

# February 14, 2016

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Date: 14 February 2016

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [ 0 : 00 ]     The Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.  
Many kids want to sing, come on down. This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Get on the mailing list, to sign up for any activities, any prayers or concerns, and any notes you want to send for the staff.
- [ 1 : 23 ]     And if you're new to our church, please be sure and pick up a gift that we have for you in the back of the church at the Connection site after worship. Thank you for coming today, and welcome to Pendleton Center Church.  
  
We have a couple of items on our clipboard. One is for things in the service, like bulletins and flowers and such. There's only one of those. That's going to go around the whole sanctuary.  
  
If you're looking for it, you can find it and sign up on it. The other one's for our fish fries, and there's one of those for each section. We had a great fish fry, and we're glad to have people out helping with that. If you can help in the future, it's a good and enjoyable time, and we'd love to have you down for that experience together.  
  
Let's turn to the Lord in prayer, shall we? Dear God, we thank you for this morning, and we pray that your blessing will be upon us, that you'll give us your peace, your presence, and help us to focus our minds, our hearts, our thoughts, holy and completely on your words.  
  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. If you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand as we sing Standing on the Promises. Standing on the Promises of Christ, my King, Through eternal ages let His praises ring.
- [ 2 : 48 ]     Glory in the highest I will shout and sing Standing on the Promises of God Standing, standing, standing on the Promises of God, my Savior Standing, standing I'm standing on the Promises of God, standing on the Promises that cannot bear.  
  
When the howling storms the doubt and fear are slain, by the living Word of God I shall prevail, standing on the Promises that cannot bear.  
  
The Lord, bound to live eternally by love's strong core, Overcoming daily with His spirit's sword, Standing on the promises of God, To God, we're standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God, my Savior, Standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God, Standing on the promises I cannot form, Loosening every moment to the spirit's card, Resting in my Savior as my all-in-one, Standing on the promises of God, Standing, standing,  
  
Standing on the promises of God, my Savior, Standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God, My voice doesn't want to do that this morning.  
  
The Lord be with you. Take a moment and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit. I'd like to invite the frogs to come up now, if they would. Where are our frogs?

[ 5 : 55 ] We're going to invite the frogs to come up and join us now. I think we have kids that aren't frogs, yeah, that's okay.

So, okay, kids who are not frogs, come back here with me. If you're not a frog, come back here. If you are a frog, stand in the front, okay? Come on right up here if you're not a frog. If you're not a frog, come on over here.

If you are a frog, stand up there. There we go. We'll sort it out. There we go. There we go. There we go.

There we go. Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 8 : 14 ] Thank you.

Thank you. If any other kids want to come up and join us, you're welcome to come on down at this time. Any of you ever have to shovel?

Yeah? I used to have to shovel when I was a kid. I had to shovel the whole driveway. Yeah. They didn't have any snow plows or snow blowers or things. We had to shovel it all.

And you know what I got paid for it? Nothing. I had to take out the garbage. You know what I got paid for it? Nothing. And I had to mow the lawn. You know what I got paid for that?

Nothing. Yeah. Because I had to do it. They were called chores. Any of you ever have chores? Yeah. You know what you're supposed to get paid for it? Nothing.

[ 9 : 32 ] Nothing. You got paid for it? Well, good for you. But you know why? Because we're part of a family, right? And if our parents want us to do something, we need to help out.

Because they do all kinds of stuff for us, don't they? Yeah. So we got to do a little stuff for them to help them out too. Even if there's nothing in it for us except being part of the family. And that's the same thing with the family of God.

If God wants us to do something, we should do it for them, right? Even if we get paid, what? Nothing. Right? Yeah.

What do you guys thankful for today? Why don't you raise your hand if you want to share something? My mom and dad. Friends and family.

Family. My mom and dad and my family. My family. Friends and family. My mom and dad.

[ 10 : 34 ] Sister. My mom and dad and my brother. My mom and dad. My mom.

Every newborn in the world. Anyone else? All right. Let's pray. Lord, we do thank you for all the wonderful blessings in life we have. Families and people we love.

We have newborn babies. All the good things that God gives to us. We thank you, Lord, and we pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You guys can all go out to church school now if you'd like to. All the kids are welcome to go out to church school.

Amen. Amen. Good morning, church.

Good morning. Our God has blessed us with a beautiful winter day and a nice warm sanctuary to gather together and praise his name. Amen. Amen. Let's continue our worship and bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord.

[ 11 : 39 ] We'll be right back.

I've been one to shake with fear, and I wonder if you're even here. I've been one to doubt your love. I've told myself you're not in awe.

I've been one to kill you.

You take the offense and you are the one Messiah. You are my head.

