

Who Do You Belong To?

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Our life as a church, Ben Heaney, Catherine Martinez, and Rex and Michelle Klotz want you to know what the Lord has done for them.

And so it's our joyful privilege tonight to hear their testimonies of God's saving grace in their lives, to baptize Ben and Catherine upon the profession of their faith, and then to receive all four of them into the membership of this church.

There's no joy like the joy of having our sins forgiven, of knowing that we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is what Jesus Christ has purchased for all His believing and repenting people. And it remains a cause of wonder and worship all through our lives.

Micah said it, Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy.

[1:02] You will again have compassion on us. You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. So if you'd take your song sheet and stand with me and stand together and sing the praises of this great God of wonders and remain standing for prayer, Pastor Bob will lead us.

Great God of wonders, all Thy ways are matchless, God-like and divine.

God of wonders, all our iniquities into the world.

God of wonders, all our iniquities into the world.

God of wonders, all our iniquities into the world.

[3:22] God of wonders, all our iniquities into the world.

For whom has grace so rich and free? Oh, may this strange, this matchless grace, This God-like miracle of love?

Fill the whole earth with joyful praise And all the angelic fires above.

And all the angelic fires above.

Who is upon me God like thee? For whom has grace so rich and free?

[5:08] For whom has grace so rich and free? Amen. Let's pray.

Almighty God, our Father in heaven, your word tells us that the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver.

It is he who saves us. Therefore, we come tonight in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ to worship you and to give you our praise.

We thank you that by your amazing grace you saved more wretched sinners like us. We thank you for this privilege that we have to gather tonight to hear and to see the testimonies by word and by baptism of sinners who have been saved by the wondrous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that you would give much grace to Rex and Michelle and to Catherine and to Ben in this hour and in the days ahead of their lives that they may show forth your goodness and your grace and draw others to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

[6:26] So, Father, hear us, be with us, accept our worship, be glorified until that day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father in whose name we pray. Amen.

Amen. You may be seated. If you'd please pass your handouts into the center aisles and we'll just set them underneath the chairs there to be picked up later.

Thank you. Come and listen, all you who fear God.

Let me tell you what he has done for me. Catherine Martinez, come and share with us what the Lord has done for you. I would first like to say thank you, Lord, for answering my prayers, for bringing family together tonight.

I was young and asked Jesus into my heart, and I knew I was a Christian because I was telling everyone this, and I really believed it. I went to church through junior high and high school and heard the gospel many times, but it never sunk in.

[7:45] There was no true meaning for me. I became a member, and I was baptized at the church I was attending. During this time, I really felt that I was saved because I did believe in God and Christ, John 3, 16.

I continued to go to church, but I was never persistent. I went to church with my friends, family, and felt I learned a little more there. But I still told myself I was a Christian.

During that time, I learned I wasn't. I did not show fruit of being a Christian. I was not living in a daily life with the Lord. I was professing to be a Christian.

I don't know of a date when I was saved, but I do know that it was early last year. I felt to be convicted of my sin when reading scripture, and I learned that I was not a good person at all. I continued to see that I could not do anything at all by myself. During this time, I learned that it was by grace that I'm able to do anything. I relied on myself, and I relied on my friends and family, which is not always bad, but to get encouragement from the Lord through scripture was the most encouragement to me.

[8:52] The first Bible verse that I memorized was Proverbs 3, 5, 6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will keep your path straight.

To trust myself and others with my life was foolishness, but to change and trust the Lord with all my heart was reviving. It has given me rest and assurance. This verse didn't just give me an answer to why I needed to be saved, but most importantly, show me how much the Lord loved me.

The Lord showed his love to me most by sending his one and only son to his world as a man, to endure everything in this world for his people. He was crucified on the cross where he became my sin for me.

