

Looking Out

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Date: 20 November 2022

Preacher: Pastor Jennifer Stamm

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Okay, let's try that again!

Good morning! Good morning! It's so nice to have you here on this chilly, wintery day. We do have a few announcements. So, a lot of people wanted to know, how do we find out if the church closes?

The church at this point is not closing unless there's a driving ban. So we will be open. Use your best judgment. Please make sure that you're safe. We served 336 meals at Niagara Falls first last week, so that is truly a blessing to us and them.

[2 : 1 9] Christmas caroling is coming back. So Sunday, December 17th, we will be having a sign-up sheet. For Christmas caroling, not only for volunteers, but if you have someone who you think might enjoy a visit, there will be a sign-up next week for that.

And the angel tree is back. So we have an angel tree in Mission Alley, and then there's one in the fellowship hall by the back door. Feel free to stop and take a look and choose a special child to bless this Christmas.

It's the practice in the United Methodist Church to offer a purse to retiring clergy. The purse is a combination of financial gifts given to the retiree.

So if you want to contribute to Pastor Kathy's purse, there's three ways you can donate. You can give online through our website. You can do a check mailed in, or you can just write it on the offering envelopes.

For those of you who were not able to make her celebration, we will have a reception for her closer to the middle of December, and we'll give her gifts then.

[3 : 3 1] So please ready your hearts with mine in prayer as we go to worship. The difference between the Baileys and the Potters of the world comes both in the inner and outer worlds.

Do we reap love and generosity or bitterness and resentment? This week we ask if the outer manifestations of our money practices align with our courageous vision.

Are we creating the impact for which we hope, or at least moving in that direction? When our practices, no matter how incremental, or seemingly simple, are serving the vision, we live with a sense of wholeheartedness and wonder that truly energizes us and those around us and the world that we truly live.

To be part of the early Christian movement was to be countercultural, concerned with a more equitable distribution of resources and care of those who needed our help the most.

But this did not mean that those who had money could not help the movement. Benefactors were essential to the spread of Christianity and support of teachers and apostles. This week we will explore how money, when coupled with the alignment of values and visions for a more just world, could result in the kind of generosity that gives life not only to the movement, but also the giver.

[5 : 13] Would you please get ready to sing the first verse, Be Thou My Vision, with us? Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, Not be all else to me, Siveth Thou art.

Thou my best thought, By day or by night, Waking or sleeping, Thy presence I lay, We light this flame to affirm that where there is light, where there is understanding, where there is compassion, where there is possibility.

Holy and living God, transform our fears into awe-inspired wonder.

Amen. Amen. Good morning, everybody.

We had quite a few announcements this morning, but I have one more to add to the list. You'll see it in your bulletin. We are going to do the second year of a Christmas music program on December 11th, and what comes with that is a whole need for a whole lot of help.

[7 : 03] So I have a written sign-up sheet that will be in the back of the sanctuary after this service. If you're interested in baking or ushering or helping us with setup or cleanup, we'd so appreciate it.

But we hope you'll all come out on December 11th and join in that celebration. I'm going to invite you to stand as we open with our two songs. Now thank we all, our God, and my reward.

O thank me, O our God, with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things has done, may no restful rejoices, who from our mother's arms O may this founteous God, through all our life be made, O may this founteous God, through all our life be near us, with ever joyful hearts, and blessed peace to cheer us, and keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all illes, in this world and the rest.

All praise and thanks to God, the Father now beginning, the Son and Him who reigns, with them in highest heaven, the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore, for thus it was His love, and shall be evermore.

God transgressions and holy numbers, and what we are a folks who bring, because of the■■■■ we ego of the Sahaja, and the generations who have seen us, and obsessions of provostes, can be unconstrahing within the nin, with the Grizzly heraus.