You are my head. I've been one to go down in chains beneath the weight of all my shame. I've been one to believe that where I am you cannot reach.

[ 13 : 56 ] You're the one who conquers giants. You're the one who calls out kings. You shut the mountain lions. You tell the dead to breathe. You're the one who walks in fire. You take the offense and you are my Messiah.

You are my head. You are my head.

You are my. I am. in stone And now I live There's the spirit inside The same one The very same one From the sun Back to life Hallelujah Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Oh You're the one who wants to rise You're the one who calls our king To shut the mouth of lies

You tell the devil to breathe You're the one who wants to fire You take the open's hand You are the one who's sire You are Hallelujah You are Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah He lives in me Hallelujah Praise to you, Lord.

Praise to you, Lord.

[ 16 : 56 ] Praise to you, Lord. Praise to you, Lord. For the furtherance of your kingdom. Father, we ask that you bless this offering. That you give us wisdom to know how to best use it.

We are your people, Lord. We desire to do your will. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated.

Amen. As we come before the Lord in prayer, we always come with so many things in our hearts that we're thankful for.

Our gratefulness to God for all that God gives us, all that God blesses us with. And we come before God with those requests that we have, those things that trouble our hearts, that keep us coming closer to God.

We do need to keep the Thornton family in prayer. Len's father passed away in Florida recently. And Teresa Greer's brother, Tim Myers, also passed away.

[ 18 : 02 ] We need to keep these families lifted up in our prayers. Shirley Duchar is in Florida. She's having some medical testing. We want to keep her lifted up for a good report for that.

Ron Ellman had surgery on his hand and he can't drive yet. But he's hoping that he'll be back in worship with us very soon. Bob Walk is going to be having surgery on his hand on Wednesday.

So we want to keep him lifted up in our prayers. And of course, there are all those things that are in our hearts, each one of us. Those things that we know that we haven't spoken out.

God hears and answers everything that we pray. God knows our hearts. God hears our cries. So let's turn to our Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this time that we can come together and lift up all of those things to you that we are joyful for.

And those things that are troubling in our lives. Father, we know that you rejoice with us as we rejoice. And you mourn with us when we mourn.

[ 19 : 28 ] You are with us. Holding us in the palm of your hand when we fear. And all we need to do is look to you.

And you send blessing upon blessing. Father, we lift up now all of those people who are sick and infirm. Those who are in the midst of uncertainty, not knowing what their conditions are or how they will be treated.

We just pray that you will give them peace and grant them healing. Each and every one healing from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. Let their spirits and their souls and their bodies be well in you.

It is written in your word. Beloved, I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in health, even as your souls prosper. Thank you, Lord, for all the medical professionals and caregivers who work with them.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you would give them wisdom beyond their experience, beyond their studies and learning. That they would have wisdom from you.

[ 20 : 48 ] Know how to treat and to care for those people you have given them. Father, we pray for those grieving losses. Father, we just ask that you would touch them with your comfort, with your peace, by your Holy Spirit.

That you would give them the opportunity to draw closer to you. That they would know your hand of grace and mercy upon them and upon their lives.

We pray for memories of good and joyous times. And that in that there would be peace found.

We pray, Father God, that as each one draws closer to you in search of comfort, that you would grant them.

Lord, we pray for all of those in our community, here in our church and the wider community and even into the wider world. Lord, we pray for peace.

[ 22 : 15 ] We pray, Lord, that you would equip us so that we, as your church, can be your hands and your feet, your voice, that your words of promise, of salvation, of healing and mercy would come through us.

Help us, Lord. As we hear your word, Lord God, help us. Help us to receive what you have for us.

Let it wash over us and transform us, preparing us for all those people and all those situations we'll run into. Let our speech be full of grace for them, Lord.

Let us speak your truth in love. Father, as Pastor Tom brings the word, the message that you have given to him for us this day, we ask that it would be a blessing to us.

We pray that he would be blessed also. And most of all, Lord, we just pray that all of our worship would bless you.

[ 23 : 37 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. This morning's reading comes from the book of Numbers, chapter 13, verses 1 through 3 and 17 through 31. The Lord said to Moses, send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites.

For each ancestral tribe, send one of its leaders. So at the Lord's command, Moses sent them out from the desert of Haran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

[ 24 : 47 ] When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, go through Negev and onto the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many.

What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not?

Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land. It was a season for the first ripe grapes. So they went up and explored the land from the desert in Zin as far as Rehab toward Leho, Haman.

They went up through Negev and came to Hebron where Haman, Shekia, Talnevay, the descendants of Anak lived. Hebron had been built seven years before in Zonin in Egypt.

