

Loving Like Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] The Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. If any kids want to come and join us, they're welcome to do so. I know there's not many in here, but I'll still have one here. 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.

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Hi, we're Ash of Lutath. And we're the Lord. Everyone, please write your name on a friendship card. Fill in your address to receive newsletters or update your info.

On the back, you can write prayer, concerns, blessings, or notes to the staff. Then place it in the offering plate. If it's your first time at our church, please pick up our welcome bag. At the connection site or at the welcome desk.

[1 : 1 8] Welcome to our church. And enjoy the service. And enjoy the service. We're glad to have the kids greeting us this morning.

Let's turn our hearts and our souls to the Lord in prayer, shall we? Dear Lord, we thank you for this morning. We pray that you'll gather with us. That you'll pull all the distractions from us and fill us with your presence and your strength.

We ask, Lord, that you are our strength and our power as we come to worship you. In Jesus' name, amen. We have a couple of clipboards going around. One is for our dinners in Niagara Falls, which we feed about 100 people a week up there.

And we do appreciate your support. And the other is for our fish fries. We had a great fish fry last week. Almost 600 people. And, you know, a lot of people chose not to eat corned beef and cabbage. Thank you.

Appreciate that. We've got number four coming up this Friday. We'd love to have you come and join us. Shall we stand and sing to the Lord, Standing on the Promises? Standing on the Promises Standing on the Promises of God, my Savior.

[2 : 4 1] Standing on the Promises of God, my Savior. Standing on the Promises of God, my Savior.

Standing, standing I am standing on the promises of God Standing on the promises that cannot fail When the howling storms of doubt and fear are set By the living word of God we shall prevail 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 of Christ the Lord Bound to Him eternally by love's strong core

Overcoming gaily with the Spirit's sword Standing on the promises of God Standing, 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 fall Listening every moment to the Spirit's call Listening every moment to the Spirit's call Listening every moment to the Spirit's call Wrestling in my Savior as my all paid off Standing on the promises of God Standing, standing Standing, standing Standing, standing

I'm back The Lord be with you Take a moment and share the peace of the Spirit with one another How do the kids come Adrian Bring them in I'm going to invite our hot chocolate with God And our s'mores kids to come on up And share their thankful moment now And share their ■■■ All right obtain Thank you.

Thank you.

[7 : 28] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. I'm so glad that I decided to become a leader here, and even at the age of 20, I'm still learning new things about the Bible that are helping strengthen my relationship with Christ day in and out.

After these two months, I have made some very good friends that I'll never forget. So thank you, and thank you for your time. God bless. Hello.

My name is Madison. I'm in fourth grade, and I've been doing Hot Chocolate with God for two years. I really like Hot Chocolate with God because I've met a lot of new people, and I've made new friends. We get to do crafts and fun activities in Hot Chocolate with God and also church.

We also do dance parties, and we learn about God. I like our small groups because we learn more about God and the Bible. I'm thankful for Ms. Adrienne, the leaders in church.

[9 : 21] Thank you for everything you do for us. Hi, I'm Tracy Finnecke. My son, Richard, is in S'mores.

He loves coming to S'mores. He can't wait for Fridays. His sister cries every week because she can't come because she's too little. And I know it's a great thing because my son's only six, and he says, only six more years until I can be a leader.

So he can't wait to see Vinny every week, and he just loves it. Thanks. Good morning.

My name is Kaori Briggs. It's with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I speak to you today about the S'mores and Hot Chocolate with God program. I'm a member of Good Shepherd Parish, yet I am a parent of two daughters who not only participate in Hot Chocolate with God, but have also been in the Mom's Morning Out and Genesis preschool programs.

We moved to the area, and everyone we met recommended that we check out this program. Our girls have really come to know God through the offerings here at PCUMC. The Adrians, as we lovingly refer to them, are enthusiastic role models who lead the religious discussions, facilitate learning, and just have plain old fun with natural ease.

[10 : 38] They are particularly gifted at identifying the children's needs, encourage their contributions to society, and involve them in activities that will enrich their lives. The commitment and passion for the children is so evident and apparent to anyone who picks up their young ones any given Friday night.

In my opinion, their unwavering devotion to the children and the Word of God exemplifies strong moral fiber and character. My children love taking part in the fellowship with God and singing His praises.

As recently as last week, I texted Miss Adrienne because the topic discussed really hit close to home on the very same week that it was such a necessary lesson for my daughter Nina.

They especially love making crafts that relate back to the night's discussions. Examples are too numerous to mention, but if you'd like me to elaborate, please feel free to ask. I cannot fail to mention that I was in a bad accident a few years ago, and this congregation and church community wrapped my family in their arms with generosity, prayers, and unwavering support.

