

February 7, 2016

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Date: 07 February 2016

Preacher: Pastor Jean Edmister

[0 : 00] This is the day that the Lord has made.

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

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We're the Fish Fry Kitchen Cleanup Crew. A welcome gift is available for new visitors and can be picked up at the connection site in the back of the sanctuary following worship.

[1 : 24] Fill out your friendship card to get on the mailing list. Sign up for activities. List any prayer concerns and any notes for the staff. Welcome to our church.

And we do welcome you to Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. There are a couple of clipboards going around. The one is for the community dinner in Niagara Falls that's served every Thursday night.

And they're looking for donations for that. The other one is for fish fries because, yes, it's that time of year. And so we'll be starting up the fish fry season, which happens all the way through Lent.

So this Friday from 4 to 7 is going to be a fish fry and they could use a lot of help. This Wednesday, then, to kick off the Lenten season is Ash Wednesday.

And we will be having a worship service at 7 o'clock. That means that a lot of the regular programming is canceled, but there will be a dinner. So check out the information in your little good news about that.

[2 : 17] And I welcome you to the Ash Wednesday service at 7 on Wednesday. Today, we are going skating. A bunch of families are getting together. We're all going skating down at Canal Side.

I know it's Super Bowl Sunday, but that's later. So if you want to come and try out skating and join those of us who haven't been on skates for a couple decades, it'd be great.

So we're going to meet here at 1.30 for that. And one other quick thing, the Mission Trip Kids have started their fundraising activities, and there are baked goods out in the fellowship for when you leave.

So check those out as well. All right, good. Let's have a word of prayer. Gracious Lord, we give you thanks that we're able to gather here together today to worship you, to honor you, and to praise you.

We pray that your spirit would be here among us and within us and lift our hearts up to you. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Shall we join together in singing our opening hymn?

[3 : 14] Oh, Jesus, I have promised. Would you stand? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Oh, Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end.

Be thou forever near me, my master and my friend. I shall not fear the battle if thou would bear my side.

Your wonder from the pathway if thou would be my guide. Oh, let me feel thee near me, the world is ever near.

I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear. My foes are ever near me, around me and within.

[4 : 42] But Jesus, draw the mirror and shield my soul from sin. Oh, let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still.

Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will. Oh, speak to reassure me, to pace in our control.

Oh, speak and let me listen, thou garden of my soul. Oh, Jesus, I have promised to all who follow thee.

That where thou art in glory, thou shalt thou servant thee. And Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end.

Oh, give thee grace to follow my master and my friend. The peace of the Lord be with you.

[6 : 07] Won't you greet your neighbors? Amen. I'd like to invite the kids to come on up.

Any kids want to come up and join us? Come on up, guys. All right. Here they come. Nice to see all these kids here this morning. Hey, I have to ask you, do you know what this thing is called?

It's called a cross. It's called a cross. And why do you suppose I wear it? It's about Jesus. It talks about Jesus to you.

Yeah, it reminds us of Jesus. That Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Absolutely. But do you think that this particular cross is anything special?

It's just a cross, right? What do you think? It does look like a sword if it's upside down. You're right. You know what the sword of God is?

[7 : 33] It's the word of truth. It's the Bible. Ah, so it could represent both, couldn't it? True. Now, suppose I was going to go out and go across Campbell Boulevard.

And you know how busy that road is? Do you think if I just held this cross up it would protect me as I went across the road? No, of course not. It doesn't have any power.

Yes, it's sparkling. It changes colors, doesn't it, when the light shines on it.

It's very pretty, but it doesn't have any power in itself, does it? But it does represent the power of God, doesn't it? And it represents the love of Jesus.

And so I wear it to remind myself of who I belong to. I belong to God. And I try to listen to his voice. And I depend on his power to protect me and keep me safe and tell me what I should do to stay safe.

[8 : 34] I don't just trust in this thing, do I? I trust in God. And this represents God. But it's not God. Right? Tell me the things that you're thankful for.

Okay? One share. Every friend. Every friend. Friends and family. Friends and family. Friends and family.