When they reached the Valley of Eshkol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on the pole between them along with some pomegranates and figs.

[ 25 : 54 ] That place was called the Valley of Eshkol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. At the end of the 40 days, they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community of Kadesh and the desert of Paran.

There they reported to them and the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses the account. We went into the land as you had sent us and it does flow with milk and honey.

Here is the fruit. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Anakites lived in Negev.

The Hittites, Jibbisites, and Amorites live in the hill country. And the Canaanites lived there near the sea and along the Jordan. Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, We should go up and take possession of the land for we came to do that.

But the men who had gone up with him said, We can't attack these people. They are stronger than we are. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Jim.

[ 27 : 04 ] We'll go walking along, singing a song, walking through the window on the land. Ah! It's snowing! We're going to get six inches of snow!

Close everything! Seriously. When did we become such wimps? What happened? Everybody goes nuts! We're going to get six inches!

I mean, really, seriously, folks, this is Buffalo. We used to be tougher than this. We didn't have snowblowers and snowplows when I grew up. We had snowplows on the street, but they were clunky old things.

We had to shovel everything by hand. And the snow was a lot deeper, and the winters were a lot colder. And we had to walk uphill both ways, barefoot, to school.

That's true. That's true. The roads are better. The equipment's better. We never heard of such things as four-wheel rides back then.

[ 28 : 03 ] A Jeep was something the Army used. We've got a Jeep with something the Army used. We've got a little bit easier winters these days. And we still whine.

In the midst of blessings. God wants to bless us. The ultimate statement of faith for a Christian is, Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. And if people can say that and mean that, they are Christian. The problem is, is we like part of it, but we're not so comfortable with the other part.

Jesus Christ is our Savior. He saved these people. He blessed the Israelites. He took them out of captivity in Egypt. He took them through the Red Sea and drowned the Egyptian army.

They went out in the desert and He fed them manna, food from heaven. He gave them water out of a rock. He's protected and taken care of them. He's already saved them.

[ 29 : 01 ] And He does the same for us. When we trust God, when we accept God, He starts out by taking away our sin. Forgiving us. Taking away our guilt and the pain and hurt of things that have gone on in the past.

Gives us a life of purpose and meaning. Gives us people to belong to. He gives us His own Holy Spirit presence in our hearts. He gives us the ability to conquer death itself.

God has already blessed us. But the problem is, is God wants to be more than just our Savior. He wants to be our Lord and Savior. So God expects things.

God actually has expectations that we will do something. For God. In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet says this. God gave them this command.

Obey me and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you that it might go well with you. You want it to go well? You want God to be your God?

[ 30 : 04 ] You're supposed to do what God wants you to do. In John, Jesus even says it. We see Jesus as being whatever. Well, Jesus says, if you keep my commands, you'll remain in my love.

He says, I kept my Father's commands and remain in His love. If you want the love of God, you do what God wants you to do. And He told these people what to do. He told them what was expected.

It wasn't really that difficult to figure out. In the book of Deuteronomy, in chapter 1, He said, I've given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land I swore to give you.

Go into the land. That's what He tells Moses as this passage begins. Go into the land. And so they picked 12 leaders.

And they sent them into the land. It's interesting, they chose the leaders. It's one of the few times in the Bible where people actually choose their own leaders. We'll talk about that in a couple of weeks.

[ 31 : 08 ] They went in and they wandered around for 40 days. They found a land that they called the Promised Land. They said it was flowing with milk and honey. But it's also got giants in it.

Huge people! Now, we're not sure what giants really meant back then. Has anybody here ever been to Old Fort Niagara and looked at the beds those guys slept in?

And they're like about four feet long? You know, 200 years ago, we would have all looked like Dan Putney to them. We've all been huge. Giants!

In their midst! We can't take these people on! They'll destroy us! They've got fortified cities. They've got weapons.

We're afraid we're not going to do this. It's too hard. You see, we want a Savior without a Lord. We want a genie, not a God.

[ 32 : 10 ] We're afraid. If we have to take a risk or we face something that seems like it might be difficult. About 1 o'clock on Friday, somebody said to me, are we canceling the fish fright tonight?

I looked out the window and at 1 o'clock here, there was nothing. There was no snow on the ground. The parking lot has got black pavement. The grass is showing and people want to cancel the fish fright tonight. I'm like, look out there!

It looks like this! In fact, without the snow! So, about 2.30 or so, it started coming. Right? Now people are flipping out all over the place.

So, it's 3.30 and I'm actually cooking fish. Literally cooking fish in the kitchen. And Mary, who directs these fish fries, comes in and says, everybody thinks we should cancel this.