He endured each sin past, present, and future. Christ, through his unflinching obedience when dying at the cross, has given me freedom of the wrath and destruction that it could have been for me. What kind of love is that? It's amazing love. Since I've been saved, God has blessed me with some wonderful individuals who have been able to encourage me. I also have been able to focus my heart more on the Lord with Bible studies, which have never been a part of my life.

[10:05] I go to my first conference, which during that time I was able to learn so much about how to act as a Christian lady.

[illegible]

My friends began to start liking me more because I was becoming more of the world. I was influencing them down the wrong path. I was the star of the show, and yet I did not have satisfaction. Day after day, I washed it as my older brother lived for the Father, and he had friends

to help him along the way. I longed for his joy and security in Christ. It was right there for me to have, and yet I would not come to Christ. I would pray half-heartedly that God would save me, but never actually wanting it. I was in love with the sins and possessions I had. I did not deserve in any way the Lord's forgiveness. It was as if I was too bad to be saved, but that is what the Lord came to do. He came for the lost, and I was in that category of needing a holy and righteous Savior.

This past spring, I began to hate my sin, and I was sick of saying that I would change and then never doing anything about it. It was always on my mind that what would happen if I would die today, and it really scared me when I was honest with myself of where I was headed. My dad really encouraged me to start reading in the Word and love, and a love for Christ began developing in me. Jesus Christ was working in me and changing my heart to live for him. Jesus had died on the cross for my sins, and I have no hope without the sacrifice he made for me. It humbles me to think that he chose me back before the world was created. I felt that a change had occurred in my life, and I wanted to live for the Lord. In Galatians 2.20, it reads, I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. This verse reminds me of Christ's mercy to save a sinner like me. [14:12] His love is never ending, and his word is a blessing at the beginning of each day. I will always struggle with sin, but I have Christ to go and repent to. He will never leave or forsake me.

I am very thankful for the family God has placed me in that taught the scripture to me. Also, my grandparents for keeping the Word of God in the family and being so consistent in living a life for the Lord. Without the blood of Christ spilled on the cross, I would still be in a life full of sin and evil desires. With the Lord's help, I will continue to grow stronger in him each and every day as long as I live. With him, I find the joy that is such a treasure and comfort in my life.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Ben. Michelle. I cannot remember when I actually became a Christian. I am growing stronger and stronger every day in my walk with Jesus. I know that at some point in my life, I would have made the switch, but the exact moment is unknown to me. As a child, I always went to Sunday school.

I am not sure why we did not attend church. Church was not made a priority. We went to Sunday school to get fed a little of God's Word, then went about our lives. After Sunday school was done, I did not open my Bible until the next week for Sunday school. I grew up hearing all of the stories of the Bible. They are familiar to me, but I did not know them inside and out. Throughout my childhood, I never memorized scripture or read the Bible. To my knowledge, this is how life was to be lived.

I mean, we always went to church. I did not know... What I did not know was that I needed to learn more about my Lord, the grace that he has given to me, and to have a personal relationship with him.

[16:14] Looking back now, I would have liked to have things happen differently. But as I have learned over the years, God has a reason for everything. He was always there in my heart waiting.

It was like someone outside of someone's door to their house, knocking and the person inside saying, Can you wait just a little bit longer? I knew he was there, but he was still a stranger to me. I don't know how old I was, but very young. I remember giving my heart to the Lord. Looking back, I realized that they were just words to me. I believed in God and that he sent his son to die for us. But I didn't understand the weight of it all. When I was a sophomore in high school, I met Rex. He soon became the love of my life. I think that God brought us together so that way we could both grow stronger and to get to know our Lord better together.

Rex and I were married and went to church off and on. As time grew on, God laid upon my heart that we needed to know him more. We started attending church just about every Sunday, both Sunday school and church.

[17:34] I was learning more about him every week. After Brittany was born and was several years old, I started going to Wednesday night Bible studies at church. God has been giving me a deep desire to know him more, not only for myself, but for my family as well.