[10 : 29] I want to hear you say Words to me well done I want to hear you say Good and faithful servant I want to hear you say I've prepared a list for you When all the treasures of this world Fade away Jesus, you are my reward To hear your voice all the day Is all I'm living for Jesus, you are my reward To see your grace all the day

Is all I'm living for I want to hear you say Words to me well done I want to hear you say Good and faithful servant I want to hear you say I've prepared a place for you When all the treasures of this world Fade away Jesus, you are my reward To hear your voice all the day Is all I'm living for

Jesus, you are my reward To see your grace all the day Is all I'm living for In the twinkling of the night We'll all be changed We'll meet you in the sky We will see the present today Jesus, you are my reward Jesus, you are my reward To hear your voice all the day Is all I'm living for Jesus, you are my reward

Jesus, I'm my reward to see your Christ all the day is all I'm living for Jesus, you are my reward living for.

Jesus, all I'm living for. Jesus, all I'm living for.

[14 : 19] You may be seated. Amen. Good morning, church.

Always a joy to come together as we praise God. Today, we have an extra time of celebration among us because we get to celebrate a baptism, which is always a thrill as we welcome a new person in faith to the family. So, we're going to ask the family to come on up, and we are going to welcome our new sister.

You guys, let's come all the way up. Okay. Yeah, I'll stand on that side.

Good morning. Good morning. Brothers and sisters in Christ, through the sacrament of baptism, we are initiated into Christ's holy church, which is not simply the here and now, but it is into whatever church and faith community we find ourselves in.

We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and give a new birth through water and the spirit. All of this is God's gift offered to us without price.

[15 : 48] Today, we come together as Olivia's family, godparents, and friends to celebrate in the sacrament of holy baptism. Let us pray. Gracious God, every child is a miracle of love, and today, we thank you for the miracle of Olivia.

Hold her in the gentleness of your hands and her family in the bonds of patient love. May this little girl grow in the way of faith and grow to be close to you, close to her grandparents, godparents, family, and forever close to her mother and father.

Let her be aware of your tender care and your righteous calling in her life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Now, Joe, Allie, and Olivia have a support system, as every person should have, and that support system is amazing.

And for those of you who are present, who are a part of that support system, and those who are with us, even if you're not with us in person, you make up that anchor for the family.

Each of you has prayed for, supported, comforted, and encouraged Joe and Allie as they have become parents. You have loved them through their hopes, their times of anxiety, their lack of sleep, and their times of celebration.

[17 : 14] That journey will forever be a part of your story as Olivia's special family and friends. So, we ask you, as her grandparents, godparents, family, and friends, do you promise to continue to surround them with love, inspire them with faith, and support Joe and Allie as they raise Olivia?

Will you pray for their marriage, their parenting, and their family? If you will do whatever you can to fulfill this awesome calling, will you say yes? Yes. Let's offer this prayer for each and every one who loves this little girl.

Heavenly Father, you have given Olivia to this family and to so many friends. We thank you for this little girl. Lord, please bless everyone with enthusiasm for each relationship.

Bless us with patience, as Joseph and Alexandra parent Olivia, and have loving patience with Olivia always. Bless us with stories of faith.

Let us share you and your love with Olivia, that she might grow to know you through those who love her. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, this will feel familiar to you too, because they've had their son baptized here already.

[18 : 39] But, we still ask these questions each and every time. I know, right? So, your own personal faith has a profound effect on the ways in which you live and raise your children.

We gathered here are honored to participate in this sacrament that is for today and for forever. On behalf of the whole Christian church, do you come with your whole hearts before God, your family, your children, these witnesses, and people of faith?

And do you promise to reject all that is evil in this world? If so, say we do. Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist all that is evil, all injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

If so, say we do. Do you confess your belief in God the creator, Jesus Christ, God's son and our savior and to the best of your ability to put your trust in God's grace and promise to be faithful to God?

If so, say we do. Will you, as Olivia's parents, nurture her in Christ's holy church that by your teaching and your example, she may be guided to the point in her life whereby she accepts God's grace for herself, professes her faith openly, and agrees to live a Christian life?

[20 : 06] If so, say we will. Will you, members and friends of the Pendleton Center United and Methodist Church, make every attempt to support Joe and Allie and Olivia in providing a Christian upbringing for this little girl?

When she's here in church, in child care, or just running around, will you help her learn about God, the Bible, and to learn how welcome she is in Christ's holy church? If so, then say we will.

I need my hand back. Let's pray. Eternal Father, you have always brought forth water for your people.

You created the world and the waters that nourish us. You sent the living water through Christ and your spirit. Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this water and Olivia, who will be baptized with it.