What do you think? I said, Mary, I'm cooking fish. I mean, we're cooking it. It's here. It's got to be cooked either way. We're here. Let's give it an hour and see what happens. Do you know why they wanted to cancel the fish fry?

[ 33 : 14 ] Because they were freaking out! Because the radio and the TV and everybody everywhere said, we were going to get six inches of snow! Ah! Really?

Really? Really? Really? Really? Really? We're flipping out over six inches of snow? You know? The spies went into the land and they started to get afraid.

And chapter 14 actually tells you what comes next. You should read it sometime. But I'll tell you a little bit about it. These ten spies start going around the community of Israel and saying to everybody, we can't go in there!

It's giants! It's terror! It's horrible! They're spreading their rumors. They're spreading fear. Just like the media does.

And do you know why they do that? They really don't do that to keep you safe. Not when six inches of snow is coming. They do that because it makes you listen to their radio. You tune into them.

[ 34 : 18 ] Not because they really care what they have on, but because they're going to tell you about this crazy storm coming. With six inches of snow. And so the people got afraid.

They said, we need to get rid of this guy Moses. We need a new leader. We're going to pick a leader that will take us back to Egypt. We've had it with this Moses guy.

Everything was better back in Egypt. This is the way they describe it in one chapter in Exodus. They said, If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt. There we sat around pots of meat and all the food we wanted, but you brought us out here to die.

They had this idea that everything was good. It wasn't. It wasn't. They were slaves.

They worked under slave drivers who beat them and forced them to do work they didn't want to do and wasn't for their own benefit. Some people believe they built the pyramids for somebody else.

[ 35 : 23 ] Big, huge pyramid just so one guy could have a tomb after he died. See, the thing is, God has given us a wonderful gift. And that is, for the most part, aside from a few traumatic events in our lives, we forget all the bad stuff that happened in the past in our lives and we remember all the good stuff.

So when we see a classic car go by, we say, Boy, now that's a real car. That's when they really made cars to be cars. Have you ever ridden in one? They're a pure misery.

They're not comfortable. They have no features. There's no four-wheel drive for the winter. They slide around the roads. Their tires blow out. I mean, blow out.

But that's not the way we remember it. Everything was fine when Leave it to Beaver was on TV. There were no problems. Everybody had a good life. Things were simple.

Egypt seduces us to believe that there's some kind of easy world with no wars and no trouble and no sacrifice. And if there is, somebody else does it for us.

[ 36 : 32 ] We don't have to do that. But that's not the way it really was. They had a hard life. Back when Leave it to Beaver was on the TV, I grew up.

I graduated high school in 1975. 75 will charge. And in 1975, does anybody know what the unemployment rate was in Buffalo, New York? 15%.

That's not 15% counting the people who quit looking for a job. That was the official unemployment rate. 15%. The plants have just closed down.

General Electric, Westinghouse, Bell Aerospace, Republic Steel, Bethlehem Steel. We talk about we're going to get this huge solar panel factory that will employ 1,500 people.

Each one of these plants employed 10,000 to 20,000 people. In two years, 100,000 people lost their jobs. That's what we came out to.

[ 37 : 33 ] And by the way, inflation was running at 11% to 12% a year. Your money was going backwards by 11% to 12% every single year. So even if you got a 7% raise, you lost five.

The good old days. I happened to get a job. I was one of the fortunate ones. They told me that I had to work 85 hours a week and I didn't get overtime after 40 hours.

Oh, I got overtime. They'd pay me \$2.50 an hour. Not \$2.50 extra an hour. They'd pay me \$2.50 an hour for those extra 45 hours.

We worked in the hot sun. I didn't enjoy it. It wasn't a bad job, but it wasn't a good job. We had to do things that were really probably a little risky to our health, but you had to do it because you got to put food on the table and a roof over your head.

My family left. They failed out on this area. I don't blame them. A lot of people did. Life was not always easy, but we did what we had to do.

[ 38 : 41 ] And part of what we did was we went every week to church to worship our God. We didn't do that because we had to do that. We did that because we wanted to do it. It was the top of the priority list.

It was a job expectation that we would have a day off to worship God. That's one thing we all agreed on. These people run into a problem.

A little concern because God has told them to go into a promised land and they see trouble and so they reject God. I got to tell you, I don't know what would have happened if they would have said, we don't think we're quite ready.

Can you give us a year or two to kind of train the troops and kind of figure out how we're going to do this? I don't know what God would have done. He let them wander around for 40 days. Didn't have a problem with that. I suspect that it would have been okay if they would have tried to delay it or something.

They didn't. They said, we are not doing what this God wants. We're not following this leader. We're not going to have this God. We're going back to Egypt. They rejected God because they felt it cost too much to follow Him.