I leaned on the teachers emotionally and physically at times, and I will never forget your kindness. It has been my honor to write this on their behalf and feel confident in telling you that Hot Chocolate with God and S'mores leaders are people with qualities of love, genuineness, warmth, and compassion.

[11 : 54] It's exciting for me to think of the possibility that they may be able to share that with more kids who may be interested in looking into these programs. If you are considering enrolling in preschool, VBS, babysitting, S'mores, or Hot Chocolate with God, I urge you to carefully consider doing so right here.

Good morning. Good morning. My name is Jennifer Wheeling, and my husband and I have three boys who are in S'mores. We have Thayer, who's in fourth grade, Devin, who's in second grade, and Rourke, who's in kindergarten.

And we are thankful for S'mores for a number of reasons. First, as recent newcomers to Western New York and this church community, we were thrilled for our kids to have an opportunity to engage with other kids in the community outside of school in the classroom setting while learning about worship and having a relationship with our Lord.

I am thankful for the outstanding leadership and organization of this ministry and for the youth who give so generously of their time and set a wonderful example of service for the younger kids.

My kids come home on Friday afternoon and excitedly ask, is there S'mores tonight? And when I drop them off, it is the best feeling to know they are in such good hands. And finally, I cannot lie.

[13 : 07] S'mores nights are also date nights for my husband and me. It helps us tremendously to be able to reconnect with each other while our boys are having some more time with God. Hello.

My name is Michael, and I'm thankful for S'mores with God because it's a fun way to spend my Friday evening. I learn about God while having fun at the same time. And Ms. Adrienne and Mr. Adrienne have a lot of enthusiasm to keep us going through the whole night.

I'm thankful for such a wonderful program to help me grow my faith. We do want to thank all the people that work with this program.

It's a wonderful program. It's great for our kids and for our teens and for all the people involved. And we appreciate all that they do. So let's give them one more time of thanking them for what they do. All right.

I'm going to invite all the younger kids to come on up here. If any of the other kids want to come and join us, come on over here. We're going to take a minute. Come on up, guys.

[14 : 19] Do you guys know what these are? Dogs. They are dogs. They are dogs. They're actually identical dogs to the dogs we used to own, Alpha and Omega. Yeah.

And our dogs were bigger than this, a lot bigger than this. You ever see a big dog like that? Are they sometimes scary? Yes. No, you're not sure? Yeah. Do you know that dogs bark?

And do you know why they bark at you? Because they're scared of you. They're afraid of you. Have you ever thought about it? They're way down here and you're like up here like a giant on them. So they're barking because they're trying to say, you're scaring me.

You know, I've been around a lot of dogs in my life and most of the time I find if I'm nice and I'm gentle and I'm kind and I'm soft with them, dogs will be real friendly and calm down too.

Now, not always. And so you've got to check with your parents or adults that are around you. It's the same way in our world. We think that there's all kinds of scary things that are out there that can hurt us. But God makes sure that we have the ability to overcome any of these dangers in our lives.

[15 : 21] So turn to God, turn to your parents, and the things that will frighten you will just kind of melt away a lot more and we'll put a lot more nice things. Because nice dogs are really nice, aren't they? Yeah.

What are you thankful for this morning? If you want to share something, raise your hand. I'm thankful for my friends, my family, and my pets. Church. Family.

Friends and Family. Friends and Family. Friends and Family. Friends and Family. wszystkim.

My friend Connor. My friends and family. Mommy. All right.

Okay, let's pray. Lord, we are thankful for our family, our friends, for hot chocolate and s'mores, and for moms and dads everywhere, and even dogs. Bless us all in Jesus' holy name.

[16 : 32] Amen. Okay, you kids can all go out to church school. All the kids are welcome to go out to church school at this time. We're going to thank God for all the blessings he gives to us through all the activities and life for our children and all the good things he blesses us with in life as we return our mourning tithes and our offerings.

God's love will never let us go.

God's love will never let us go. God's love will never let us go.

God's love will never let us go. God's love will never let us go.

God's love will never let us go.

[18 : 35] God's love will never let us go.

God's love will never let us go. God's love will never let us go.

God's love will never let us go. Eternal, pure and strong It holds on and on and on God's love will never let us go God's love will never let us go

God's love will never let us go God's love will never let us go Praise him above ye heavenly hosts Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Amen Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day that we have the opportunity to gather together and worship and to offer you a portion of all of the gifts that you have poured into our lives

We ask that you would bless this offering, Lord, and give us the wisdom to know how to best use it for the furtherance of your kingdom that many would come to salvation in Jesus Christ through the work that you do through this church It is in Jesus' name we pray Amen Would you please be seated?