Clothe her in righteousness throughout her entire life that this day, being claimed by you as a part of this household of faith, she will be marked forever with a sign of eternal life.

[21 : 13] All praise to you, Eternal Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever. Amen. Amen.

Okay, showtime. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. And what name is given to this child?

Okay, I'm going to shift you to this side, all right? I'm going to try and come around so everybody can see. Yes, I know, right? I live your grace. I baptize you in the name of the Father.

I know, right? And of the Son. It's cold, I know. And of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So, we're going to come out here. I know, you were fascinated by this before. So, now we get to celebrate our new sister in faith.

[22 : 16] Will you welcome her, please? Yay! Yay! And of course, as is our tradition, we have a Bible for her and her certificate of baptism.

Yay! Yay! Yay! It's always a thrill to be able to celebrate.

One of the ways in which we show that gratitude, one of the ways in which we show that emptying of our hearts out to God is part of how we give. And as we come to today, we do have a mission moment.

You'll see an envelope in your bulletins and that goes to our Thanksgiving. We want to make sure we give as a gesture of thanking God for all God has given to us. So, not only should you be paying attention to that mission moment, you should also be paying attention to your regular honor, your regular pledges and your gifts to support our ongoing work.

That said, as a gesture of praise and worship to God, let us give what God puts on our hearts to give. Amen. my worth is not in what I own, not in the strength of flesh and bone, but in the costly wounds of love at the cross.

[24 : 26] my worth is not in skill or name, in win or loss, in pride or shame, but in the blood of Christ I flowed at the cross.

I rejoice in my Redeemer, greatest treasure, wellspring of my soul.

I will trust in Him no other, my soul is satisfied in Him alone. I will not boast in wealth or might, of human wisdom, of human wisdom, sleeting light, but I will boast in knowing Christ at the cross.

I rejoice in my Redeemer, greatest treasure, wellspring of my soul.

I will trust in Him no other, my soul is satisfied in Him alone. two wonders here that I confess, my worth and my unworthiness, my value fixed, my ransom paid at the cross.

[26 : 43] at the cross. I rejoice in my Redeemer, greatest treasure, wellspring of my soul.

I will trust in Him no other, my soul is satisfied and He'll ask to be a part of me if I're proud of me in Him alone.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

[28 : 27] Let's take our seats. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's go to our time of praying together. Time where we open our hearts.

We go to God and seek God's face. There's a great line in a song that I love. It's called, we know we need to seek God's face, not just his hand. So often we come to God looking for things God will do for us, but we need to go to God for God, God's self, the degree to which we can connect with God's heart.

So as we are mindful of aligning our vision with how we live, as we are mindful of all the things that have happened in the past few days, let us be mindful of what we need to do to get close to God as possible.

Does anyone have a joy or a concern that they would like to lay before the body that we can be in prayer together? I bet we are.

So that's a praise that snowblowers work. If yours didn't work, we will help you too. But we are definitely grateful that for those of us who had the ability to get out from underneath this, and we pray for our siblings in Christ who are still struggling with it in different parts of our area.

[29 : 54] Anything else? All right, then. Oh, go ahead, Adrienne. Okay, so given that so many people will be on the road in the next few days, given that we're still digging out, she is offering asking for prayer for everyone traveling before the upcoming holiday.

All right, then, let's go to God in prayer. Holy and eternal creator of all things, giver of all life, savior of all people, and lover of all your children.

We come today grateful. Grateful for the ways in which you have shown us who you are. We come because we love you.

Not seeking what you might do for us. Not just praying that some good thing might happen. But praying because you have already done so many good things.

You have shown us who you are. You have shown us that you are willing to love us even when we don't feel so lovable.

[31 : 06] You have shown that you are willing to take upon our challenges when we can't bear them ourselves. You have shown us that you will continue to provide even when the world seems to be too big, too much, and too heavy.

Lord God, we give you thanks for who you are today. And as we come, having gone through a storm, having experienced so much snow, having experienced so much work, we give you thanks for those around us who help each other.

Those who have plowed streets, those who have responded to calls, those who have brought meals, those who have been true friends in the midst of it all. Lord God, we know that your love shows up in the hands of those who do such things.

