

Baptism and Membership Service of Paul Filpus, Jean Filpus, Heather Martin

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 February 2014

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] The psalmist said, come, come and listen, all you who fear God, and let me tell you what the Lord has done for me. And so, Paul and Jean Philpus, you have made your way quickly into our hearts in the short time that you've moved to Bremen.

Please come now and tell us what the Lord has done for you. Okay, thank you, Pastor. I grew up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

My parents were believers, and they took my brother and me to church on a regular basis. But I didn't make a personal commitment to the Lord in those days. And before I was in my late teens, I pretty much quit going to church.

I thought, well, I can get to this someday, but for now I'm just not interested in leading the separated life of a believer. So I went on through high school and college, and I worked for eight years as a civil engineer in the construction industry.

Then, May of 1970, I was involved in a car accident, which left me totally blind. Well, it was kind of a wake-up call for me at that time. And one of the first challenges I received spiritually was when my dad came to the hospital.

[1:15] One of the first things he said to me was, Paul, God is calling you. And I thought, yes, he might be, but I didn't really make any big change at that time yet. But it was good to hear my dad's concern.

I spent that first summer up at my parents' home healing up from the wounds I'd had other than the damage to my eyes. And I had woken up in the hospital totally blind, and I knew there was no chance for any physical eyesight returning.

So I was at home that summer, and then I went to a rehabilitation center in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in October of that year. And that's where I met Jean. She was one of the teachers there, and she was going through a program at Western Michigan University to teach adult blind people.

Well, I found out that Jean was a Christian. We actually developed a friendship even outside of class in those few weeks that we had together in Kalamazoo. We didn't get into a serious dating situation.

The reason I didn't want to at that time was the fact that I didn't know if I'd ever be gainfully employed again. And unless and until that happened, I didn't feel qualified to get married or even seriously date a girl.

[2:27] Well, she had a reason, too. She knew I wasn't a believer, and she was a Christian. She shared with me about the Lord and about salvation, what it took. And that, again, was some good challenges for me spiritually.

And I heard her, and I thought, well, that's good. And I was going through my training. Jean left there then and took a job in Elkhart, Indiana, in a rehab center.

I went to see her a few times down there and visited her church, met her pastor. And then I went on to Pittsburgh to a computer school for six months. And the pastor, her pastor called me one night. And I was in my dorm room studying, and he called me. And he shared the gospel plan with me over the phone, and I did pray a prayer of acceptance then to pray to have the Lord come into my heart.

But it really wasn't a time when I had good follow-up. He was hundreds of miles away, and I was real busy. But anyway, the end of that year, I got a job in Elkhart. We thought it'd be good if I could work in Jean's hometown and see where our relationship would lead.

[3:32] So I moved to Elkhart and started attending church with Jean and started working there. But actually, our relationship broke off after a while, and I could tell Jean was uneasy about our relationship.

I wasn't sure why. But anyway, I continued going to church. There was a man from work who would pick me up. He and his family would pick me up every Sunday morning, and I'd go to church with them.

And then on July 31, 1972, at the end of the service, the pastor had an invitation for people to go forward in those days. And I chose to go forward to openly own the Lord as my Savior to get the spiritual situation straightened out.

And I went then to a side room with one of the assistant pastors and repented of my sins and came to a saving knowledge of Christ at that time. Well, suddenly, Jean's and my relationship flourished, and three months later, we were married.

And it's been over 41 years now for us. The Lord's blessed immensely through this time. And it took losing my physical eyesight to gain spiritual sight. And I can say, as a psalmist did in 1971, it is good that I was afflicted so I might learn your decrees.

[4:50] Thanks. Thanks. Okay. My goal in life is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. But if you would have asked me that question back in my teen years and my college years, my answer would have been something like, well, I'm trying to be good and I'm trying to do good because by doing all these things, I can help be sure that I'll get to heaven.

So I lived those years going to church faithfully, reading my Bible, looking good, and even went to a church-related college. And then to top it all off, I wanted to become a missionary to help lock that in.