Tim and mommy and daddy. Oh. Daddy. Daddy. Friends and family. Daddy. Friends and family. My mom and dad. My baby. My baby.

My family. Friends and family. Friends and family. Friends and family. The world. There's one more. There's one more. Dexter, my cat. All right. All right.

All right. Well, let's pray together. Lord, we are so thankful for everything that you've given to us. Our friends and our family, for this beautiful world, and even for the animals, our cats, and our dogs, and all of our pets.

[9 : 36] We give you praise. We give you honor. We give you glory. Because you alone are God, and you are worthy. Amen. Thank you so much for coming up. Go out and help. All the children are welcome to go up to church school.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. We give you praise. We give you honor. We give you glory because you alone are God and you are worthy. Amen. Thank you so much for coming up.

Go out and help. All the children are welcome to go off to church school. Sunday school is right back with Miss Adrienne. We have a mission moment today.

In your bulletin is an envelope for that. And it is for Super Bowl Sunday. And it's not the football they'll be throwing around later on. It's S-O-U-P-E-R.

And it's about soup, which is about food, which is about our local food pantry. And so we're taking up an offering today to support our local food pantry. They tell us that there is a great need in this area for food.

[10 : 46] Families who really are struggling. So if the Lord is calling you to make a donation for that, place that in the offering when that is passed. I am thankful for a church that is willing to give so much.

And I'm thankful for this gorgeous weather. My goodness, it's February. And the sun is shining. And we're able to go out without coats sometimes. It's just wonderful.

But there's so many other things. I think we could all just list on and on and on the great blessings that God has given to each and every one of us. And as we reflect on the goodness of God, let's return our gifts, ties, and offerings to the Lord.

Thank you.

■ normal. It's just wonderful.

[12 : 05] It's no fascinating. In His hand I am secure. In His hand I am secure.

Shelter from the bitter fray, He's my refuge and my stay. In a dry and weary land, I have seen His gracious hand.

I have seen His gracious hand. Faithful in life's deep distress, Father to the fatherless.

To those ravaged by the war, He is all of these and more. He is all of these and more.

For His goodness I will praise Him. With my song I will proclaim.

[13 : 27] He is righteous, He is holy. He is evermore the same. Once a stranger, now a friend.

With me till my journey's end. He receives me as His own. Never will I walk alone.

Never will I walk alone. In my darkness He is light.

In my weakness He is might. In my doubting He is sure. In His hand I am secure.

In His hand I am secure. Secure. Secure.

[14 : 42] Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure.

Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure.

Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure.

Secure. Secure. Secure. Secure. Father, the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen. Lord, we thank you and we praise you for your many good things, the blessings in our lives, and we give back to you a portion as a reflection of our love.

[15 : 47] May it be a beacon in this world that we may be loving to others and make an impact in your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated.

There is so much to be thankful for and so much joy in this world. The sunshine alone just makes everything seem better. And I think, again, we could share lots of wonderful stories.

We do also have a lot of concerns on the hearts of our people, many that have been shared, many I know that have not. I just wanted to lift up some for you.

And I ask that you take note of it, and when you do your prayers throughout the week, please lift up these people in prayer. We need you as a church community. Sue Mayer was in a car accident.

That's Bud Mayer's wife. The car is a mess. She's very sore, but thankfully okay. But she's hurting. Dorothy Thuman is experiencing health issues.

[16 : 51] Please pray for the Thornton family. Len Thornton's father is expected to pass away very soon. Nancy Trowbridge and her family, please keep them in prayer as well.

They just experienced the death of her uncle. I ask for special prayers for a young man, a very young man named Matt, who has been diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor.

So lift him up all week, please. I pray for Elizabeth Geary. She's the daughter of Heather Geary, and she's a baby who has the flu and is dehydrated.

And please pray for the Greer family. Teresa Greer's brother, Tim, is also expected to pass away soon. So lots of heartache.

And those are just the ones that have been shared with us. So as a church community, let's go to the throne of grace. Lord, you are a good and gracious God.

[17 : 55] And we know you love us, and we love you in return, but our hearts are troubled as we seek out answers. And we come to you knowing that you are a God of love and of healing and of power.