[21 : 46] And now I'd like to invite Sally Henderson to come forward along with the Homer family as we're going to be celebrating a baptism Brothers and sisters in Christ We celebrate the new birth by water and the Spirit through the sacrament of baptism as we become members of Christ's Holy Church On behalf of the church, I present Liam Ryan Homer for baptism These questions are for the parents Do you reject the evil powers of this world?

Repent of your sin and accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist Satan If so, answer, I do Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and promise to serve as Christ's representative through faithful participation in his church?

If so, answer, I do And will you nurture this child in Christ's Holy Church that by teaching an example you might lead him to accept Christ as his Lord and Savior? If so, answer, I will And for those who sponsor this child will you encourage him in his Christian faith?

If so, answer, we will Got a lot of them up here, so Okay, we're going to come up this way, guys Shall we pray?

Lord, bless this water as a symbol of your sanctifying and renewing grace As you have used water to bless the saints of history let it now bless your child Pour out your Holy Spirit on this gift of water To bless this child with your grace that leads to eternal life Help us to know that as we die to this world we become alive to Christ and share in final victory over sin and death Amen Amen You want to come up in for a minute, ma'am?

[23 : 59] Yeah, how you doing? Excellent You're right there Okay Lee and Ryan Homer I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit May the Lord bless you this day and always Amen You liked that, didn't you?

Yeah Yeah Brothers and sisters Shall we greet our newest member into the family of God? Thank you You like that?

That's yours Okay Oops There you go This is for you This is for you Okay Thank you Congratulations What a blessing Always To welcome New members into the church Even the teeniest, tiniest ones We have a couple of other joys This Friday at our fish fry There were 950 No, not 950 Sorry I'm backwards I'm just Yeah 591 591 fish fries Which was an awesome thing And Pastor Tom is not only feeling better He can still hold that note And standing on the promises longer than the choir Which is always a good thing We need to keep in prayer Of course I know we have many, many other joys this morning as well Donna Swain is having surgery on Monday

And we need to keep Linda Canoodla in prayer She is having some health issues that really do need our prayers And of course, as we know, we need to keep in prayer The Wasik family and all of the people in our community That this, the death of 10-year-old Benjamin has caused our sorrow and grief Over this terrible, terrible accident Benjamin's funeral is going to be here tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock And everyone is welcome, of course, to come and spend time with the family And offer up your prayers and your condolences We're going to turn to the Lord in prayer now Of course, there are prayers in your hearts Joys as well as concerns that we have not lifted up out loud But God knows what they are So you are welcome to join me in prayer From your seats or at the rail Gracious Heavenly Father

God of all creation Who knows our needs before we even ask Who is with us in times of joy And in times of sorrow You know that sometimes both of those things come At the very same moment in time in our lives We ask, Lord God, now that you would place your hand of healing Upon everyone who is sick and infirm Those who are recovering from surgeries And those who are going in for surgeries Be with them, Lord Help them Help them to be whole in their spirits Their souls and their bodies We pray for those who care for them Medical professionals, Lord Family members, friends All those who offer help of any kind We pray that you would give them wisdom We pray that you would give them compassion

[27 : 43] We pray that you would give all of those folks hope We pray in Jesus' name for those who are grieving losses Lord God, it is so hard Whether it has been a loss that has come from a long illness Something that had been anticipated, unexpected Or something completely unexpected That is a terrible shock We pray in Jesus' name for your peace to come upon all of those who are grieving We pray, Lord, that as your people we would be able to offer words of compassion A touch of hope A hand of help To those who are in need of your love Lord God, we pray in Jesus' name That all of these circumstances The things that are going on in our community

The things in our church The things in this world Would serve to draw us closer to you
Give us your wisdom And your help in being of help to others Help us to be your hands
and feet Lord, we pray as we hear your word As we sing your songs of praise As we hear
the message Pastor Tom has for us We just ask in Jesus' name that it would wash over us
That it would change us Transforming us more into Christ-likeness Than we have ever
been before Help us to know truly in the depths of our being What it is to be your church
As we grow in you As we support one another And as we go out into the community to
serve Bless Pastor Thomas He brings the message Let it be a blessing to him and to us

And Lord, make all of our worship To be a blessing to you this morning For that is why we
came In Jesus' name we pray Amen Shall we hear from the word of the Lord?

Amen Oh Listen, it is not just the goodly Do you hear from us?

Good morning. Today's reading is from Mark chapter 5, verses 1 through 17.

[30 : 42] They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the
boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the
tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain.

For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the
irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day, among the
tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He
shouted at the top of his voice, What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High
God?

In God's name, don't torture me. For Jesus had said to him, Come out of this man, you
impure spirit. Then Jesus asked him, What is your name?

My name is Legion, he replied, for we are many. And he begged Jesus again and again
not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside.