And so we give you thanks for the grace that that is. Lord, we are mindful of those who may not have known that. Those who may not have had a safe place to be.

Those who may not have been able to get out of their driveways. Those who may still be struggling with a need. Lord, here we are. Send us. Send us as we know that there are those who need so much.

[32 : 25] We are mindful. Mindful that there are those who are still struggling in their own individual ways with individual challenges. Those whose hearts are broken in grief.

Those who need healing touch. Those who need to make decisions. Those who are seeking guidance and comfort. Lord God, there is so much that weighs on our world because we know there is still a need for justice and peace.

We know that there are those who are contemplating evil things. We know that there are those who are working for safety. Lord, help us to be your hands, your voice, your heart in this world.

Lord, help us to be your hands, your heart in this world. Wherever we encounter brokenness. Wherever we encounter need. Wherever there is someone who does not know the story or know your love.

Lord, as we come today, we thank you. Because we know it is you who has done these things among us and not we ourselves. So Lord, please hear our prayer.

[33 : 34] As we seek to love and serve you and all your children. In Jesus' most precious name we pray. Amen. Having shared that prayer, we do want to be mindful of our Operation Christmas Child gift.

Because this is an extreme act of generosity on everybody's part and we can't say enough about it. We want to make sure we say a prayer over those boxes as well as they go to those who are in need.

Just over here, we know that the church is gathered. And as I have this right, it was 972 boxes and counting because the days got mixed up because of the storm.

You should give yourselves a round of applause for that. That's extremely good work. And so with that in mind, I invite you to another time of prayer as we pray over these as they go to those who will receive them.

Loving and gracious God, we give you thanks for all the ways in which you move among your people. Lord, please let these be the blessing that we hope they might be to someone who will receive it.

[34 : 35] Those who may be struggling in ways in which we can't fathom or imagine. But Lord, we know that you work in mighty ways and we pray for all of those who will be doing the work of transporting them.

And we pray that through these small gestures, someone will be able to know another piece of comfort, will know another slice of joy. Help those who are doing this work to be able to share your love and share your story.

That those who do receive them may walk in the light of your grace, knowing your love and become champions for you as well. In Jesus name we pray and ask.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Isn't it beautiful outside? I just love all the sun and the snow. I think it's just a God picture again. So I know we're burying out, but we have to be thankful for the beauty of it too.

[35 : 51] So I am reading for Lou Bobsine who is in Florida right now. This week we ask if the outer manifestations of our money practices align with our courageous vision.

Are we creating the impact for which we hope or at least moving in that direction? When our practices, no matter how incremental or seemingly simple, are serving the vision, we live with a sense of wholeheartedness and wonder that energizes us, those around us in the world.

We truly live, our scripture says. The difference between the Bailey's and the Patters of the world comes both in the inner and outer worlds. Do we reap love and generosity or bitterness and resentment?

In the movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, George's father, Peter, who refuses to foreclose on the townspeople's mortgages when they fall on hard times, confronts the mean-spirited Mr. Potter.

Mr. Potter, what makes you such a hard, sculled character? You have no family, no children. You can't begin to spend all the money you've got. And George himself later reminds Mr. Potter that how we share with others is where true riches lie.

[37 : 12] Just remember this, Mr. Potter, that this rabble you're talking about, they do most of the working and paying and living and dying in this community. Well, is it too much to have them work and pay and live and die in a couple of decent rooms and a bath?

Anyway, my father didn't think so. People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, their cattle. Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you'll ever be.

In our scripture today, we do not hear that it is evil to have money, but that what we do with that money is what makes us rich or not.

Let us prepare our hearts to hear the word. Scripture reading is 1 Timothy 6, verses 17 through 19.

Tell people who are rich at this time not to become egotistical and not to place their hope on their finances, which are uncertain. Instead, they need to hope in God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment.

[38 : 19] Tell them to do good, to be rich in the good things they do, to be generous, and to share with others. When they do these things, they will save a treasure for themselves that is a good foundation for the future.

That way, they can take hold of what is truly life. This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. What does that get us?

A discontented, lazy rabble instead of a thrifty working class. And all because a few starry-eyed dreamers like Peter Bailey stir them up and fill their head with a lot of impossible ideas.