We trust in you. We lift up these people, Lord, who are struggling physically, that your power of healing, you are the great physician, Lord.

Your powerful healing will reach into them and may miraculous things happen. We pray that you'll be with doctors and nurses and guide them, that they may make wise decisions.

Throughout every problem, Lord, we pray that you'll surround the people struggling with your comfort, your peace, your strength. Help them to lean back in your loving arms and trust in you.

We pray for the families who are there to support those who are going through issues. Give them your peace. Give them your wisdom.

[19 : 07] Give them the right words. Help them to be strong. We pray for people who are struggling emotionally and spiritually.

Those who don't know you, that they may come closer to you. Help us to be a part of that, that we may be a blessing to others.

We pray for our families. You'll draw all of our families closer to one another. We pray for our church, that you'll give us wisdom and guidance to make the right decisions, that we may have a great impact in this world in your name.

We pray for our world that just seems so broken. We know that you are the answer. We come to you humbly, asking for your protection, your help, your guidance, your peace, your mercy.

We praise you, Lord, for your goodness. And we trust in you for all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

[20 : 23] Let's hear from the word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Our scripture reading this morning is from the book of Exodus, chapter 32, verses 1 through 8. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, Come, make us gods who will go before us.

As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what's happened to him. Aaron answered them, Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons, and your daughters are wearing and bring them to me.

So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool.

Then they said, These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.

[22 : 08] So the next day, the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Go down because your people whom you brought up out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf.

They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Thank you, Jan, for sharing the word with us this morning. Today we're going to continue on with our sermon series.

We've been following the Israelites as they've been wandering through the desert places after God brought them up out of Egypt. and they've been learning lessons along the way.

[23 : 11] And so today we're going to look and see what else they've learned. It was by God's mighty power that Moses was able to lead the people up out of Egypt and out of slavery.

And it was God who led them through the Red Sea when Pharaoh came along and the army was chasing them. And it was God who provided manna and quail when the people were hungry in the desert.

And then the people were consecrated to serve God's purposes. And finally, they were given God's law to show them how to live. But now God's people were in trouble once again.

God had spoken the Ten Commandments to Moses back in chapter 20 of Exodus, which he shared with the people of Israel. But as soon as Moses disappeared back up Mount Sinai to talk with God again, the people became restless.

He was gone a long time, it says. In fact, if you look back, it actually tells us that Moses was gone for 40 days and 40 nights.

[24 : 15] And in Bible language, that's a long time. After a while, the people weren't so sure what had happened to Moses. Was he coming back down or wasn't he?

Had he been attacked by some wild animal? Had he gotten stuck in a crevice in a rock and wasn't able to come back? Or maybe God had just decided to zap him into oblivion.

We don't really know. And so the people were getting very anxious about where Moses was. Perhaps they panicked, thinking that God had withdrawn himself from them completely and taken Moses along with him.

Was God no longer going to be in touch with them? Maybe they simply wanted a visible leader, something tangible to connect to God, to look for guidance.

Sometimes it's hard to believe in a God who's invisible that we can't see. Moses was the people's only point of contact with God. In fact, they asked him to be their mediator between them and God.

[25 : 22] If you remember, when God spoke to them in person from the top of the mountain, they couldn't bear to hear the sound of his mighty and powerful voice. They trembled with fear.

They were afraid they would die if they stood in the presence of God and heard his holy voice. And so Moses agreed to act as a buffer between God and his people.

When Moses disappeared on the mountaintop, they really became fearful and they appealed to his brother Aaron to help them out. This fellow Moses, they said, we don't know what's happened to him.

Doesn't it sound like they spoke about their leader with some contempt? This fellow Moses, they had become angry with Moses because he wasn't returning.

Now parents, I don't know if you've ever done this, but maybe there was a day when you were supposed to pick one of your kids up from school and you kind of lost track of time or you got tied up in traffic or something happened that you were late picking up your child.

[26 : 26] How did they feel by the time you got there? First of all, they got a little bit nervous and confused and maybe a little bit afraid, but by the time you finally showed up, they're angry at you, right?