[31 : 50] The demons begged Jesus, Send us among the pigs. Allow us to go into them. He gave
them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about
2,000 in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the
people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man
who had been possessed by the legion of demons sitting there, dressed and in his right
mind, and they were afraid.

Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man
and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their
region.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Jeff. We're going through this sermon series as
we take our road to the cross during Lent.

We're looking at stories about Jesus and how he loved people. And today we're talking
about a guy who lived in the graveyard. Think about that. Lived in the graveyard.
Obviously, no facilities.

[33 : 01] Kind of probably looked a little wild on top of everything else. They used to try and chain
him up, but he broke the chains. So he was big and strong and a little wild.

And he talked really, really loud. You know those kind of people, right? You ran across a
guy like this in a dark alley. You'd be like, what?

But we're also looking at the secret life of pets. And they've been living in the apartment so
far. Well, not anymore. They're out on the street. Ah! Oh! Oh! Help!

Whoa! Help! Help! Help! Help! So long. Don't leave me here. Didn't have to be this way,
Max. Wait! No hard feelings. Dude, please!

Oi! What's going on here? Mind your own business. Oh, my gosh. What happened to you? I had a fight, all right? With a big stupid dog. He lost.

[33 : 58] Oh, you're headed into dangerous territory there, kitty cat. I'd watch your town, sunshine. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to cut you into string, ball you up, and then bat you around for hours in a game that only I understand.

Oh. Very nice. I'll take that. What? Huh? Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!

Ooh! You want to start with me, little raisin? Yeah. Okay. Get your umbrellas out, kitties, because here they come. The thunder and the lightning! Right down on your face.

Gosh, there are a lot of you up there. I'm talking about the thunder and the lightning that's coming down on all of your collected faces. Attack on three. Two. Ah!

I just remembered I've got to be somewhere! Ha ha! That... Ha ha! That guy, huh? Am I right? Okay, I'm done.

[35 : 05] You know what? I'm just going to... It's no offense, but goodbye! Oh, have you ever run into somebody like this in life, you know? You're, like, going along and everything's fine, and then all of a sudden it's like...

That happened to me. A couple of weeks ago, I was in an activity with... I won't say who or where, but with the church, and this lady just, you know...

I'm just, like, standing there, and she just comes over and starts going off on me, you know? Do you know what they did to me? This is so terrible! They were so disrespectful, and I'm never coming back to this place again! I am so upset!

And it's like, whoa, lady! Just, oh, really? And I could feel the demon coming out. You know what I'm talking about? In me. You see, because that's the problem, isn't it?

When something like this happens, how do we feel? Because sometimes we're the ones who feel like somehow we've been misunderstood, or chained up, or cast out, or pushed aside.

[36 : 04] The last one picked for the baseball game. The person no one wants to be around, the living dead. We take these people, and we put them somewhere where, you know, they belong.

In some kind of institution, or in jail, or in a neighborhood where folks are better suited than to be around people like us. And sometimes we find out it's the people like us that are going through this.

These few weeks we're talking about, how do we love? Like Jesus loved. Jesus came to this region.

It was on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which meant that they had left the place where all the religious people lived, and they'd gone to the place where the religious people weren't. And he gets out of the boat. And this guy, this kind of wild, kind of out there, off the bubble, trying not to say the wrong word and get in trouble again, you know, kind of guy, comes out and starts going off on him.

In the book of Matthew, there were some people talking about Jesus. It sounds something like this. Or maybe it sounds like this. Or maybe I'll just tell you what it sounds like.

[37 : 23] Jesus was eating with sinners and generic sinners and tax collectors, and they said, how could Jesus eat with these people?

And Jesus said, I haven't come for the righteous, but I've come to help sinners. To accept the unacceptable. To be there for the people who are struggling.

Not the people who think that they're already fixed. How many of you are feeling like we're living in an anxious world right now? Where things have just gotten a little bit wild, right?

Like the demons are going crazy in our world. What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little love.

I know somebody's going to say, well, you sang that two or three weeks ago. Yeah, we could sing it forever. We need it now. We don't need more yelling. We don't need more people who know everything. We don't need more people to confront people.

[38 : 26] We need some people that will show the love that Jesus showed. So this guy comes up to Jesus and he gets down on his knees. And he yells at the top of his lungs.

What does it have to do with me? Son of the most dying God, don't torture me. We're like inside voice, inside voice, right? You know, you ever meet somebody like this? Who's just like, ah, right?

And Jesus says, what's your name? He says, my name is Legion. Legion in the Roman days was about 1,000 to 10,000 soldiers.

In other words, what he was saying is, this guy had so many problems, you couldn't count them. You know what I'm talking about? People that just have a problem after a problem after a problem.