[ 39 : 49 ] There's a day when people would give their lives for God. People would give their fortunes. People would change the course of what they would do with their lives.

They would give up their comfort. They would sit in pews that had no cushions on them. Really. And not say, oh, it's too hot in here. Oh, it's too cold in here.

In chapter 14, Joshua and Caleb say, guys, we can do this. God's with us. We can do this. But two voices against ten. That didn't work.

And so they gave up on God. How often do we give up on God? We've turned God into an occasional priority. If we don't have something to do with our family, if we don't have a sporting event, if we don't have the work, if we don't have a festival to go to, if we're not on vacation, if we're not to, God, we should have two or three days a year we can take some time for you.

Now, not any one of those things alone is a problem. But when we take the priority of God from the top and make him one on the list, before long, God ends up being towards the bottom of the list.

[ 41 : 06 ] And we forget about God. God help us if the weather's bad. God help us if the weather's good. That's even worse. More people come to church on a day like this than on a sunny day.

And, well, there's a sunny day, excuse me. On a sunny, warm day. And so Christianity in our nation is on the defense. Our country and Western Europe, the churches are dying.



Now, the rest of the world is embracing Christianity to tell you the truth. God will make his church. And the church is exploding in growth everywhere in the world except here and Western Europe.

We want God to be our Savior. We want God to bless us and give us miracles. But we don't want God to be our God. We don't want God to be our Lord. We don't want God messing with our lives.

God. The Israelites had forgotten. They'd forgotten the God that just a short time earlier had rescued them from Egypt. They'd forgotten the God that took them through the Red Sea.

[ 42 : 09 ] They had forgotten the God of their lot heritage and of their history. They didn't even know the land they were going into even though their ancestors lived there. Isaac and Jacob and Abraham all lived in Rome that land and now they're saying go find out what it's like because we have no idea.

They don't remember. And when we forget where we come from we lose where we're going. Today is not only the 14th of February we call it Valentine's Day.

Some of you might have noticed by the way I changed my tie. This morning when I got up my wife said are you going to wear the tie with hearts on it? I said no I'm not wearing that tizzy tie.

I don't know if I'm allowed to say sissy but I did. Anyways I came over here and got three fourths of the way through the service and realized there's only one person that would have given me a heart tie with Valentine's on it.

When we forget we get in trouble and we've forgotten who we are and where we come from.

[ 43 : 27 ] I know you know today's Valentine's Day you know that it's named after Saint Valentine but do you know who Saint Valentine was? Saint Valentine was a bishop in Rome back before Rome became Christian and Saint Valentine did two things that got him in trouble.

The first is he married Christian couples. Now you wouldn't think that meant me much but the thing is is when he married them then the men were no longer available for military service.

So this was actually taking people out of the military so they brought him before the Roman emperor and the Roman emperor actually liked him and he was about to let Saint Valentine go until Saint Valentine made the mistake of trying to suggest to the Roman emperor that he needed to be a Christian and he needed Christ in his life.

And so the emperor had him beaten and had him killed and he left a note to the people of his church and signed it your Valentine.

Somehow from that we've got this idea that we've got these little weird kind of Cupid type of things going around shooting arrows at people and we're all supposed to send little love notes to all the people we're so in love with.

[ 44 : 49 ] And it's not a bad thing or anything it's not wrong to share our love with each other but we have no idea where Valentine's Day came from. It wasn't a day about the love and the romance between men and women it was a day about the romance between people and God.

A man so willing to serve his God that he would die for God and die for the people of God. That's the love that we're supposed to celebrate on St. Valentine's Day.

We turn it into weird little Cupid guys going around shooting. Why would they shoot people with arrows anyways? What's that all about? Don't want to know. They forgot God.

They forgot God and they wanted to go back to Egypt and for us it's easier to forget God believe it or not than even for them because we live in Egypt. We live in the land of the empire.

Egypt was the greatest empire in the world at that time with all the blessings and all the power and all the wealth. Who does that sound like to you today? We live there. We have everything.

[ 45 : 59 ] God has blessed us to live in the land of Goshen in the land of Egypt. Unfortunately that's created too many distractions. Too many things that confuse us and turn us away from following God.

And we look around it seems like the Egyptians are winning. We're like Jeremiah who says why do the ways of the wicked prosper? God what's the matter with you? Are you impotent?

Can't you do anything here about all this? And so we look for somebody who will give us the answers we want. In Timothy it says to us a time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine instead to suit their own desires they'll gather around them a great number of teachers to say what they want to hear.

And we will even turn our churches into places that will simply tell us what we want to know and we want to hear. Not what we need to hear. Not what we should hear.