Now, I say... Just a minute. Just a minute. Now, hold on, Mr. Potter. Just a minute. Now, you're right when you say my father was no businessman. I know that. Why he ever started this cheap penny-ante building alone, I'll never know.

But neither you nor anybody else can say anything against his character because his whole life was... Why, in the 25 years since he and Uncle Billy started this thing, he never once thought of himself. Isn't that right, Uncle Billy?

[39 : 29] He didn't save enough money to send Harry to school, let alone me. But he did help a few people get out of your slums, Mr. Potter. And what's wrong with that? Brody, here, you're all businessmen here. Doesn't make them better citizens.

Doesn't make them better customers. You said that they... What did you say just a minute ago? They had to wait and save their money before they even thought of a decent home? Wait! Wait for what? Until their children grow up and leave them?

Until they're so old and broken down that they... Do you know how long it takes a working man to save \$5,000? Just remember this, Mr. Potter, that this rabble you're talking about... They do most of the working and paying and living and dying in this community.

Well, is it too much to have them work and pay and live and die in a couple of decent rooms and a bath? Anyway, my father didn't think so. People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, they're cattle.

Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you'll ever be. I'm not interested in your book. I'm talking about the building and loan. I know very well what you're talking about. You're talking about something you can't get your fingers on, and it's galling you.

[40 : 29] That's what you're talking about. I know. Well, I've said too much. You're the board here. You do what you want with this thing. There's just one thing more, though. This town needs this measly one-horse institution, if only to have some place where people can come without crawling to Potter.

Come on. I did my homework. I watched the movie. You might think, for many of Jesus' teaching about money, that it's a sin to have any despair.

Remember the parable of the rich fool, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The warning, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Or the story of the rich young man whose obedience to the commandments Jesus loved so much that he told him, you lack just one thing. Go and sell all that you have and come and follow me.

To which the man went away sorrowful because he had so many things. Yes, there are many stories, teachings, and accounts of personal encounters with Jesus in the New Testament that bear out the truth that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

[41 : 50] As Paul writes to Timothy just a few verses before the passage that was read for us today. Yet alongside these stories and teachings, there are nearly as many encounters of wealthy people whose generosity made possible the spreading of the gospel.

From Joseph of Arimathea, who gave up his prepaid funeral plot for Jesus' burial, to Mary and Martha, who frequently hosted dinners for Jesus and the disciples in their home.

And it may be Mary who anointed Jesus with an alabaster jar full of expensive perfume. Cornelius, the well-to-do centurion, who was among the first Gentile converts to Christianity.

And Lydia, the seller of purple. A merchant who was the backbone of the church at Philippi. And there are a host of other examples. But neither can we say that just because these saints are wealthy, that it's okay for us to be wealthy.

Over and over and over, what we see in these stories is how they use their wealth to bless others, aligning the use of their material possessions with their most deeply held values.

[43 : 07] This week, we're invited to take a look to see if the outer manifestations of our money practices align with the courageous vision. Are we creating the impact in the world for what we hope?

Or are we at least moving in the direction towards us? Are our practices, no matter how small or simple, serving the vision we live with a sense of wholeheartedness, that sense of joy that bubbles up within us, that wonder that energizes us and all those we connect with and the world around us?

Do we truly live as the scripture says? The difference between the Baileys and the Potters, the world comes both with inner and outer worlds.

And last week, I invited you to look inside your heart. This week, we're looking outside. George's father, Peter, refuses to foreclose on the townspeople's mortgages when they fall in hard times.

And he confronts the mean-spirited Mr. Potter. Times are bad, Mr. Potter. A lot of these people are out of work. Well, then foreclose. I can't do that.

[44 : 21] These families have children. Mr. Potter responds, they're not my children. But they're somebody's children, Mr. Potter. Are you running a business or a charity ward?

Not with my money. Mr. Potter, what makes you such a hard-skulled character? You have no family, no children, and you can't begin to spend all of the money you've got.

Oh, I suppose I should give it to miserable failures like you and the idiot brother of yours to spend for me. To which little George responds, he's not a failure. You can't say that about my father.