And Jesus, Jesus responded to him with calmness, confidence, and compassion. See, the demons, they know, they know that they're losing.

[39 : 27] They understand that in the end, God will send them to a lake of fire. You can read about the battle that the angels had in heaven in Revelation chapter 12, where it says that Michael and his angels fought with Lucifer and his angels.

And Lucifer and his angels were cast down to earth. And they're angry and they know they're going to be doomed. And they want to take as many of us with them as they can. A third of the angels, evil angels now, roaming this earth, trying to cause us trouble.

They're evil. They really are something beyond what we normally think of. Sometimes people try to say, well, they're like addictions. But they're not addictions. Addictions are what they use. See, they take anything that we somehow get off kilter with, and they use it to get into our lives to make an even bigger mess.

So alcohol and gambling and too much work and all these kind of things, they're not demons. But the demons use them. They get into them.

And they work them to cause us trouble. Like, you know, the idiots, right? Stuck on it. And the demon gets hold of them and grabs them.

[40 : 36] Or even church. I've seen people get obsessive and crazy about that. And how about the conversation in our public arena right now? Do you not feel like there's something really wrong with these conversations?

Nobody's arguing about right or wrong anymore. Nobody's trying to get across the good point. All they're trying to do is win. I gotcha. I gotcha. There's sort of a nastiness and a hurtfulness and a pain and an anger going on here.

It's hard. It's hard. This fellow, you see, didn't hurt anybody according to this story. He hurt himself. He was cutting himself and beating himself up and isolating himself.

Demons destroy their host. They're self-destructive creatures. They know where they're going. And they want you to go down, too.

So the demon says, don't torture us. Don't make us leave this area. Let us go into the pigs. Ah, the pigs. See, in the Jewish world, pigs were unclean animals.

[41 : 47] Not like us. We, like, obsess about bacon. We got to have bacon on everything. They got bacon ice cream now. I'm surprised we don't have bacon pies for our fish fries. I mean, you know, the Baconator fish fry, right?

I suppose that's the next thing we're going to do. We are nuts about bacon. But they didn't like bacon. They thought that was wrong and bad for you, which it is, by the way.

Right? We all know that. And so he said they could go into the pigs. And what did the pigs do? They ran down into the lake and drowned right away because they couldn't handle these demons.

See, Christ has power over the demons. Christ has the ability to cast the demons out. In 1 John chapter 4, it says, Perfect love casts out fear.

Fear has to do with punishment. But the one who fears is not made in perfect love, in the love of God. God doesn't cast out demons with some kind of loud thunder and lightning type of thing.

[42 : 51] It doesn't say Jesus called down the angels from heaven above. This guy was crazy. He was out of control.

The volume was just way off the charts. And Jesus responded with love and compassion. The book of Proverbs says, A gentle answer turns away wrath.

This lady is like up in my face. Ah! Now this was a calm lady. I had met her before. She's a nice lady. She really is. But something got under her bonnet, you know.

And she was just, and I was feeling it. And then I thought, just be calm, Tom. I said, well, actually, you like coming here. And you like the person you're angry with.

Really? You know, you've always gotten along with them. Maybe they didn't hear you. Maybe you just had a misunderstanding. Maybe, you know, you just need to just take a little bit to take a breath.

[43 : 50] You like coming here. And she says, well, yeah, I do. Right? You see what happens? I don't think Jesus was screaming at this guy. This scary guy, you see, was scared of Jesus.

The demons are frightened of Jesus. They believe in God. They don't have this kind of intellectual weird argument we have in our heads. It says the demons believe in God, and they tremble.

They tremble. Because God has the power to overcome all evil. Again, in 1 John chapter 4, it says, greater is the one that is in us than the one that is in the world.

We have the power to overcome because we're children of God. So Jesus asked the demon his name.

What's your name? Name it, and you can claim it. Name the problem, and you can defeat the problem. But if you don't name the problem, you'll never defeat the problem. Anybody remember that weird Mighty Python movie where the guy keeps losing the pieces of his body, and it's, oh, it's just a flesh wound, right?

[44 : 57] If we don't admit we have a problem, we'll never get cured. If you know anything about Alcoholics Anonymous, the first thing you have to do when you go to them is say, I am an alcoholic, right?

That's the way we got to do it. I have a gambling problem. I like too much chocolate. I work too much. I have a problem with my temper. We just need to recognize.

We need to recognize that we have a concern, and God wants us to overcome those concerns. Now, when you came in, we left some slips of paper on a table that you could take. If you want one, you can just raise your hand, and they'll bring you one.

This is what I want you to do with this, and I'll explain it. Then you can decide if you want one, okay? It's like this. What I want you to do is I want you to write on this piece of paper one or two things, either a word that describes a problem you're dealing with, not a sentence or a paragraph or, you know, a whole, you know, dissertation, just a word, or I want you to write your first name, or even if you don't want to, you can just put an initial, all right?