As a Christian, I felt like a tiny baby. I know very little and was soaking in as much as I could about my Savior. God laid heavy on my heart that I needed to be baptized to show the world that I was serious and also to show myself that he was in my heart and soul.

I was baptized in 2007. Without his son dying for me and his saving grace, I would spend eternity in the depths of hell. I am now going through the Bible and learning so much.

My Lord and Savior is no longer a stranger to me. He is my best friend. I want to keep learning about his son, Jesus Christ, and grow stronger as a Christian so that I can teach my daughter at a

young age what it really means to love the Lord.

As a family, we now pray together. I actually learned how to pray. I now know that I just talk openly with my friend.

[19:12] We also talk about the church services and what they mean, about scripture and how God wants us to lead our lives. As a child, I thought I was a Christian because I went to church, believed in God, and that his son died for us.

As this is true, I now realize that there is so much more. There is the grace of God, and without that, there is nothing. We cannot just go through the motions.

We are now putting him first in our lives, and he is our number one priority. The ways of the world are not important. God is. Thank you.

Thank you, Michelle. Rex Klotz. Wow. Hey, I don't think I can do this for a living.

I am not a spectacular person, but God's saving grace and what it's done for me is. I can't give an exact time or date to when I became a Christian, but up until nine, ten years ago, my heart's just racing right now, I always thought I was.

[20:28] As I read this to you, you'll see that I'm not. My life was self-centered, only wanting to please myself. From the time I was little, Mom and Dad always took us to church.

I had always remembered having the fear of God in me, and so did Satan. I can still remember always asking him for forgiveness when I would do something wrong, and so did Saul.

I was a shy kid and an overweight kid, as some of you still here remember. It's from the past. Going into the fourth grade, our family moved from Atwood to Bremen so Dad could take over the farm.

That summer was great because we was moving right next to Grandma and Grandpa. But then the new school started. Being overweight and starting a new school was tough for me to fit in. I made friends with the ones that made me feel like I fit in, but they really weren't the good friends.

I didn't do the things that they did, but over a few years, I allowed some of the wrong things to be justified. I can't remember when, but between my fourth grade year and sixth grade year, for some reason, Dad quit going to church.

[21:37] It wasn't all of a sudden. It was a Sunday here and a Sunday there, and then it was all the Sundays, and Mom was left to take us to church, and I was quickly approaching my teens. I was always athletic, and between my sixth and seventh grade year, I lost a lot of weight and played football.

With this, a whole new life was shown to me. Seventh grade started, and now everyone was my friend. I was on top of the world, but with this, I was also moving even further away from God. I still feared Him, but I figured if I didn't confess Him the wrong things that I was doing, I wouldn't feel guilt.

This time, Mom was having trouble getting my brother and I to church, which was easy for us not to go because Dad wouldn't stand behind her on the fight. I didn't want to go because all my sins was hiding.

Sorry. I didn't want to go because all of the sins I was hiding were always coming to surface on Sunday, and the guilt would come back in.

You know, just like a child playing hide and seek, they cover their eyes, and they think they're hid. I was doing that with God. Football and lifting weights became my life. I became bigger and stronger, and I was going to play college ball, but I was lacking height to be a lineman at the college level.

[22:54] I prayed to get taller. My dreams were slipping away. My guilt was still increasing, and I was hanging around the cool crowd. At the end of my junior year, I met my wife, and after the second week, I knew she was the one.

She met all my standards, and the main one was she was a Christian. Jesus was taking hold of my life. I was going back to church, feeling guilty when I would miss, but missing more than I was going.

Michelle and I were married in 94, and I was going through the motions until our daughter was born in 2001. Now I'm not only a husband, but also a dad. What a responsibility.

I have to teach someone the rights and wrongs. It has to be burned into their heart. While reading the Bible, I came across Matthew 18, 2 through 6. Verses 2 through 5 were okay.

Becoming like a child, humbling yourself, being faithful and dependent upon the Lord. I could do, but verse 6 hit hard. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and drowned in the depths of the

sea.