That's how the Israelites felt. They felt abandoned and they felt anxious and they were angry. And so they turned to Aaron, the brother of Moses, who was second in command, and they asked for his help.

But Aaron was not such a great leader, was he? He immediately gave in to the fears of the people. Instead of saying to them, just wait a little while, Moses will be back, calm down, it'll be okay.

Just wait to hear what Moses has to say. Instead, he gave in to them and what did he help them do? He helped them to make a golden calf to worship.

What the Israelites really wanted was a visible God, something they could see, just like the false gods they had worshipped in Egypt. People have this tendency to fall back on old patterns very quickly when they're uncertain or afraid, don't they?

[27 : 37] When we're in the midst of trouble or uncertain times, who do we fall back on? Are we willing to wait for God to send us direction? Or do we jump ahead and kind of do our own thing?

Do we trust in our creator God's way of speaking to us? How does God talk to us? Through scripture? Through prayer?

Through the counsel of otherwise Christian brothers and sisters? But the people really weren't too willing to wait and to hear from God.

And so they were looking to created things and they were looking to things that were like superstitions in order to find out what they should do. Let's see what Bob Sled has to say about some of these things.

Do you want to build a snowman? Well, I would like to, but there's no snow.

[28 : 41] Some find it unsettling. It's not as chilly as it usually is this time of year. It's usually very, very cold outside. But, well, it's brisk, but it's not sub-zero.

Now, usually we have lots of snow. And I would build a snowman. But all I'm seeing is grass. What does it all mean? It can be very confusing. It's a paradox.

We are in Buffalo, after all. Hey, everybody. It's me again, Bob Sled. I'm here with another fireside chat that'll give you a little direction on how to go forward with this strange but lovely weather we've been experiencing.

Now, some folks get a little bit antsy this time of year. They just want winter to be over. But those of us who've been living in western New York for a while have come to learn a few lessons about that. The first sign of beautiful weather does not mean that winter's over.

I'll be back! We still have to wait to plant those flowers outside. We wait and enjoy it just where we are. Have a cup of cocoa and it's a beautiful day, isn't it?

[29 : 42] But people who are not from here think it's a sign. They think to themselves, we've waited long enough. They start believing in their minds that they should just push ahead into spring, regardless of the day, regardless of the forecast, regardless of history, that shows that spring always arrives, but not yet.

When is it coming? We need to know the truth. They need to know the truth, but they can't handle the truth! And they succumb to getting furry little creatures to do parlor tricks for them, looking around to make sure they don't see a shadow.

That's supposed to reveal the truth? Puxatani Phil battles it out with Dunkirk Day. Who's the more impressive shadow seeker? Who's willing to tell everyone what they want to hear? How much more of this do we have to take?

Is the warmer air and sunshine just a temptation? What are we waiting for? Let's plant those flowers! And those pretty pansies will likely not do well.

Wait for it. It's worth the wait. Don't plant those flowers now. It's likely to have a snowman on it soon. Instead, have a cup of cocoa, relax, and wait.

[30 : 50] It's a beautiful day, isn't it? Good old Babsled.

He's full of great advice. Who do we trust for the truth? Do we trust a groundhog or do we trust our experience of God's natural order of things, of seasons?

Is it really time to start planting those flowers or should we wait just a while longer? And just like planting a garden now would show a lack of trust in God's order, so making the golden calf showed the Israelites lack of trust in God.

they thought they knew best and that they could go do whatever they wanted instead of waiting for Moses to return with God's instructions. We get distracted from what we know is the right thing to do.

We get distracted by people and we get distracted by the things of this world. We do what the world says is right instead of discerning God's voice speaking to us.

[32 : 06] Are you wondering how to discern God's voice from other voices? Well, the topic of our church retreat this year is going to be spiritual discernment, so maybe you ought to come along and learn some more about it.

The thing is, we can destroy ourselves by acting before listening to God. And in this winter weather, sometimes it is better to wait and let the snow melt a little bit before we go out to do things.