Because this is what we're going to do. We're going to ask you during communion to come up and put them in a basket up here, and then on the way out of church, we're going to ask you to take somebody else's and pray for it. You follow? So we don't want them to know who you really are, and really, it doesn't matter what you put on there, because this is your prayer that you're putting before God that somebody else is going to lift up for you.

[46 : 14] You see how that works? Somebody came out of church last night, and they took one out, and they said, mine's blank. I said, then pray for blank, because blank needs a lot of help, right? So this is for you.

So if you'd like a slip of paper, take and write something on the paper, or if you want one, just raise your hand. They'll bring one to you, okay? And the idea is just to take this and put this in on the way up to communion, and then on the way out of church, we want you to take one out and pray for somebody.

Because, see, I believe that prayer is the way we overcome so many of our problems. Jesus, one time, was with his disciples, and they couldn't drive out a demon, and they asked him why they couldn't do it, and Jesus said, this one only comes out with prayer.

I'm going to give you one of the best passages in the Bible. It's the fourth chapter of Philippians. The fourth chapter of Philippians, the whole chapter is wonderful. But I'm going to give you just a few verses out of it.

It says, let your gentleness be evident to all. Did you hear that? Your gentleness. We used to call certain people gentlemen, right?

[47 : 18] Because that meant that they were refined, and they knew how to handle things. Because the Lord is near, you don't have to be afraid of anything. Don't be anxious about what? Anything.

Wow. Try that one for a day. Don't be anxious about anything. But in every situation, by prayer and petition, thanking God for what he's already done, present your request to God.

Because God wants to give you victory over these things, and there's ways in which you can do it. First, we name it, and we claim it. The second thing we do is sometimes we just need to redirect.

We just need a new place. That's why the demon said, don't send us out of this place. Send us into the pigs. Don't make us go somewhere else. Demons like to hang around with demons in the same place.

Sometimes what you really just need is a change of venue. You need to be around different folk, or in a different place, or in a different setting. Sometimes you just need something to distract you. You'd be amazed at what a distraction can do to a person who's upset.

[48 : 20] Watch this. Selfie?

I don't want you to use the phone, DK. Selfie. Selfie. You didn't know it was that easy, guys, did you?

Selfie. Sometimes we just have to get ourselves out of the situation we're in because we've got ourselves worked up about something that's really not that important.

We get victory over the demons by naming it and claiming it. We get victory over the demons by changing our environment. But before we go on from this, I need to say some people don't want to be healed at all because it has a cost.

It means change. It means risking a different type of life. You see, Jesus' worldview doesn't fit this worldview. Do you have any idea how much 2,000 pigs are worth?

[49 : 27] I know you're not a lot of farmers, but honestly, 2,000 pigs, this is like \$4 million. Just went in the lake. \$4 million. Most of us would be freaking, right?

\$4 million of bacon floating in the lake. So this kid out of here, you're scaring me. You're messing with my idea of what's important, Jesus.

Fascinating. Jesus is the great miracle worker. He's the great man that everybody's proclaiming around the world. And yet when he goes to this place, the only person who wants to come and listen to him is the guy who is demon-possessed and lives among the tombs.

The guy who everybody thinks is messed up. The healthy people don't think they need him. They actually reject him. And now they're afraid because he's healed the broken person.

See, here's the thing. If you heal the broken person in your community, in your family, in your system, everybody's going to start looking for a new broken person. Guess who that is?

[50 : 33] You follow? So long as we can have somebody we can identify as the problem. In counseling, they call it the identified patient. So long as we can say, it's that person.

They're messed up. They have a problem. That's a dysfunctional person. The Bible calls it scapegoating because they really used a goat. But in this case, we use people, which is much harsher. And they put all the problems, all the complaints.

If we could just get rid of this one, life would be good. And we don't have to look at ourselves. And we don't have to admit we have any problems. Jesus fixed the most messed up person in their community.

And their response wasn't, Lord, heal us too. It was, get away. And Jesus walked away. So we kind of want to be healed.

We have to want healing in our lives. We have to be open to the power of God. Or God is going to respect that. And he's going to walk away. But there's people that are hurting.

[51 : 36] There's people that are really struggling in this world. This guy's cutting himself. He's crying out. He wants attention. He needs healing. And there's people all around us that are self-destructive.

They're reclusive. And they need our compassion. They need us to love as Jesus loved us. Accepting them. Embracing them. Being kind to them.

Not trying to contain them and put them away and blame them. Because, you see, God has given us the power to cast out demons. God has given us the ability.