So I went to Nigeria in 1965, Nigeria, West Africa. And God's providential hand, the day I landed, he had it worked out that instead of going to the American mission that I thought I was headed to, it was better for me to go to a British mission.

His hand was there because there I clearly heard the gospel. I recall so clearly in the staff meetings when they would pray, I sensed just a relationship with them, with God, that was different.

It was something personal and real. And the biggest thing that struck me was the fact they talked about knowing they would go to heaven one day. Well, I was hoping I would get there, but not knowing. And so as I would study the scriptures and read the scriptures, it became clear to me.

[6:10] 1 John 5, 13 said, these things are written that you may know that you have eternal life. So that was encouraging. Then just little things that God puts in our ways. It was one of those calendars that had a picture with a verse on it, and you'd tear each month off.

And on that calendar, the verse was from John 3. 3, Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man is going to enter the kingdom of heaven, he must be born again. What did born again mean?

I never heard that term, even though I read the Bible. So it drove me to the Nicodemus story and studying that. Well, a month or two later, I was in a service. And the preaching, I can't recall exactly what he spoke on, but the weight of my sin and just the joy of understanding it was God's faithfulness, all his work on the cross, all his power, all that he had was what made it possible for me to know that I could get to heaven.

So I made that decision, thankful that it happened at the beginning of my time there, that my time was more effective. It wasn't until I came back to the States, then, when I returned home and went to the churches that I had attended in different places, I was empty.

I wasn't being fed. So there, then I took a new job, and another family moved in at the same time I did from that, and they went church hunting and taught me how to church hunt.

[7:34] They took me with them. So I learned how to church hunt, found a good, solid Bible-believing church, was baptized there, and I'm just thankful that the Lord has led us to another church here with strong believers, where we can work and serve and worship with you all.

Heather Martin is the daughter of Larry and Pam Martin. I'm going to read my testimony because I was not blessed with such great public speaking skills as them, so sorry about that.

The only time that I spent with God before the Spirit worked in my heart was on Sundays, and even then, it was just a habit to be at church with my family. I never wanted to be in church, and I managed to get through Sunday school and service with the least amount of work and attention as possible.

I obeyed my parents simply because I knew I had to, but my heart did not have the correct attitude. My heart was able to tune out the real message, even though my mind knew right from wrong. I was consumed by selfishness and a love for the world and was unaware of the damage it was doing to my relationship with the Lord.

The first time I remember the Lord talking to me through a sermon was when I was 13 and Pastor Bob spoke over Matthew 3:12. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[8:54] After the service, Pastor Bob asked me if I knew whether I was the wheat or the chaff in the story. I was overwhelmed because I knew deep in my heart that I did not have the right answer. After that day, I spent a lot of time pondering if I was a child of God or if I would be swept away and burned in the day of his coming.

Even though that was a big step in my spiritual life, I did not commit my life to Christ until the end of my junior year of high school. Everything that I was putting my heart and work into did not please me, and I did not find enjoyment in things I used to love.

I was irregular in the reading of my Bible and devotions, but one day during the spring of my junior year, I sat down and prayed that God would help me find what I was looking for. God opened my eyes to the beauty of his love and amazing grace.

I realize now that the greatest yearning of my heart was to accept Christ's sacrifice for my sins and live a life that glorifies the one and true God. Psalm 63:3, Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

I would also like to add that I was afraid to get baptized because I was worried about whether or not I was truly saved because I sinned daily. After building tomorrow's church in Arizona, I was convicted of my fear of baptism and now realize sin is a daily battle that will never disappear until Christ comes again.

[10:07] Heather is wanting to be baptized and so we have three affirmations for Heather to make publicly to us.

Heather, do you confess that you are a hell-deserving sinner whose only hope of mercy is found in Jesus Christ and what he has done for helpless sinners? I do.

Do you trust only in Christ's blood and righteousness to save you and realize that the waters of baptism do nothing to wash away sin or to merit favor with God?

I do. And do you desire tonight to publicly identify yourself as a disciple of the Lord Jesus and purpose by his grace to turn from your sins and to follow him in faith and obedience for the rest of your life?

I do. Amen. Paul and Jean have been baptized but they are wanting to join the church here and tonight they will make public their commitments to you even as you have made to one another.