And so we go out into the desert to learn lessons from the desert and our desert is winter so let's see what Bob Sled has to say today. Sleigh bells ring Are you listening In the lane Snow is glistening A beautiful sight We're happy tonight Walking in a winter wonderland It's back Winners returned I don't know if happy is really the word usually used to describe this winter scene at this point in the season Nonetheless winter has shown its face once again and as I said last week just because we have a few nice days doesn't mean the winter's over but hey don't get down about it we're going to get an attitude check in today It's me again Bob Sled with another friendly fireside chat offering you some advice and encouragement today You see I've learned some lessons from living here in western New York Yes we look at the weather forecast and we see it's freezing outside

[ 47 : 59 ] We look outside and it's frosty No not the snowman but the temperature And in some places the snow is back Some may think not again but I say isn't it wonderful We here in western New York are hardy folks We're not going to allow the return of winter to melt us away No no We're strong We're mighty Now imagine those from the southern states where they don't have any winter They believe their going through winter must be hard But I say it's not hard It's a challenge And you know what you do with challenges don't you You accept them Now we Buffalonians conquer winter We don't let it get us down Ice skating sledding Building snowmen Throwing snowballs Building snow forts So much that we get to do Those are things our southern friends never get to experience For them from a distance it may seem scary But can you remember the first time you experienced playing in the snow catching snowflakes on your tongue Good times Good times

And great memories It's given us strength and resilience and I wouldn't have it any other way A beautiful sight We're happy tonight You know I think happy is the right word after all Walking in a winter wonderland Not only has he got wise words Boy connect Boy sing Right Walking in a winter wonderland Very impressive We've turned away from God And we've misrepresented the challenge What God presents as a blessing we start to see as a problem And why would we expect that God will bless us when we turn our back on what God wants us to do God got angry In chapter 14 it says God not only got angry He got so upset that he said I'm going to kill all these people We say Oh God wouldn't do that but he did

He said I'll make a nation out of Moses and Moses says He can't do that That's just over the top God You didn't know that you could talk like that with God but you can And so God said Alright I'm just taking out those ten spies those guys who called themselves leaders but didn't live like leaders And they all died All ten of them And then God said and ask for these other guys all these people that didn't follow me except for Caleb and maybe Joshua the rest of them are never going to see the promised land They're going to spend 40 years wandering in the desert a year for every day that they were wandering in the land of promise They're going to wander in the desert and die What do you think God's going to do if we keep turning away from Him What do you think God is doing?

Are we really happier? Are we really happier in a life as we keep turning God off and turning towards what Egypt says will make us happy?

Have all these things made us a society of joy and blessing? Do you feel that every time you watch the news and you listen to the reports of people talking and how our leaders talk you're hearing happiness and joy and wonder we are living in the greatest time ever and we're miserable because God can even turn our blessings into something sour They wandered in the desert for 40 years and I'm afraid if we keep pushing God away eventually He's going to push us out of Egypt too and we'll find ourselves in the desert The interesting thing is we've been using winter to represent the desert for us Now this is a beautiful winter scene It really looks like winter from back there doesn't it?

[ 52 : 02 ] Pretty cool They did a great job This is the way they would do winter in the south It's beautiful It's nice but really it's only for show It's like people that live inside in the winter and never go out Some of the happiest times I've ever had was out playing in the snow Am I right?

Building a real snowman You can't do that down south We're in this kind of picture rolling the ball and stacking the ball and putting a carrot in there and then biting off the end of the carrot just because we could Snowball fights Snow angels sledding down a hill going tubing ice skating This is a blast Winter is not a cursed event Going to Florida in July is a cursed event Living in the winter is an opportunity and God wants to give us opportunities He wants to bless us but we have to pursue what God wants The purpose of life is not to the pursuit of life liberty and happiness but serving God 1 Corinthians chapter 10 says simply whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do it all for the glory of God Caleb says we can do this guys don't give up we can handle this

God said we could have it God will make it happen Romans in chapter 8 says if God is for us who can stand against us if God is on our side what do we have to fear do we really honestly earnestly believe that they picked leaders but they weren't leaders leaders lead by example leaders show us the way leaders demonstrate courage in the face of problems leaders don't blame everybody else they go and fix things I know the Egyptians seem to be winning you need to remember the Egyptian army got drowned in the end God promises blessings he said I am giving you a land flowing with milk and honey a promised land I'm giving it to you it's not a maybe it's not an if God wants to bless us he's already said he will do it at some point or another if nothing else we can live like