[24:03] Wow. There was real pressure here. How can I do this? I can't, but God can. I asked the Lord Jesus Christ for his forgiveness.

I asked him to turn my life around and stop going through the motions, to take him serious. I asked him for more love and wisdom. I asked him to get rid of my evilness and fill my heart, body, mind, and soul with the Holy Spirit and help raise this child.

This was the point in my life when I turned to the cross and realized the love of God. God gave his only son for a sacrifice to my soul, to save my soul. Jesus took a brutal death and a separation from his own father to go to the depths of hell just to bury the sins that I have committed and the sins I will continue to commit.

Then God raised his son from the dead to finish the job and bring glory to his name. What a gift of grace and all I have to do is take it. So I have. All this change doesn't happen all at once, but my sins started coming to my attention and one by one with prayer and Jesus, we start pounding away at them.

Christ and church became the most important. My passion for wanting to learn more about God became priority. I started learning how to pray again, to read the Bible again.

[25:27] New things are being revealed to me. Jesus now put on my heart to be baptized to show I'm repenting my sins and my sins are washed away and the Holy Spirit is with me.

I was baptized in September of 2007. Every day I wake up, I become a stronger Christian. Life is a lesson God teaches us. This life isn't important or the things in it, but the next life is.

Without Jesus, there is no life. I realized I wasted too many years on the earthly life and now it's time to commit to a new heavenly life with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We only have about 90 years on this earth to learn all we can about God, so it's time to quit wasting them.

Thank you, Rex. The Lord has been working among us and we see different ways that he brought each of these to himself, but he brought them all to the Lord Jesus to be saved by him.

And what we find in the New Testament is that when people repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ, they were baptized and added to the local church. They attached themselves to the people of God in a common commitment to one another and to the Lord.

[26:50] So I'm going to ask Ben and Catherine to stand now and to make their baptismal affirmations. 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?

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

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

Amen. Rex and Michelle, if you would join them. As you heard in their testimonies, Rex and Michelle have been baptized upon the profession of their faith and they're seeking membership in this church.

So I'm going to ask them to make their membership commitment public to you who are members here and then I'll ask you who are members to make your commitment to them. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and commit to follow his word in every area of your life?

[28:17] 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, by your serving in it according to your talents, spiritual gifts, and God-given abilities?

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?

Do you understand that the 1689 confession of faith is the doctrinal standard of this church and agree for the sake of unity not to spread among as doctrines contrary to this confession?

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

Amen. I'm going to ask that the members of Grace Fellowship Church please stand at this time and make your commitment to these four new members.

[29:36] do you welcome these four into the membership of this 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 them in love as brothers and sisters in Christ, all that Jesus Christ may be glorified.

If so, say, we do. We do. Let's all pray together. Blessed God, our Savior, we thank you for the testimonies we've just heard.

These were wandering sheep and you sought them and found them and brought them to your south. We thank you that they know what they are, sinners saved by grace.

They know that they are great sinners but that they have a great Savior. And I thank you tonight that they desire to join with others and to not go to heaven alone but to travel along with the body of Christ and to receive from the church body all the encouragement and help that you have put into the church for them.

So make us, Lord, to be faithful to them. Help us to pray for them. Help us to take an interest in their spiritual walk with Christ and so to spur one another on to love and good deeds.

[31 : 12] Lord, would you use Ben and Catherine and Rex and Michelle to spur us on by their own example, by their own diligence and zeal for the Lord.

And so help us to do one another good for the praise of our Savior in whose name we ask. Amen. Amen. Amen. Catherine, you've testified to us tonight how the Lord Jesus sought you and how he found you.

You thought for a while that you were a believer that you now realize that you weren't and you're so thankful that the Lord Jesus didn't stop seeking you. That he found you.

And he brought you to know himself and that saving grace and life that is in Christ. So it's my privilege to 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.