And when the ice is raining down and the roads are slick, sometimes it's better to wait for the salt truck to go by before we try to travel. And at my age, I've learned it's better to wait for somebody to help with the shoveling and the snow removal because I don't want to have a heart attack.

I'm going to wait for help. In life, we need to wait on the Lord. We need to put our trust in Him and not put our trust in things that really can't save us.

Like the Israelites who put their faith in a golden calf. Psalm 135 tells us, The idols of the nations are silver and gold made by the hands of men.

[33 : 17] They have mouths, but they cannot speak. Eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear. Nor is there breath in their mouths.

Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. Now, a calf was a pretty common pagan idol image back in those days.

And in pagan religions, it was thought that a god was either seated on or standing above the calf. And so the calf may not have been considered the god itself at first, but more likely the throne of God.

But things began to slide downhill pretty quickly once that golden calf was made. They built an altar in front of it, and they began making sacrifices, and they began to worship the calf itself.

It became more than just a man-made article representing God's throne. It became a false god, an idol. And why is worshiping idols so wrong in the eyes of God?

[34 : 23] It is a denial that God alone is our God. It's putting something or someone before God in importance in our lives. God alone is the one who created the universe, who created the Israelites, and God alone was the one who brought them up out of Egypt.

And no other gods had done this for them. Romans chapter 1 talks about this when it says, for although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator who is forever praised. Amen. By worshipping an idol, the Israelites were in essence creating a new false religion.

They were taking what God had taught them and combining it with whatever else they wanted to believe. And we call this syncretism. Kind of a funny word, syncretism.

[35 : 43] It's something people do today still. People will tend to take what they consider to be the best parts of all the popular religions and combine them into something that they like instead of what is true about God.

Even within Christianity, there are some people who will only read from certain parts of the New Testament because they want to hear about a God who is loving and forgiving and willing to sacrifice himself for us.

And that's a very good thing and that's what God is like. But, they ignore the parts that are harder to understand and the parts that are harder to swallow. They don't want to read in the Old Testament about a God who is also holy and can't stand sin.

And they certainly don't want to read in the book of Revelation about a God who will someday judge people according to their sinful actions. But all of the Bible, taken together, is the fullness of God's truth.

What kind of a holy God would we have if he didn't have a plan for destroying everything that's evil and sinful at some point in time? A good and a holy God does not allow evil to last forever.

[37 : 04] God certainly didn't want a people who worshipped a golden calf. Not only did they make the calf to worship and build an altar and make sacrifices before the calf, but they also had a party.

And the Bible calls it revelry. And it indicates in the original language a really wild party if you get my drift. They held this wild party the same way they had worshipped pagan idols in Egypt.

And it was the only way they knew to do things, but it was a perversion of what God wanted and what God had told them to do in worshipping him. And if they thought that they could get away with this perverted behavior just because Moses was not there to report it to God, then they were sadly mistaken because God knew what was going on before Moses did.

God told Moses, your people, Nody didn't call them my people anymore, God said, your people are doing wrong.

They've become corrupt. They've turned away from what God has taught them. It's a wonder God didn't zap them all right then. He had warned them very, very clearly that they were not to worship other gods and that they were not to worship graven images, idols.

[38 : 27] God intended to destroy them all at this point and start over again with just Moses. But Moses, who was a good leader and loved his people, interceded for the Israelites.

He reminded God how it was God's power and might that had brought the people up out of Egypt. Why would God give the Egyptians a reason to gloat by destroying his own people now?

And Moses reminded God of the covenant promise that he had made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of the Israelites, a promise to be their God and to take them to the promised land.

And so God relented. Somehow, Moses was able to change God's mind. And the people were not wiped out. Do we wonder if we're able, with our pleading and our prayers, to change God's mind?

Sometimes it's really hard to comprehend, but I think it's a possibility. possibility. And so if you're in the midst of a terrible trouble right now or having a problem of some sort, keep on praying because God is listening.

[39 : 43] God hears you. And things could change. Now after Moses had interceded for the people, he went to see for himself what was happening at the foot of the mountain.

And starting in Exodus 32, verse 15, we read, Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back.

