting me help you. Only one way you can help me.

You don't happen to have eight thousand bucks on you. Oh, no, no. We don't use money in heaven. Oh, yeah, that's right. I keep forgetting. Comes in pretty handy down here, bub. Oh, touch, touch, touch.

I found it out a little late. I'm worth more dead than alive. Now, look, you mustn't talk like that. I won't get my wings with that attitude. You just don't know all that you've done.

[26 : 04] If it hadn't been for you... Yeah, if it hadn't been for me, everybody would be a lot better off. My wife and my kids and my friends. Look, little fella, why don't you go off and haunt somebody else? No, now you don't understand.

I've got my job. Oh, shut up, will you? Yeah. Oh, this isn't going to be so easy. Sometimes life feels quietly desperate.

Sometimes as we're watching the celebrations and the joys of Christmas, we're feeling the pains and the struggles and disappointments of life itself.

Zechariah and Elizabeth just want a child, but she was unable to conceive. Children are a blessing. It says in verse 14, John will be a joy and a delight to you.

Many will rejoice because of his birth. And Zechariah says, how is this going to happen to me? Have you seen my wife?

[27 : 14] She's old as 30. Well, that's a modern interpretation of the scripture. I don't think this is possible.

Zechariah has a crisis of faith. This man who is the priest going into the Holy of Holies on this special day to pray for the people of God, standing next to an archangel, has a crisis of faith because life has beaten him down so much.

like George Bailey. Sometimes we feel like life is just crushing us with all the struggles and all the difficulties.

It's easy to have faith when everything is going right. It's easy to have faith when all the blessings seem to be falling our way.

It's hard to have faith and to see this time of year as the most wonderful time of the year when everyone else is smiling and everybody on Facebook is showing us all the happy, blessed moments in their lives and we're feeling the struggle, the difficulty of life.

[28 : 38] How much faith do you have today? I know you had faith enough to come here. I was watching one of the cars pulling up to the driveway and evidently they slipped past it because they stopped in the middle of the road and I was watching just while we were singing.

You know, I get distracted too. And they had to back up and pull in. Getting to church itself was not easy today. Amen? But you had faith that your vehicle would bring you here.

You had faith that you could walk across the parking lot. You had faith that this place would be open. But do we have faith in God when it seems as if the very most important thing in our life, the one thing we would just want from God that we would trade most of the successes of our lives for?

Seems to be elusive and impossible. The best named apostle in the Bible, Thomas, had a crisis of faith during a different season.

It was the day of Jesus' resurrection and all the other apostles were talking about how they had seen the risen Lord and he said, yeah, right. Unless I stick my fingers in his wounds on his side and see the nail marks in his hands, I'm not going to believe.

[30 : 03] That's why we call him Doubting Thomas. Jesus appeared to him a little later. Thomas, you want to put your fingers there? Go ahead. Do you have to have your fingers in the nail holes in God's hand to have faith?

And Jesus said, stop doubting and believe. We get caught so much in what our culture and our world and the people around us tell us.

Day after day, we feel that somehow, some way, something has disappointed us, has let us down, has left us to believe that we're the only ones in the world that haven't received the blessing everybody else has.

And things just don't seem right. But Advent is a season to remind us that God keeps his promise, that God has a future for us even when we can't see it.

faith. But we have to see with the eyes of people of faith, not the eyes of this world. We have purple pyramids out today.

[31 : 23] Did you notice that? People sometimes wonder, why don't we use the red ones or the green ones at Christmas time? Wouldn't they fit better? I mean, obviously, the whole world is coloring red and green.

Why is the church using purple? Are we just colorblind or incapable of understanding what would match? We don't celebrate Santa.

We don't even celebrate the Christmas tree. What the purple recognizes is that Jesus Christ is born to be king. It's the color of a king.

And what we do at Advent is remember who God is. And this passage is telling us God is still God. God is the Lord of the universe.

God is still in control of everything. Even the choice of Zechariah to go into that holy of holies that day was decided by God.