Just before he left this earth in the book of Acts, Jesus said, You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And you will have power.

Power to overcome the demons, the problems, the struggles, the difficulties of our world. The problem we have as we've been deceived into thinking we're in weakness. 2 Corinthians chapter 11 talks about this deception.

[52 : 41] When it says, I'm afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

We believe somehow that we're on the losing end. That we have to retreat. That we have to worry and watch out and hide. In this passage, it says that the bystanders were witnesses to the power of God.

The demon-possessed man was witnesses to the power of God. You know who wasn't? Where are all the disciples? You know, the guys that went in the boat across the lake with them.

Where are they? You want to know where I think they were? If Jesus is here, they're standing behind him going, Don't let him get near me. Don't let him get near me. And that's the problem. We're living in fear.

We're living in anxiety. And we're hiding when the world needs the people of God the most.

[53 : 42] Perfect love, God's love, cast out all fear. In Luke, Jesus says something a little odd.

He says, When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

And we're going, yeah, so? So here, this is what it means. We have decided that what makes us strong is if we have money, if we have friends, if we have influence, if we're healthy, if we're strong.

But the truth is, we're competing against Satan and his angels. And we think we have the ability to take on a strong man like that, yet that strong man will take us and knock us aside.

But if we have the armor of God, if we have the power of God, God is greater than anything in this world. And he can keep us safe.

[54 : 43] So are we counting on our own strength? We'll lose, like these people. But if we're counting on the power of God, like this demon-possessed man, then we'll have the victory.

So what we need to do is we need to fill our lives up with God. We need to understand this word. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us up so much because there's no room for these demons, no room for these ideas, no room for these problems to come in our lives.

Because when we fill ourselves up with God, then we become full of the power of God. And so we can name it and we can claim it. We can redirect it. We can fill ourselves up with God.

And then we can cast out demons in this world because God calls the people of Christ to do that. You know, in a world where it feels like the church and the people of God are retreating everywhere, we need just the opposite.

We don't need angry, nasty, mean, judgmental Christians going out there yelling at people. We don't need that. We need people to share that love, that compassion, that power that transforms this broken, angry world into a world of God.

[55 : 56] It's essential Christianity. They left the side where God was to go out into a community where he wasn't. Just like while we come together here so that we can get empowered by God, the real purpose of what that power is for is so we could go out there and change a broken world to be witnesses to God's power.

Because if we don't, it's not going to get better. Imagine a world without grace, without love, without hope, without God.

That's not a nice world. That's the world that this poor fellow had to live in and it made him crazy. But imagine if instead we would take the love of God into this world and commit intentional acts of love.

Remember? Not random acts of kindness. Intentional acts of love. There are reasons people get upset. You know? I had to sit with a couple who just lost their 10-year-old boy this week.

I've had people who have had tragedies and disasters and hurtful, painful, difficult things happen to them. I read in the paper just a simple thing where some guy, something happened in traffic and so he gets out of his car and goes back to the other guy and starts choking him.

[57 : 28] Unfortunately for him, there was a cop across the street. He got arrested. But he let the demon take that situation, you see. I know there's difficult situations and I know there's times when people come at you and you just want to go.

Bam! But here's what I'm going to challenge you with this week. Not to just go out and look for some place to be loving. I want you to be ready for that person to come at you.

You know what I mean. The one that's going to get up in your face and start... And I want you to be loving in return. I want you to say nice and kind and gracious things and listen to what they have to say.

Jesus is amazing because in the Bible he says, if you do this, one of two things will happen. Either you will change them to a loving person or it'll be like you poured hot burning coals on their head.

You will take them bonkers. But try it. See, if maybe if we bring a little love into this situation, we can calm this thing down a little bit because here's the thing, folks.

[58 : 43] This is what bothers me the most. It's not the strangers arguing with strangers. It's family arguing with family and friends arguing with friends.

Children arguing with their parents and parents fighting with their kids and brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins. People in the church getting into an argument about things that really don't matter.

People of this country that all love this country and just want something good to happen but have a different idea of how that'll work and instead of trying to figure out the right way, they're fighting and hurting each other.

And we all know what it feels like when that demon starts getting in us and we're ready to just smack back. Folks, these are people we care about and we love. They're not strangers.

They're not bad people. But we can turn the world into brokenness or turn the world into good. I'm going to go back to that chapter 4 of Philippians. And let's just read through it one more time.

[59 : 46] What do you want to be evident to all? It just feels good to say it, doesn't it? Because God is right there with you. So don't be anxious about anything.

But in every situation, by prayer and petition, thanking God for all he's already done, present it to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Genuinely love the unlovable. Speak truth, real truth, but in a loving way. Heal the hurting, destroy the destruction, turn away anger, and let's drive the demons out of the conversation.