[32 : 26] Amen. Amen. Amen. Ben, I too was raised in a Christian home as you were, but you learned that being raised in a Christian home doesn't save you.

The Lord Jesus sought you and he found you and he brought you to himself and gave you a new heart and new life. So it's my joy to baptize you, my brother, 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. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for what we've seen and heard so far.

We ask now that you would open your word to us in a way that we would be able to understand it and apply it. Thank you for the way that you have saved so many of us poor sinners.

This room is filled with people that you've showered grace upon grace on. Give us hearts that would be lifted up and exalted in you and what Jesus has done.

[33 : 59] Lord, we thank you for your great love for us and we pray that you would continue to pour out that love upon us. Continue to pour out that love upon our sons and daughters, about our friends and our neighbors, that your kingdom would come more and more, that your praise would go forth to the ends of our street and the ends of our state and to the ends of our world, that people everywhere would see how great our Savior Jesus Christ is.

And it's in his name I pray. Amen. Well, God changes things, doesn't he? Among the gods, there is none like you, O Lord.

There are no works like yours. And that's what we have seen. The Lord has done amazing things among us. And he is worthy of praise. I would invite you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 6. 2 Corinthians 6. We're going to begin reading at verse 14. And we'll read into chapter 7.

2 Corinthians 6, verse 14. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

[35 : 27] Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will live with them and walk among them. And I will be their God.

And they will be my people. Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you. I will be a father to you.

And you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

God. Well, have you seen how God has the amazing power to change things? He has, there's no God like him to do amazing things.

[36 : 36] He did that in the city of Corinth. He's done amazing things in the lives of Catherine and Ben and Michelle and Rex. God has radically changed their identities and their destinies.

And Paul began this small section with five rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions are questions that you're supposed to know the answer to. So what does righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Nothing. What fellowship can light have with darkness? Again, the answer is no, they can't have any fellowship. What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? That's a name for Satan.

And the answer again is none. What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? Nothing. What does the temple of God have to do with idols?

And again, the answer is nothing. Well, why is Paul saying all this? Because he wants to remind the Corinthians of who they are now.

[37 : 41] What they are now. They aren't what they used to be. Things are different. They can't do the things they used to do because they're not the people they used to be.

God has forever changed them. And so, my question is, what happened? How did they become this new people? Well, the Corinthians weren't born believers.

They weren't born as the light, and far from it. They were like everyone else. Everyone else in this room, everyone else in this world, they were born in sin. And the natural inclination of their heart was to hate God.

And that might be hard for some of you to swallow, that you actually hate God. But the Bible from front to back is clear that from infancy, we go astray.

God says, go this way, and we say, I am going my own way. And so in sin, our mother conceived us, and sin was the stew that we were born in, and sin was what we lived in.

[38 : 50] And isn't that what we have seen from our newest members? They're just like us. They read their testimonies, and each one of them said, I was a sinner.

I was a sinner. I was guilty before God. I wasn't going the right way. I was going my way. But what a change. What a change has happened.

Just like the Corinthians, they used to be darkness. Some of you have known Ben all his life. Some of you have known Catherine for quite a while. They were born in darkness.

But look what has happened now. They've been moved from darkness to light. God has changed things completely. Well, how did God do that? How did he do that in the Corinthians? Well, how did he do it?

And Catherine and Ben and Michelle and Rex? Well, God sent grace to wake up their hearts.

[39 : 47] We just sang amazing grace. He sent grace into their hearts to make them fear. Well, fear what? Fear God. Fear his wrath.

And then he sent grace upon grace. And he sent grace to fear or to calm their fears. to relieve their fears.

And he did it by showing them Jesus. Jesus who had no glory before. Jesus who was nothing special before.

Now suddenly flamed into glory and they saw Jesus for who he is. They saw him as Lord and they saw him as Savior.

Jesus is Lord to command them. Jesus is Lord to save them. And they saw that Jesus was exactly what they needed. They needed a Savior.