[32 : 28] It says that they cast lots. You probably don't even know what lots are, do you? Casting lots was actually like a set of bones that they would roll like dice.

And depending on how those bones landed, it would send one message or another. Can you imagine the greatest event in your life being decided by a roll of bones like a roll of the dice?

But they had faith. They believed that God would direct those bones to land the right way. Could we have faith like that?

Would we trust a set of bones to decide how our life is going to go? God is still a king.

He sets the course of our lives. He decides what our lives will be. before he was born the angel said that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit given by God.

[33 : 39] He would bring many people back of Israel to the Lord. He would go on before the Lord in the spirit and the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of God to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord.

We need a time when the parents will turn their hearts to their children. Stop worrying about what their career says and what everything else says and know that the greatest possession is what Zachariah and Elizabeth couldn't have.

God made the decision and set the course of John's life before he was even born. While you were still in the womb Jeremiah says I called you and I knew you and I chose you for my purpose.

In fact even John's name. You will call him John. Everybody will be like no Zachariah that's what you call your firstborn. John means God is gracious. God is gracious because God answers prayer because God doesn't forget us because God still loves us.

The people were praying Zachariah was praying Elizabeth was praying can you imagine they were praying their entire lifetime for something that seemed totally impossible.

[35 : 07] Faith means we don't give up because it's taken longer than we want longer than everyone else tells us. One of the things that's most frustrating about God is that his time and our time are completely different.

He doesn't go by our clocks. He doesn't go by our calendars. He doesn't care about the timing we would set. God lays things out when it's right.

Not when we want it. But like the people during Advent waiting for Christmas and can't wait for that day to occur. We don't have the patience. So often we give up on God.

Faith says that we don't give up. We continue to believe. We continue to have hope. And we continue to prepare our lives while we wait to be like Elizabeth and Zachariah and live a life that would be worthy of God blessing it.

the angel says don't be afraid. Don't be afraid.

[36 : 12] Don't give up on God. Stop doubting and believe. But we've come to be a pessimistic lot. We have a tendency to look at all of life as negative nowadays.

How many of you see bad news whenever you see the news? It doesn't seem as if there's any good news. God is the giver of good news and yet all we hear day in and day out from the TV, from the newspapers, from our computer, from our phones, even from our friends is, oh, woe is me, the world is bad.

Even Ellen was talking about that one day. And so the news came on and here's what I noticed about the news. It's bad. It's all bad. Bad news.

It's not all bad. There's some terrible news and then there's awful news and then there's the weather, which lately has been bad news. It's easy to get depressed watching it so I had an idea.

I wanted to come out here today and I wanted to tell you good news. I wanted to find good news. Thank you, Stuart.

[37 : 24] This is just good, positive, happy. Whatever I find that's good and positive and happy, that's what I'm sharing. Nope. Yeah.

Okay, so there's nothing in there. In 2016, 40 new marine sanctuaries across 20 countries were established, protecting an area larger than the United States.

Charitable donations have dramatically increased. 2016 was the most charitable year in American history and China's contributions have gone up 10 times since a decade ago. For 299 days, Costa Rica ran entirely on 100% renewable energy.

They will likely be the first country completely off fossil fuels. At its lowest point in 25 years, world hunger along with poverty is dropping worldwide. The ocean cleanup prototype developed by Boyan Slat is starting this year.

This project aims to clean up 40% of ocean borne plastics. India shattered the world record with the most amount of trees planted in a single day. 50 million trees were planted by 800,000 volunteers.

[38 : 37] Sri Lanka has become malaria-free. You know that mosquito-borne disease that is one of the most deadly killers on the planet? This took 5 years of working to exile the disease from their borders. There's good news.

I was reading this. 20 top good news stories. World poverty is at an all-time low. More people are being fed than ever. They're planting millions of trees in India.

They've wiped out malaria. In large parts of the world, and we've been part of that, by the way, with our No More Malaria campaign by the United Methodist Church. There's good news if we listen to it, and God has good news.