[11:12] And so I'll ask the three of them these questions and ask that at this point the members of Grace Fellowship Church please stand. Amen. By the grace of God do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and commit to follow his word in every area of your life?

I do. Do you agree to submit to the discipline of this church and the oversight of its elders and commit yourself to support the ministries of the church by your faithful attendance and by serving in it according to your talents, spiritual gifts, and God-given responsibilities?

I do. Do you agree to cooperate in the outreach of this church to the world by bearing witness to Christ, praying for the spread of the gospel, and giving of your financial resources?

I do. Do you understand that the 1689 confession of faith is the doctrinal statement of this church and affirm that you are in basic agreement with it and agree that for the sake of unity you will not spread among us doctrines contrary to it?

I do. Do you then commit yourself to this body of believers, to love them, to seek their good, to work and live with them in harmony, all to the end that Jesus Christ may receive glory in his church?

[12:44] I do. Members of Grace Fellowship Church, do you welcome these three into the membership of the church and thereby commit yourselves to them as you have to one another, to pray and labor for their building up and growth in grace, to encourage and watch over one another in the Lord, and to esteem these in love as brother and sisters in the Lord.

All that Jesus Christ may be glorified in his church. If so, say, we do. We do. Let's pray together, shall we? What can we say, our Father, but thank you for this grace that sought and found Paul and Jean and Heather.

There is no grace like yours. We think of the determination to follow Jean down to Nigeria, to bring the gospel to her, to pursue Paul to drastic measures, to wake him up to his need for a Savior. And even for Heather, growing up in the church and yet not knowing you, thank you for your word that came and opened her eyes to her need for a Savior.

Thank you for the way that you have come to dwell in them, the way that you have changed their lives, the way that you have equipped them now to become members of this church.

[14 : 20] Would you cause them to do us good, even as they have tonight, to spur us on by their own testimony and their lives? And would you help us that we might be of strength and encouragement to them?

Make us a blessing to each other. Whatever years you give us together on this journey to heaven, we ask with thanksgiving for the Lord Jesus and in his name. Amen. Amen.

You may be seated and we'll prepare for baptism. We come at last to the waters of baptism and our Lord Jesus takes a very simple element, water, used to wash dirt from our bodies.

And he uses it as a symbol to proclaim to the world that Jesus Christ has come and cleansed our hearts from sin and his Holy Spirit has given us new birth to new life.

And in the waters of baptism, you also confess that just as you will be put into the water, that you have been put into Jesus Christ. So that everything that he's done is now yours.

[15 : 25] His death, his burial, his resurrection. And so the confession of your faith is that the old heather died with Jesus and a new heather has risen with Christ to newness of life.

And on the profession of your faith, I now baptize you, my sister, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Buried in the likeness of his death, raised in the likeness of his resurrection.

Amen. Amen. If your heart has been cleansed of sin, that is too good to keep to yourself.

Jesus Christ deserves the praise of that work. And so he commands you to be baptized. To publicly confess that Jesus, what he has done for you.

And I would urge you, if you believe the Lord has saved you, to talk to Pastor Jason or myself, even tonight. And we'd love to talk with you about that. If Christ has not cleansed you of sin, oh, come to Christ tonight to be cleansed of sin.

[16 : 34] Amen. And new life could be yours tonight. Amen. Amen. Well, Paul, Jean, Heather are now members of Grace Fellowship Church.

And we are glad to have you. Amen. Brothers and sisters, isn't it good to hear those vows that we took once? To remember what we said that we would do.

By God's amazing grace, we are part of a church. The church. His church. The world doesn't think it's a very amazing thing to be part of a church.

This night is not on the news anywhere. It's not on the lips of our neighbors. But they don't know.

They don't understand what has happened, do they?

To them, joining a church is like signing up for AAA or the AARP. If you feel like joining, if you meet the requirements, then by all means.

[17 : 45] If you feel religious, then join a church. But the church isn't AAA. It's not the AARP. You just don't get in because you want to.

You get in because God has done something to you. God has done something for you. God found an orphan and made him a child.