And George later reminds Mr. Potter that where we share with others is where our true riches truly lie. Just remember this, Mr. Potter, that this rabble you're talking about, they do most of the working and paying and living and dying in this community.

Is it too much to have them work and pay and live and die in a couple of decent rooms and a bath? My father didn't think so. People were human beings to him.

[45 : 27] But you, a warped, frustrated old man, they're cattle. Well, in my book, he died a much richer man than you'll ever be. So in our scripture for today, we don't hear that it's evil to have money.

But we're going to take a look at 1 Timothy 6. We're going to go back to verses 10 through 19. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Some have wandered away from the faith and have impaled themselves with a lot of pain because they made money their goal. But as for you, man of God, run away from all these things.

Instead, pursue righteousness. Holy living faithfulness, love, endurance. And gentleness. Compete in the good fight of faith. Grab hold of eternal life.

You were called to it. And you made good confession of it in the presence of many witnesses. I command you in the presence of God who gives life to all things. And Jesus Christ who made the good confession when testifying before Pontius Pilate.

[46 : 36] Obey this order without fault or failure until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. The timing of this appearance is revealed by God alone, who is blessed and the only master, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He alone has immortality and lives in light so no one can come near. Tell people who are rich at this time not to become egotistical and not to place their hope on their finances, which are uncertain.

Instead, they need to hope in God who richly provides everything for our enjoyment. Tell them to be good, to do good, to be rich in the good things that they do.

Be generous and to share with others. When they do these things, they will save a treasure for themselves that is a good foundation for the future. That way they can take a hold of what is truly life.

The comedian George Carlin said, Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by taping sandwiches all over your body.

[47 : 53] We are challenged in the early church to discover the life that's truly life. First Timothy writes not just to individuals, but to see the interconnectedness of goodness in all of creation.

And through faith and grace through Jesus, that we would trust that the goodness from God is enough that we will find our meaning and our purpose in God, and not through how much stuff we have.

The reading makes it very clear that wealth and material things are not the core of the problem. It's our hearts. We allow our possessions to possess us, and they pose a real danger for people of faith.

We have this temptation to cling to things, and we lose sight of what's enough, and we become discontent, judgmental, envious, fearful, bitter.

We use money to manipulate others and hold power over them. Maybe even giving with strings attached. We've all seen this.

- [49 : 02] It's not just individuals, but it's an energy that churches can take on. It begins to discredit God's provision for all. The greatest danger comes when false teachers come and begin to justify their gathering of wealth as verification that God is approving.

There are preachers and evangelists who have built empires on the tenets of the prosperity gospel or the health and wealth gospel. It tells us that poverty and sickness are signs of sinfulness because anyone who's good enough or works hard enough for God should prosper.

I think Job certainly had some things to say about that. And if you spend any amount of time with Jesus, we discover that Jesus hangs out with the poor.

He hangs out with the least and the stranger and the ones who don't have anyone else to look out for them. Jesus sent his disciples out with very little for their mission.

We're requiring them to rely on the hospitality and the generosity of strangers. That's what this verse in Timothy is getting at. It's asking for what you have earned and saved.

- [50 : 20] What is it that you're truly looking out for? Do you see yourselves as steward of what God has entrusted into our care? Or do you see yourself as the owner?

It makes a difference. Did you gain this wealth through trustworthy practices? Or did you look the other way in your dealings with Rome? Making gains against the expense of creation or other people?

Did you and your work support systems that suppressed people? Those of you who are done earning, how is your money stored?

How is it invested? What does your bank invest its money in? Does it invest back in your community? Does it support companies that make loans in a way that leaves God's world better than they found it?

Being part of Pendleton Center, I'm often in awe of how generous this community is. Finding ways in supporting nonprofits, giving back in our community, helping those less fortunate.

- [51 : 29] But now that we have housing crises, staffing shortages, and conflicting values vying for the land and the resources that are challenging so many about how they're going to continue to live.

And so we're forced to decide, does that vision for our community match what we want to support and what we want to give? People have been burned by con artists and unethical companies calling, promising that your gifts will go and connect with what you value and what you desire for God's people.

And it's often hard to sort out what's real and what's not. And it takes more and more research and we become more calloused, trying to research and find those organizations that are a good fit.