He's still with us. He's Emmanuel, and He promises us blessings if we have faith. But people don't want to hear it. The archangel Gabriel came to tell Zechariah good news.

But Zechariah didn't believe it. When Zechariah finally did decide to believe it, he couldn't talk anymore. So he couldn't tell it. Elizabeth was so afraid to be embarrassed, she wouldn't share it.

[39 : 52] And the people standing outside waiting to hear good news had no idea what Zechariah was trying to tell them. And they had to wait a whole generation so that John could tell them the good news.

I don't want to wait a generation, do you? I don't want to wait another 20, 30 years before we can allow the next generation to finally tell us good news.

We should be the people, the people of God who spread the good news. Amen? We should go from this place saying, we have the most incredible good news to tell you.

Could you imagine what would happen if all of a sudden people would stop talking about the bad news and start talking about good news? Turning all the negatives into possibilities.

People will drift away from God, the angel says, but John will bring them back. In 14, he says, he will be a joy and delight to you and many will rejoice because of his birth.

[40 : 58] Then it says, he will be great in the sight of the Lord. And then it says, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. And then he says, he will bring back many people of Israel to the Lord. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Not he might, not he could, he will. If God is filling our heart, if God is overflowing in our lives with the wonderful blessing and promises that he gives us, we should be filled with good news to share.

You will be a witness for God. You will be a witness wherever you go. The question is, what kind of witness will you be? Will you be the bearer of good news?

Or do we have to wait a generation to find somebody who doesn't walk around like Zacharias saying, yeah, probably not me. Like he or.

Isaiah chapter five, or in Isaiah in verse five, chapter 40, it says, the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all the people will see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

[42 : 08] God said it and we can believe it because God doesn't lie. Religion is something we do.

We actually kind of like it because it's something that we can have some control over and it's a good thing for our lives. It's what we do while we prepare for the Lord, but faith, faith is dependent on God.

It means we have to believe and trust in things that we can't control. It's frightening. to trust bones being tossed.

To trust that God's promise that he wrote on your heart before you were born could possibly happen in your real lives. To trust a 2,000-year-old book and what it has to say to us.

To believe and trust that after this life we will go to a better life. That takes faith. It's not easy. It means trusting in what's impossible.

[43 : 17] In verse 18, Zechariah asked the angel, how can I be sure of this? I'm an old man and my wife, old as dirt. Of course not.

It doesn't take faith to believe in something you can make happen. It takes incredible amounts of faith and prayer to believe that God can do what we didn't think was possible.

Many years ago when I was first a pastor, I went on a retreat with a bishop and one of the things he said to me has stuck with me all my life. He said, while you go out to be a pastor, I want you to work as if it all depends on you but then pray because it really all depends on God.

we have something to do this Advent season to prepare the way of the Lord to come into our lives but we also need to pray that God will do what is totally impossible to bless us in ways we can't imagine because when Jesus was asked about this in Matthew, he said, man, this is impossible.

With God, what does it say? All things are possible with God. You might feel like George Bailey. You might feel like Zechariah or Elizabeth.

[44 : 37] You might feel like the world is just destroying your dreams and bringing you down and crushing everything you had hope in but God is still with you. Emmanuel, giving promises and hope for tomorrow.

Let's remember, God is not just somebody we talk about in church. God is the one who made the whole universe. God is the one who put the stars in the sky.

God is the one who can make something out of nothing. If God can do these things for you, if God can do what would be impossible for us, then we can trust that God still has blessings for all of us because God is God.

that's a truth that never changes. Stop bowing and believe. you are not a God created by human hands.

You are not a God dependent on any mortal man. you are not a God in need of anything we can give by your plan.

[46 : 04] That's just the way it is. You are God alone only for a time to end.

You are on your throne. You are God alone. And bright now in the good times and bad you are on your throne.

You are God alone. You are the only God whose power none can contend.

You're the only God whose name will be for everything we can give. You are God and that's just the way it is.

You are God alone from before time began. You are on your throne.