Saint Valentine and know that the purpose of this life is to get to the next one and the glory of that but God also can fix and promise us with blessings in this life God's already decided to do it but we have to do it as God would determine Valentine's Day is kind of a cool day to me you know just like the rest of you I've got little love in my life when I was in high school I had a girl I was in love with five years we were in love well I was in love she was going out with other guys somewhere around the point when I was in 11th grade we started dating and then we started going steady anybody remember that I actually gave her a ring not one that you know those Miller drugs store ones that would turn green after two weeks a real ring right we talked about life we were going to get married we were going to have children we were going to build a life together we talked about everything and we talked about our faith in God particularly we talked about the fact she didn't believe in God and I'd pray for her to have faith in God and we'd talk about it we even went to church together but she just didn't accept the idea of God in any way and one night while I was praying to God

I said God I don't know what to do with this and he said this isn't the right girl for you and being a teenage boy I said what are you nuts I got five years of this girl you better show me who is that and I had a dream that night and I was standing with this beautiful brunette looking out the window at one of our church camps that dream actually happened a number of years later and I saw my dream girl who God intended me to meet two weeks later and I did fall in love again and I did break it off with the person I had planned a life with and yesterday we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the day I asked her to marry me I know it should have been Valentine's Day but I couldn't wait one more day when God sends you an angel you just gotta take what you can get because that isn't gonna happen to a lug like me again and I knew that we drove to Buffalo and I took every dime

[ 57 : 07 ] I had out of the bank because back then they didn't give you credit cards they wouldn't loan you money for anything unless if you had money so I took my 200 bucks and I bought her a diamond ring somebody about 10 or 15 years ago was making fun of her little tiny diamond and saying it was too puny and that's what I didn't really love her but that was all I had are we willing to give to God in that way and live into what God has already decided to bless God has plans for our lives we keep trying to tell God he's wrong God has a way we're supposed to live if we'll trust him we just have to live into God's blessing instead of trying to live into our own ideas why do we think we're smarter than God why do we think the Egyptians are smarter than God God will guide us he sent them to the land of promise they wandered around it for 40 days now these guys would have been dressed like Egyptians they wouldn't have known how to dress how to act nobody molested them nobody hurt them they even ripped up somebody's grapevine and dragged it away and nobody complained

God's hand was already protecting them they spent 40 days in this land full of giants never got hurt once never had a single problem they even ripped off the giants nobody cared and they said the place was fantastic and then they got afraid winter winter is just snow little bit of water that comes down from the heavens in a different form it's not good it's not bad sometimes we have to be careful but sometimes we've got to be real we had the fish fry last Friday and for those of you who aren't aware of it we had 400 people come here to eat fish 400 people we had a line out the door of men waiting to take their dinners home to women I'm not trying to sound sexist most of them were there were a couple ladies most of them were guys on the way home from work pick up fish we're not going out tonight take out saved us we like all those you wait inside too but God can get us through things that we think are impossible we don't need to listen to the people who make us back off and quit we need to live for God but not just God like a magic genie not just God as our savior as wonderful as that is but a God who is our Lord and will guide our lives for our benefit and for us you are not a God created by human hands you are not a God dependent on any mortal man you are not a God you are not a God in need of one anything we can give by your plan that's just the way it is you are of one you are God you are God you are God alone but now you never times in bad you are on your crown you are God alone

You're the only God whose power None can contend You're the only God whose game and Praise will never end You're the only God who's worthy Of everything we can give You are God and that's just the way it is You are God alone From before time to year You are on your throne You are God alone And right now In bitter times and bad You are on your throne You are God alone You're unchangeable You're unshakable

You're unstoppable That's what you are You're unchangeable You're unshakable You're unstoppable That's what you are You are God alone From before time began You are on your throne You are God alone And right now In bitter times and bad You are on your throne You are God alone You are God alone You are God alone You're unchangeable You're unshakable You're unstoppable That's what you are You are God alone You are God alone

God alone You are God alone You hear me when I call, you are my morning song.

[ 63 : 40 ] Though darkness fills the night, it cannot hide the light. Who shall I be?

You approach the enemy underneath my feet. You are my sword and shield, no troubles finger still.

Who shall I be? I know who goes before me. I know who stands behind.

The God of angel armies is always by my side. The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine.

The God of angel armies is always by my side. My strength is in your name.

[ 64 : 44 ] For you alone can save. You will deliver me. Yours is the victory. Who shall I be?

Who shall I be? Who shall I be? I know who goes before me.

I know who stands behind. The God of angel armies is always by my side. The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine.

The God of angel armies is always by my side. And nothing formed against me shall stand.

You hold the whole world in your hands. You hold the whole world in your hands. I'm holding up to your brothers' hands.

[ 65 : 47 ] You are faithful. You are faithful. And nothing formed against me shall stand.