And let's make it start with us. you hear me when I call, you are my morning song, though darkness fills the night, when cannot hide the light.

whom shall I fear? fear? you touch the enemy underneath my feet.

[61 : 20] you are my sword and shield, though troubles linger still. whom shall I fear?

fear? 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, for you alone can say, you will deliver me, yours is the victory.

whom shall I fear? whom shall I fear? fear?

[62 : 25] 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 born against me shall stand. you hold the whole world in your hand.

I'm holding on 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.

[63 : 35] 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. i know who goes before me 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 I want to be close, close to your side Heaven is real and death is alive I want to hear voices from angels above

Singing as one, hallelujah Holy, holy, God almighty, great I am Who is worthy, not beside thee God almighty, great I am I want to be near, near to your heart Loving the world, painting the dark I want to see dry bones, living again Singing as one, hallelujah Holy, holy, God almighty, great I am Who is worthy, none beside thee

God almighty, great I am Great I am The mountains shed before you, the demons run and flee At the mansion of your name, King of majesty There is no power of love for anyone who can stand Before the power of the presence of the great I am The great I am, the great I am The great I am, the great I am Hallelujah, hallelujah Hallelujah, hallelujah Hallelujah, hallelujah Holy, holy, God almighty, great I am

The great I am, who is worthy, not beside thee God almighty, great I am The great I am, the great I am Praise be to God Please be seated You know, we live in a world where we feel like we're in a battle Every single day, doesn't it?

[67 : 26] It feels like we go out and like we're fighting against something That's trying to knock us down But here's the thing God has already declared the victory God has already decided that the battle's over It's been won He's just waiting to decide which side we're going to live on You follow?

We can live on the side of victory And we can overcome this brokenness And we can live in love and grace And we can make those demons settle down in us When we're about ready to Or we can live in the brokenness Of the living dead Chained up by our anger And our resentment And our grudges And our fear Today I invite you I invite you To name it And claim the power God gives you To overcome all brokenness in your life Let's pray Dear Lord in heaven I have sinned I get angry I lose control I get frustrated And afraid And tempted And I sin Forgive me Lord Repair me Help me to be The person you made me to be

Fill my heart with compassion Fill my life with love Help me to reach out As you've reached out to me To bring healing to this world In Jesus name we pray Amen God declares it He declares that you have victory Over everything that holds you All the brokenness All the pain Any problems you've had Any addictions you're struggling with Any of the demons That are holding you back God declares this day That you have victory over all of those In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen Shacked by our heavenly burden

Need the law of guilt and shame Then the land of Jesus touched me And now I am no longer the same He touched me Oh, He touched me And oh, the joy that was my soul Something happened And now I know He touched me And laid me home Amen Our God has loved us so much That he sent his son to die for our sin

To set us free From sin And that's what we celebrate here at the table today All that God has done On our behalf Everyone is welcome at the table If you love God Repent of your sin And seek to live in peace As a disciple of Jesus Christ Whether it's your first time coming here today Or you've been coming all your life If you've never set foot inside a church door before You are welcome at the table If you seek To follow Jesus So come Jesus will meet you here God is present in this place And wants to come to you Through the sacrament of Holy Communion The Lord be with you Lift up your hearts Let us give thanks to the Lord our God It is right It is right And a good and joyful thing

[71 : 59] 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 When you gave him To save us from our sin Your spirit led him into the wilderness There he fasted 40 days and 40 nights

To prepare for his ministry When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin You raised him to life Presented him alive to the apostles During 40 days And exalted him at your right hand 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 Now on the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us He took bread And he gave thanks to you He broke the bread And gave it to his disciples He said Take and eat This is my body Which is given for you

Do this 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 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 Shall we pray together With the confidence Of children of God 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 Amen Amen

[77 : 03] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Thank you.

Jesus truly invites all those who seek after him to come to the table. You are welcome at
the table of the Lord this morning. We do invite you, if you'd like to come for prayers for
healing and anointing, to come to the rail, to light a candle.

As you come to the table, bring your slips for prayers. As you leave the sanctuary, take a
prayer for someone else. When you come for communion, we take communion by
intention, so we ask you to take the bread, dip it in the cup, and commune immediately.

Come and join us at the table. Come and join us at the table.

Come and join us at the table.

[79 : 17] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[81 : 47] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[85 : 19] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Our God is greater than any of the struggles, any of
the problems, any of the issues we face.

As a nation, as a community, as a church, as families, as people, God has the power to
transform your lives and the lives of the people around you. All the demons and all the
lives of everyone gathered here have been declared void and gone. They are cast out of
this place.

[86 : 55] And out of your lives. Now go and live as children of God, freed. Live blessed and healthy
lives and bring the love of God to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.