The tablets were the work of God. The writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire and then he ground it into powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it. Just imagine how angry Moses must have been when he saw those people worshiping a golden calf.

He took the stone tablets that God had inscribed with his own hand and he smashed them to pieces. Later on, Moses was going to have to go back up that mountain again and say, oh God, could you make me another copy of those tablets?

[41 : 03] I'm so sorry I broke them. Would you want to have to do that? I wouldn't. Meanwhile, the people were punished for making an idol and for worshiping, but they were not wiped out completely.

Now, modern day idolatry may not look the same as in the Old Testament days. Most of us aren't actually building a golden calf and bowing down to it, but we do worship powerless and false people and things which are incapable of granting us peace and salvation and love.

We are trusting in the wrong things like somebody trusting in a groundhog to predict the weather instead of trusting in God's plans and promises for us.

Let's get a little bit specific here. When we find greater delight in our hobbies or our sports than in our walk with Christ, we're wandering down the path of idolatry.

When we spend more time absorbing entertainment of Hollywood or TV than we do contemplating oddly truth, we're toying with idolatry.

[42 : 14] When any possession dominates our thoughts and captures our affections more than the treasure of Christ, we are toying with idolatry. And when social media excites us more than spiritual interests, we are in the process of erecting false gods.

When we find excessive delight in relationship with some other person to the neglect of our relationship with Christ, that person can become an idol. And even in doing good things, when we get more delight out of serving Christ than we do in seeking Christ, we're playing with idolatry.

And when we find greater confidence in our own strengths and our own capabilities rather than in humble reliance on Christ, we can easily fall under the spell of the idolatry of self-worship.

It's Super Bowl Sunday. How many of you are going to watch the big game later? Yeah, me too, probably. I wonder how many of you feel as though you have to wear a special jersey or eat particular foods or say certain things in order to make sure your team is going to win the game.

You know, superstitious rituals are a form of idolatry. You know, superstitious rituals are a form of idolatry too. It's our way of trying to control our lives.

[43 : 44] It's our way of putting us in the high place instead of letting God control our lives. It's an attempt to get what we want instead of waiting for what God has in store for us that might be better.

When you love somebody, you don't try to control them. In fact, you'll do anything to try to please them and you never want to hurt them.

And the same goes for our relationship with God. And one issue that truly upsets God is the fact that we are constantly choosing other lovers, other things.

We choose idols over God. An idol is anything that we want more than God. Anything that we rely on more than God.

Anything that we look to for greater fulfillment than God. Jonah chapter 2 says this, Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.

[44 : 51] But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord. Every day, every day as true believers, we have to choose between an intimate knowledge of Christ and giving ourselves over to idols.

The choice is extremely important both now in this life and in eternity. And so I encourage all of us, including myself, to spend some time, especially during this coming season of Lent, spend some time praying and asking God to reveal the idols which may have crept into our lives.

Even those things which are basically good, if we take them and we elevate them to a place higher than they ought to be, they become idols. The temptations of the idols are relentless and they're seductive.

And so I ask that we try to let a burning love of Christ be the thing that surpasses all other attractions.

Let us have clean hands and pure hearts and worship God alone. let us have clean hands and purecooled, we are not challenging members.

[46 : 19] I ask that there are no choice yet, Let's just go. Let us not lift our souls to another.

Give us strength and give us pure love. Let us not lift our souls to another.

Come and speak, our generation at sea. Who seeks your face, O God of Jacob.

Come and speak, our generation at sea. Who seeks your face, O God of Jacob.

We bow our hearts, we bend our knees. O Spirit, come make us humble. We turn our eyes from evil things.

[47 : 49] O Lord, we cast down our idols. So give us strength and give us pure love. Let us not lift our souls to another.

Give us strength and give us pure love. Let us not lift our souls to another. O God, let us be a generation at sea.

I seek your face, O God of Jacob. I seek your face, O God of Jacob. O God, let us be a generation at sea. I seek your face, O God of Jacob.

Give us your hearts. Let us not cleanse our souls to another.