Not just our money, but our time, our energy, our talents. And yes, over time, our abilities change. And sometimes we find ourselves wondering about the ways that you can contribute to offer yourself.

I'm telling you that if you feel that way, I ask you to continue turning to God. To keep seeking God's help because there is always a way you can make a difference.

- [52 : 46] For the ways that you sense God calling what you have to meet the world's needs. You would be amazed at what an encouraging word, a note, or a smile can do.

Timothy's letter was challenging those who were rich to be benefactors. Seeing each person as a human being with something to share for the good of the whole and not just for themselves.

It kept spreading, sharing, and still a sense of shalom took over the scarcity that drove so many people to argue and fight and struggle.

When my grandmother was younger, she lived on a farm in the south and people would share equipment. They moved from farm to farm helping each other get the work done. And at lunchtime, all of the families would gather together and share a meal and talk and share stories before heading back to work.

It didn't matter your age. Each person had a role to play in bringing in the harvest. Each person had something to offer and contribute so that your neighbor could also make it through, knowing that they would do the same for you.

[54 : 00] Our culture has moved a long way away from that vision. And if people trying to follow in Jesus' footsteps were asked today, who are you looking out for?

Where does that God of manna fit into your life? Do you know what enough is and the difference between those needs and wants? Are you content?

And if you're not, what spiritual practices are you using to help you live the life that truly is life? With God and each other, a life where you can look on the days of plenty and want with wonder.

Because you know that God is here. And your life is full because each one of you are loved by God. The God who looks at you and says, wow.

What if someone looked at you in the face and said, wow. You're a wonder. You are a child of God in whom God is well pleased. So take a minute.

[55 : 04] Turn around. Go ahead. Turn around. Look. Look at your neighbor. Say, wow. So much wonder.

So much grace in this very room. So much possibility for helping someone else. Know that they're needed and loved. It didn't cost you a thing.

And it multiplies the more you say it. Wow. You're amazing. Wow. You're a child of God. Wow.

You are so, so loved. Thanks be to God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[56 : 10] Amen. Amen. Amen. When we consider the ways in which we stay amazed by grace, one of them is coming to the table.

And in coming to the table, we may often forget what a wonder it is. Let that sink back in. and let you be awestruck again today.

Let's ready our hearts as we come to what the Lord has prepared for us. The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth. By your appointment, seasons come and go.

You bring forth bread from the earth. You create the fruit of the vine. You've made us in your image and given us dominion over the world. Earth has yielded its treasure.

[57 : 16] And from your land, we have received blessing on blessing. 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. Though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor.

When hungry and tempted, he refused to make bread for himself. That he might be the bread of life for others. When the multitudes were hungry, he fed them.

He broke bread with the outcast and drove the greedy out of the temple. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church.

[58 : 20] Delivered us from slavery to sin and death. And made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit. And on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread.

He gave thanks to you. He broke the bread. And he gave it to his disciples. And he said, take and eat.

This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And the supper was over. He took the cup. He gave thanks to you.

And he gave it to his disciples. And he said, drink from this. All of you. This is my blood. The sign of the new covenant, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin.

Every time that you drink it, do so 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.

[59 : 27] 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 cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ. That we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one 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 God. Now and forever. Amen.

And now let us pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[60 : 30] 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. Amen. Those who are going to assist us in serving today, please come forward.

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

Amen. Jesus invites us all.

He invites us all by his own grace, out of his own worth, and out of the depth of his love for each and every one of us. It doesn't require you to have done anything special.

[63 : 23] It doesn't require you to have made promises or said anything. We come because he loves us and invites us to come. We ask you to use the center aisle.

Come to the front. A server will hand you a piece of bread. please take that bread, move to the cup, dip it in the cup and receive both elements together then exit by the sides. There is a gluten-free station here on this side of the sanctuary if that is your need or your preference. You can also receive pre-packaged elements. Simply ask a server to hand them to you because communion is meant to be a gift and received. So knowing that, knowing that God loves you and God invites you to this moment, please come as the Spirit beckons.

Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[65 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[67 : 53] 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.

[71 : 17] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. For this truly is a wonderful life. Amen. Amen.

Amen.