God found an idolater and made you a worshiper of the living God. God found someone spiritually blind and said, let there be light.

And he opened your eyes to the truth. God did something for people who don't deserve anything good to happen to them. And so it is amazing grace that you are a part of a church if you are a part of this church.

And those are the things that he's done to all true members of a church. Makes them, adopts them, brings them into his family. Gives them eyes to see.

[18 : 52] Makes them worshipers where they were once idolaters. And what God does to each one of us, in a way, shapes and decides what we do as a body is, what we do as a church.

God's grace in our lives individually, in each one of us, works itself out corporately as a body. And so what he does in my life, it reflects in our life together.

Let me show you what I mean. Turn to your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 3. 1 Timothy chapter 3. And we are just going to read two verses.

Verses 14 and 15. Remember my contention tonight is that what God does in our lives individually shapes and determines what we are, what we're called to be as a body of believers.

So you see 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 14. Paul writing to Timothy, I hope to come to you soon. [19:58] I am writing you these instructions so that if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

So did you see what Paul called the church? First, he called it God's family, God's household. Second, he called it, it's the church of the living God.

And then third, he called it the pillar and the foundation of the truth. And so, Paul and Jean and Heather, you have joined yourself to the embodiment, an embodiment, of God's family.

You see that there. He calls it God's household. That word literally means house. It's the normal word that you would use for that place that you live. But Paul often uses it to mean family.

Already in 1 Timothy 3, he said an elder must know how to manage his own house. He's obviously talking about a family. And then later, he says that deacons too must manage his children and his house well.

[21:09] He's talking about a family. And so he moves from men's families now to God's family.

So, Heather, Paul, and Jean, you have just joined yourself to the local embodiment of God's family.

And that's amazing grace that now you are part of God's family. Because what were you before? You were orphans. What is it like being an orphan?

Well, it means you have no relationship with your father. For whatever reason, you have no relationship with your father. And the Bible says we were enemies of God in our minds.

So far from being loving children, we were enemies of God in our minds. We didn't see him as a father. If we saw him as anything, we saw him as a slave, as our owner, as a slave master.

We were a slave. That's how we felt. That's how we thought. That was the predominant thinking in our minds. So we were enemies in our minds. We didn't see his love. He didn't love us. He just told us what to do as far as our thinking went.

[22:17] And so we did it or we didn't do it. But either way, we thought like slaves. We didn't think like children. And we were suspicious. A lot of people say that they love God.

And yet, that is one of the biggest lies that men ever tell themselves. Because by nature, we are suspicious. We don't love the true God. We love an imaginary God that we make up.

But whenever we get near to that true God, whenever he reveals himself in any way, we back away. We don't like him. That's how orphans think.

They don't trust anyone. They can't possibly imagine a father's love. It's not something that they even consider because it never could possibly be. And so we didn't know God's love.

You didn't know God's love. And so we had no inheritance. And inheritance is a child's possession. No protection.

[23:20] No future. No name. No honor. No legal status. We were nothing. So go to the streets of Ethiopia or go to the orphanages of Russia.

And you know how much honor and status those children have. They have none. In the world's eyes, they're nothings.

Worthless. Well, and that's what we were. Together, Paul says. Together, we had become worthless. We were orphans by choice. We had forfeited everything away.

We had run away from home. And so we ran away because we thought it would be better out there than in the father's house. And so we were rebellious orphans.

Orphans by choice. And that's what we were. And that's what we would have stayed. But how great is the love the father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God.

[24:22] And that is what we are. The song I love goes like this. We were ruined in our sin. We were guilty and undone.

When your love reached down with sovereign hands and beckoned us to come. And he does more than beckon. Listen to the next verse.

You sought out the wanderers. You made the prodigals come home. With the lavish feast you welcomed us. For you made us your own.

So the love of the father. And now we have a hope and a future. Where we had no future before.

And so like a father speaking to his children, God says, I know the plans I have for you.

I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you. And not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future. Our best things are ahead of us because God is our father.
[25 : 22] And so we're no longer slaves. We're children. And so we cry out, Abba, Father. Just like Jesus did. That's what a church is.