You hold the whole world in your hands. I'm holding up to your promises.

You are faithful. You are faithful. You are faithful. I know who goes before me.

I know who stands behind. The God of angel armies is always by my side. The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine.

The God of angel armies is always by my side. I know who goes before me. I know who stands behind.

[ 66 : 51 ] The God of angel armies is always by my side. The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine.

The God of angel armies is always by my side. The God of angel armies is always by my side.

The God of angel armies is always by my side.

Water you turned into wine Open the eyes of the blind There's no one like you There's none like you Into the darkness you shine Out of the ashes we rise There's no one like you There's none like you Our God is greater Our God is stronger God you are higher than any other Our God is deeper Awesome in power Our God Our God Into the darkness you shine

Out of the ashes we rise There's no one like you None like you None like you None like you None like you None like you None like you None like you None like you Our God is greater None like you Come on you first Awesome in power, our God Our God Our God is greater Our God is stronger God, you are higher than any other Our God is healer Awesome in power, our God Our God And if our God is for us Then who could ever stop us

[ 69 : 44 ] And if our God is with us Then what we stand against And if our God is for us Then who could ever stop us And if our God is with us Then what we stand against Our God is greater Our God is stronger God, you are higher than any other Our God is healer Awesome in power, our God Our God Our God is greater Our God is stronger God, you are higher than any other Our God is healer Awesome in power, our God

Our God Praise God, amen And Lord be seated We've got a God that can part the Red Seas We've got a God that can create the universe We've got a God that can take death And turn it into life When did we become so wimpy?

You know, I was reading in the paper the other day And they were talking about the selective service That's a draft For those of you who don't know what that means And they were saying that We should now, because we let women fight in combat We should have women signing up for the draft And then somebody else said No, no, we shouldn't even have a draft at all Because we've got people who want to volunteer to go to war Or why would we take people who don't even want to be there And put them in war?

Well, I know the people who volunteer And they don't want to go to war Okay? They're willing to But they don't want to go to war And I know that back in the day When I had a draft card Because I was like that And there was the possibility of being drafted I didn't think in terms of I won't go to war I didn't think in terms of When I go to war I won't fight Or if I get called up I won't protect the guy sitting next to me in the trench When did we start to think it's about How can we find the easy way out Instead of doing what we're supposed to do Because it's what we're supposed to do God calls us to be people That can do amazing things He promises us a blessing We have to go through the tough times The difficult times Push our way through Face down our giants Remember that if God is with us No one can stand against us We go to the table We always turn to a prayer of confession

And I know we bring all sorts of things Before God We each have our own sins That we need to confess But together as a people We need to confess That we've let fear grip us for too long We've listened to the voices of Egypt Too much And we need to start trusting God More So let's pray together Dear God in Heaven Dear God in Heaven Dear God in Heaven I have sinned I have sinned I have sinned You know what I've done wrong You know what I have done wrong You know what I've done wrong You know what I've done wrong You know my heart You know my heart You know my heart Listen as I confess my sins Listen as I confess my sins Listen as I confess my sins and now Lord forgive my sins help me to be a part of a people that lives without fear that lives in the competence of God that does what God needs because God wants it give me confidence give me faith give me strength to make God my God in Jesus name we pray

[ 74 : 03 ] Amen God already wanted to forgive you before you came here what he wants is that people turn towards him he can put up with all kinds of stuff but he needs us to be following him and looking at him and listening to him in the name of Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven glory to God Amen our God invites us to the table this morning to celebrate to celebrate all that God has done to draw us close all that God has done to make us silent everyone is welcome if you love God earnestly repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ you are welcome at the table this morning doesn't matter if you've never been to church before in your life or if you've never been to this one you are welcome at the table because God has called you to come

God has invited you so come to the table this morning you'll find blessings that you've never had before God wants you to come and be strengthened for all that God has called you to do come to the table the Lord be with you lift up your heart let us give thanks to the Lord our God it is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth you brought all things into being and called them good from the dust of the earth you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life when we turned away and our love failed your love remained steadfast 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 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 now when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts that during these 40 days of Lent we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ on the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread and he gave thanks to you he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples saying take, eat this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me when the supper was over he took the cup and he gave you thanks and praise and he gave it to his disciples he said drink from this all of you this is the cup of my blood the blood of the new covenant poured out for you poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin do this as often as 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

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 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 shall we pray together with the confidence of children of God the prayer Jesus taught us 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 for those who are serving please come forward okay please come forward yeah okay a okay uh ja yeah okay yeah yeah k yeah gospel yeah yeah

Thank you.

[ 80 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 83 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 86 : 17 ] Thank you. Thank you.