It's so hard, isn't it? We're surrounded by so many distractions, and yet we just have to continually remember that God is our priority, and that we can trust in God for all things.

[49 : 00] Bless the Lord forever. I will trust Him at all times.

He has delivered me from all things. He has set my feet upon the rise.

I will not be rude, and I'll say all the love of my sin.

My strength, my portion, deliverer. My shelter, strong tower.

My living presence comes in time of peace. I will not be rude, and I will not be rude.

[50 : 46] He has done my desire in solitude. He has made me try.

He has made me try. In the mountains of the world, you are my shield. My strength, my portion, deliverer.

My strength, my portion, deliverer. Strong power, my very present love.

You are my deceit, my strength, my portion. You live on my shelter.

Strong power, my very present love. You are my love, me. My very present love in time of me.

[51 : 58] My very present love in time of me. This is my desire to honor you.

Lord, with all my heart, I worship you. All that I have within me, I give you praise.

All that I adore is in you. Lord, I give you my heart.

I give you my soul. I live for you alone. Every brother I take. Every moment I'm awake.

Lord, I give you my heart. I give you my soul. I live for you alone.

[53 : 32] Every heart that I take. Every moment I'm awake. Lord, I'm awake. All of us have at some point in our lives gone and got distracted and started going on the wrong path in some way.

We're all sinners in need of God's grace. And I am just grateful and thankful that we have a God that is freely giving, forgiving, loving.

And he asks us to come and ask for forgiveness, to confess our sins. So let's come to the throne of grace. Lord, I have sinned. I've been distracted.

I've not always worshipped you. I've not always loved you. I've not always loved others. There are things in my heart that need to be cleansed.

Forgive me, Lord. Here as I confess my sins. Lord, I thank you for your grace.

[55 : 11] For your mercy. For your forgiveness. And your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Hear the good news.

Christ died for each and every one of us while we were still sinners. This proves God's love for us. So in the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

In Christ alone, I place my trials. And find my glory in the power of the cross.

shall we join together in the great thanksgiving the Lord be with you lift up your hearts let us give thanks to the Lord our God thanks and praise and glory and honor are rightly yours our Lord and our God for you alone are worthy in time beyond our dreaming you brought forth life out of darkness and in the love of Christ you set man and woman at the center of your creation you love the world so much that you sent your only son to bring us eternal life dying he destroyed our death rising he restored our life hallelujah and so we praise you with the faith of every time and place joining with the choirs of angels and the whole creation in their eternal 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 we thank you that you call the covenant people to be a light to the nations through Moses you taught us to love your love and in the prophets you cried out for justice in the fullness of your mercy you became one with us in Jesus Christ who gave himself up for us on a cross you make us alive together with him that we may rejoice in his presence and share in his peace always in the night in which he was to give himself up for us

[58 : 19] Jesus took bread gave thanks to God broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and he told them this is my body which is given for you eat of this in remembrance of me and after the supper he took the cup he gave thanks to God he gave it to his disciples and he said to them this is my blood the blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins drink of this as often as often as of the as you will in remembrance of me and so in remembrance of these your mighty acts of Jesus Christ we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith Christ has died Christ has risen Christ will come again pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup make them be for us make them be for us make them be for us 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 your Holy Spirit and your Holy Church all honor and glory is yours almighty Father now and forever forevermore Amen and now as his faithful people shall we pray the prayer which he 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 helping to serve please come forward.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[63 : 51] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[68 : 22] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll pray to you to stand as we sing our closing hymn. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, not be all else to me, save thou the land.
No more best thought, or day or night. Waking, O singing, thy presence, my Lord.
Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word. I offer with thee, and thou with me, Lord.
Thou and thou only, first in thy heart. Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
Great God of heaven, my victory won. May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's eye.

[69 : 57] Out of my own heart, whatever befall. Still be my vision, O ruler above.
As you go out this day, may you search diligently in your heart. Recognize those things that have become idols that you've put before God.
Take them down a notch or two. Let your heart be filled with a burning love for Christ.
Trust in God, and he will lead you, and he will guide you in all of your ways.
Go out this day in his peace, his joy, and his power. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.