That's what we are. We're God's family. And that means that we do things God's way. And that's the point that Paul is making here in this passage.

He's saying, Here's the instruction so that you might know how to act in God's family. There's a certain way that God's family acts. And you have to know what they are. And so when you are in God's family, you do things God's way.

So brothers and sisters and Heather and Jean and Paul, that's what Grace Fellowship is committed to. We are committed to doing things God's way.

We aren't interested in what the world says a church should be. We aren't interested in what the world wants us to be. That might be fine for them and their family. Parents, do you ever say that?

[26 : 22] When your children come to you and say, Well, that's what so-and-so get to do. Well, that's what their parents do. And you say, Well, that's how their family works.

That's how their family does it. But that's not how we do it. That's not how a web does it. Whatever you might be. Well, we're doing it God's way.

Not because we're slaves, but because we're sons. Not because we are slaves, but because we're sons. We do things His way because we love Him. We give unreserved submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what they committed to. That's what you committed to when you joined this church. Why do we do that? Well, not only because it's right, but because what Jesus did for us.

Remember, we were ruined. We were helpless. We were worthless. We were wretches. And He saved us, and He brought us in, and He made us God's child.

[27 : 24] And so in passionate love, we say, What do you want me to do? How can I please you, Father? How can I please you, Lord? Well, that's first.

We're God's family, and so that means we do things God's way. Then you see what Paul says next. We're the church of the living God. That word church was often used or frequently used in the Old Testament to mean it was the word that they used for Israel as they gathered to worship.

So it was the gathered congregation for the purpose of worship. And so what are we? What is grace fellowship?

What have you joined yourself to? You've joined yourself to the gathered, worshiping congregation of, notice what he says, of the living God. Of the living God.

We worship Him. We don't worship dead idols. That's what we used to do. That's what we used to be a part of. So you worship this idol, and I worship another idol.

[28 : 27] And the only thing we had in common was we weren't worshiping God, and what we were worshiping was dead. It was dead. It was useless to us.

They were blind. They were deaf. They were dead. They were useless. But we still trusted them, and that's what we would have still been doing. But God had mercy on us, and we stumbled over Jesus.

We stumbled over Him, and we would have still done it. And that's what some of you poor souls are still doing. You take Jesus, and you measure Him, and you cast Him aside.

Well, why do you do that? Because you still have your worthless, dead idol. And that's where we would have been. But God, in sovereign grace, free grace, unrestrained, free grace, He made us His own.

He made us His people. He made us His worshipers. Listen to what Peter says. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

[29 : 42] Once we were not a people, but now we are the people of God. And once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy. Praise God. God made us His own.

He made us His own people. And now what does God want from us? What is a church meant to be? It's meant to be the place, it's meant to be the people that worship the living God.

So, family characterizes the church. And worship of the living God characterizes the church. And so what is your responsibility, Grace Fellowship Church?

Well, it's to declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His light. He took us from our utter stupidity. And those words aren't too harsh.

He took us from our utter stupidity of believing gods that were not gods and brought us into the light. And so we worship Him on Sunday, but we aren't God's people just on Sunday.

[30 : 46] We're God's people on Tuesday morning, Thursday afternoon. We're God's people in the kitchen and on the shop floor and in the office. And so God says, Declare my praises.

Declare my praises. Live and speak so that others can see how great I am. Live and speak so that they can see and hear and understand and appreciate my love, my grace, my holiness, my power. Tell them. Live for my worship. Well, that's who we are. And that's what you've joined. That's what we're committed to. You've joined God's worshiping congregation.

And then third, you see what the church is. It's the pillar and foundation of the truth. The pillar and the foundation of the truth.

In Ephesus, when Paul was writing, the biggest, the best, the most amazing building in all of Ephesus was the Temple of Artemis. It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world when one writer was saying the amazing things that he wrote or what the amazing things that he had seen in his life.

[32 : 09] He included this temple there. It was one, it was this massive building on a massive foundation with 127 columns, 127 pillars rising 60 feet up into the air, holding up the roof.

And this building and all of its grandeur and all of its pillars and all of its huge foundation was designed for one thing, to say, look how great Artemis is.