[40 : 43] They saw that someone had to die for their sins. And they saw that Jesus had died for his people's sins. Jesus who knew no sin became sin for them.

And they saw in him exactly what their souls needed. And so they saw him. They loved him. And they gave themselves to him.

And he saved them. And so he changed them completely. They went from darkness to light. They went from idol worshipers to being the very temple of God.

And God has this amazing power to change people. And we have four examples here. And sitting among you is example after example of God's amazing power to change people completely.

Secondly, I want to notice from this passage that God gives amazing promises. He gives amazing promises to his people. The reason I picked this passage was for these promises.

[41:49] This passage has everything to do with being in covenant with God. And so God has promised things to you, Ben.

God has promised things to you, Catherine. And in baptism, you have made promises to him. So baptism is a sign of the new covenant.

And with God's covenant with Abraham, he said you should circumcise yourself and circumcise your descendants. And that circumcision was going to be the outward mark of being in covenant with God.

And it showed that they were in covenant with God and other people weren't. And so today, Ben and Catherine, what you have seen before you, they received the sign of the new covenant.

When they went down into the waters, when you guys went down into the waters, you said to everyone, this God is my God. He is mine and I am his.

[42:50] I am in covenant with God and I promised myself to him. but we don't see your promises in this passage.

We see God's promises to you. And that's what we want to see. He says, I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God and they will be my people.

Paul is quoting God's words to Jeremiah and to Ezekiel where God promised that someday he was going to take from this earth a people for himself and they would be his people and he would be their God.

He would make a new covenant with them. And what we've seen tonight is God doing that. God entering into a covenant with people. And he says he would live with them and he would walk among them and then Paul takes up more of God's promises.

He says, I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. Well, that promise is straight from the covenant that God made with David. And so these are covenant promises.

[44:01] They're for you, Ben and Catherine. And so when you took Christ, you received all of God's promises. They all become yes and amen in him.

And so you should let that sink in. Things are radically different now. You're recipients of God and brothers and sisters, those promises are yours.

They're yours. God has promised to be your God. All that God is, he is for you. Let me repeat that. All that God is, he is for you. All of his power is all for you. All of his wisdom is all for you. His great mercy is all for you.

He's committed to being your God. And so not a day goes by when God isn't on the throne doing exactly what you need.

[45:02] Doing and ruling all things for your good. And so God never takes a vacation from being your God. God has promised to be totally for you.

And he said, I will live with you. And we can understand from this passage that it means more than that. It means I will live in you. I will be in you.

So your body is God's dwelling place. Your body is the very temple of God. And so how close is infinite power? How close is infinite wisdom and overflowing grace?

Well, he's living in you. He's living in you. The almighty creator who said, let there be light and poof, there was light is in you.

Is in you. And so he's closer than you are to your own self. He's God for you. And that isn't all. We read in verse 18, this personal God says, I'm going to be your father and you're going to be my sons and daughters.

[46:09] You'll be my son, Ben, and you're going to be my daughter, Catherine. You'll be my sons and daughters. Now, neither of you are parents. Maybe someday you will be. But I am a parent, I am a dad, and I would give my life in a heartbeat for any of my children.

If it was them or me, I wouldn't hesitate. And you might not be able to comprehend that, but if it was my daughters or me, I would die a thousand times over. And the point is, I am evil.

I am evil. So how much more will your heavenly father love and take care of you? That's his promise to you. He'll be your father.

He'll look after you. He will love you and live with you. And that's the glory of God's promises for all of his people, for anyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

It was true for Ben and Catherine. It's true for all of you who have believed, and it will be true for you if you believe. If you repent from your sins and give yourself wholeheartedly to Jesus to save you, then those promises are yours.

[47:19] They can be yours. You get them by taking Jesus. So God's amazing promises, they're all for you.