[47 : 17] You are God alone. You are God alone. And bright now in the good times and bad you are on your throne.

You are God alone. You are God alone. You are unchangeable.

That's what you are. You are unchangeable. You're unshakable You're unstoppable That is what you are You are God alone From the point of the end You are on your throne You are God alone And right now In the new time to burn You are on your throne You are God alone You're unchangeable You're unshakable You're unstoppable That's what you are Come and fill our homes with your presence

Come and fill our homes with your presence You alone are worthy of our repress That's for me and my house We will serve the Lord That's for me and my house We will serve the Lord That's for me and my house We will serve the Lord We will serve the Lord Lord, we bow to live for thee

As for me and my house We will serve the Lord As for me and my house We will serve the Lord We will serve the Lord Oh Lord, we will serve the Lord.

[50 : 42] Staying together, praying together, and His arm we can weather.

Trusting in God's word, we need each other. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, in harmony and love.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. We will serve the Lord.

We will serve the Lord. We have a faith that's strong, strong together as a family of God.

[52 : 01] And so we gather together to reinforce each other's face, to support one another, encourage one another, and we gather together to receive God's grace at the table.

So as we prepare ourselves for the table of grace, let's greet one another in this family with the peace of the Holy Spirit. All right. Peace.

Peace. I came in from a cold rain, which is what actually happened. Yeah. Peace. Peace. So, well, and and and, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. mafia requests. Thank you. Thanks, let me go.

And one of goes shoot me in his eyes, Amen. Amen.

[53 : 59] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. The table of the Lord is open to anyone and everyone who is seeking after Christ.

A relationship with God Almighty, a restored relationship through justified grace and seeking to be sanctified. And so we come with repentant hearts to receive more grace.

And I invite you to a prayer of confession along with me. Lord, I have sinned. Forgive me. Reveal to me what I need to change.

Reveal to me what I need to change. That I may shed your light. In this world. Forgive these sins, Lord.

[56 : 11] Set me on your path. Forgive me. As I repent. And seek you more. In Jesus' name.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were yet 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 so we celebrate. The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise. 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 your prophets, who looked for that day when justice would roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

[57 : 27] When nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. 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, 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, whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.

You scatter the ground in the imagination of their hearts and have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation. You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low degree.

You fill the hungry with good things and the rich you send empty away. To be your own son came among us as a servant, to be Emmanuel, your presence with us.

[58 : 32] He humbled himself in obedience to your will and freely accepted death on a cross. 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, Jesus took the bread. He gave thanks to you. He broke the bread and 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. The body of our Lord.

And when the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks. He said, this is the 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.

[59 : 54] 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 your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen. And 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. 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.

[61 : 25] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[63 : 24] Thank you. Now, if you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand and sing together, O Come All Ye Faithful.

Thank you.

Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant. O Come, O Come, O Come, into Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him, O Come, let us adore Him.

O Come, O Come, let us adore Him. O Come, O Come, O Come, O Come, O Come, through God.

[64 : 54] True God, home to God. Light from light, light from light eternal. Though He shun's not the virgin's womb.

Son of God, O Come, O Come, O Come, let us adore Him. O Come, O Come, let us adore Him.

O Come, let us adore Him. O Come, let us adore Him.

Christ the Lord. Christ the Lord. Christ the Lord. Child for us sinners, poor and in the nature, we would embrace Thee with love and awe.

Who would not love Thee with love and awe. Who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly. O Come, let us adore Him.

[66 : 13] O Come, let us adore Him. O Come, let us adore Him.

Christ the Lord. And so Gabriel looked at Zechariah and said, Well, if you don't have anything good to say, you won't say anything at all.

You thought your mother made your head up, didn't you? Yeah. You know, if you have nothing good to say, maybe you'd be better to be quiet. But you do have something good to say.

You have good news. God is still on His throne. God promises eternity. God promises blessings. God still will make wonderful things happen in your life and in the life to come.

Go and spread the good news. Be a part of the solution, not the problem. Go in His peace. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[67 : 18] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.