Look how great this goddess is. And here's some homework for you. Go home, Google tippie of Artemis tonight or tomorrow and you can see a picture of what's left of it.

Nothing but a swampy meadow and one single reconstructed pillar. So much for Artemis.

But here's the church, a thousand years praying, two thousand years worshiping, declaring the truth of who God is.

[33 : 21] The church upholds, it defends the truth and God's truth conquers. Sometimes I think that we get so focused in on how things are going in our neck of the woods that we don't see the big picture of how triumphant God's gospel is throughout the world.

And so what do we sing? Martin Luther wrote these words, and though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we do not fear for God hath willed his truth to triumph.

Did you catch these last two words? Through us. Through us. That's amazing. Through us? We were blind.

We were ignorant. We suppress the truth and unrighteousness. Whenever we got near the truth as it is found in Jesus Christ, we pushed it down, we pushed it away, we hid from it, we preferred the dark because our deeds were dark.

The truth was not in us, and the God of this world had blinded us to the glory of God that was being shown to us in the face of Jesus Christ. But God, who is rich in mercy, said, let there be light, and the dungeon flamed with light.

[34 : 48] And so we didn't come to the truth because of our great intellects. Not many of you were wise. We came to the truth through the almighty grace of God, of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit came, he put his hands on our eyes, and he healed us, and we saw. And so now, what are we called to do? What are we called to be?

Well, we're called to be the pillar and the foundation of the truth. We uphold it, we defend it, we hold it so all can see. God gave the truth not to the universities, not to the Christian colleges, not to seminaries.

He gave the truth to the church. He gave the truth to the churches. One of us. Like us. So Harvard started out a Christian university, Princeton started out a Christian university, and where are they now?

God has never promised that those sorts of institutions will last forever, but Jesus has said, I am building my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. So God didn't give the truth to colleges and seminaries.

[36 : 04] He didn't give it to the wise and the influential. He gave it to the churches. He gave it to local churches, and it's here, it's here in this Bremen, of all places, that the truth shines.

And it's in this world of tolerance, and it's in this world of syncretism, where we're always trying to tinker with the truth, and I'll take some of that, and I'll take some of what you're saying, and we don't

believe anything really, and we hide our doubt and our unbelief under all this false humility, and it's in that sort of world that is so uncertain, that is so wishy-washy, that loves the people that take a stand, if it's something that they can agree with, because they don't know how to take a stand. It's in that world that the church says, here is the truth, here is the life, here is the way. It's in Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, that's what we are. We need to remember that again.

That's what we are, and this is God's grace. This is our heritage. This is our family line. This is our calling. We don't need to be ashamed of having the truth. We don't need to be humble about that in that sort of way.

We can gladly glory in the truth and tell others about it with great confidence. The early church was bold. Where's our boldness?

[37 : 27] Where's our courage? We have the same Lord as they do, the same spirit, the same baptism. We are one body with them.

We are one family with them. They are our brothers and sisters, just like us. They are our family. And so, oh church, arise.

Put your armor on. What is the church? What have you joined? It's God's family. It's the worshipping congregation. It's the pillar and the foundation of the truth.

That's glory. That's amazing grace to us. So, we aren't what we used to be. And now we are the children of God.

And what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

[38 : 31] And with this, we'll end. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your grace. Thank you for your sovereign grace that reached out to sinners like us. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are a mighty warrior and a sinner's friend.

a new relationship with you.

So now we can sweetly say, Abba, Father. And we can look around and see our brothers and our sisters. Thank you that you've given us new hearts that want to worship you.

Thank you that you've given us new eyes that will see and understand the truth. Thank you for your amazing grace. Thank you for your grace and the life of Paul and Jean and Heather.

[39 : 57] Thank you. Thank you that they are with us and I pray that you would bless them and bless all of us. Help us to be more faithful to what you've called us to be.

Thank you that there is fullness of grace in Jesus Christ. We are not what we should be. Please, please make us more of what you want us to be.

Conquer every rebel power that rests and lives in our hearts. And may we be a people for your glory and for your praise.

And it's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.