Now third, here's the application. Purify yourself. Purify yourself. God has given himself to you. He's given himself totally to you. And so you return and you give yourself only and all to him. And you do that by purifying yourself. Chapter 7, verse 1 says, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves. But what does that mean?

It means you have to come out of the world. You have to come out of the world. You can't live according to its standards, its ideas, its rules, its values, its priorities, its desires.

[48:23] Those things are behind you now. It means not yoking yourself with unbelievers. Your closest friends can no longer be God's enemies. enemies. And the reason is because God is in you.

He is in you. And he is all for you. God is your God. He's devoted himself to you. And so you must now devote yourself only and all to him. And so it has to be total devotion, total purification.

It says, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. And so then, Catherine, the goal now in believers, you need to remember this, the goal now is perfect holiness.

It's perfect holiness. And that is a high goal. That is a radical, life-altering goal. But that is the only goal that will live up to the reality that the Lord God is in you.

That he is walking with you, that he is your God. He's perfectly holy. And so you have to be perfectly holy. And that has to be your pursuit from this day on.

[49:31] Perfect holiness, holiness of body. Your body is no longer yours. You were bought at a price. So honor Jesus with your body. Christ died for that body.

He's going to raise it one day. And so you are called to keep it holy for him. Holiness of spirit. That means from now on your goal has to be perfect emotions, perfect desires, a perfect heart.

heart. And whenever you see sin, because the goal is perfection, but you're not going to reach it here. But when you see sin, and the way that you feel, and the way you think, and the things that you desire, you repent.

You get rid of it. You purify yourself. And the reason is because out of reverence for God. God is holy, God is with you, and so you must be holy yourself.

Now Moses was out in the middle of the wilderness, and he was a shepherd, and he was walking along one day, and he saw a bush burning, and the bush didn't burn up, and he was a bit of a scientist, and so he said, well, I have to check this thing out, and he came close to that bush, and as he was coming close to it, a voice came, and it said, Moses, take off your sandals, the ground that you are walking on is holy ground.

[51:00] Well, why was the ground holy? Well, it was because the Lord God was there. He was there, and Ben and Catherine, brothers and sisters, that's us.

That's us. God is with you. God is in you. You are his temple, and so purify yourselves. So Ben, tomorrow you're going to be walking into school, and as you go through that building, those doors and into that building, you should think that this ground that I am walking on is holy ground, and everywhere you go, as you walk down the halls, this is holy ground because God is here.

You're taking him there, and so I can't, I won't defile myself in any way. I will purify myself because the Lord God is living in me.

He's all for me, and so I have to be all for him. And Catherine, you're going to be going to work or class tomorrow, and as you go through that door and as you walk through those buildings, think, this ground is holy ground because God is in you.

You are his temple, and so out of reverence for God, purify yourself. Well, God has done wonderful things for you. He's done wonderful things for many of us, and so out of reverence, we need to purify ourselves, and out of awe and joy, we need to live for him and praise him.

[52:31] And so, now live for him. Live for him. He's done so much for you. Live for him, and when you fail, what do you do? You run to the cross. Because if God saved you when you weren't looking for him, how much more is he going to forgive you now that you're his very own special treasure.

Let's pray. Our heavenly father, I pray that your word would come home to our hearts, that we would remember what you have promised to us, and make those promises not only a source of reverence and awe, but a source of joy, knowing that you are for us, your power is for us, and your wisdom is for us.

I pray for Ben and Catherine, and Rex and Michelle, and I pray that you would bless them and bless their union with us. May they do real good in the coming years if it is your will.

Will you help us to do real good for them? Thank you that you have been so kind, so generous, and I pray out of the greatness of the gospel, you would make us to live for you, out of reverence to live all for you.

Help us to purify ourselves from every evil, from everything that contaminates body and soul, that we would be pleasing to you. Thank you that we can please you in Jesus Christ.

[53 : 55] Thank you for him. Make him look wonderful to every single person here. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.