

Choose Reality over Appearances

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- [0 : 0 0] For a moment, let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, it can be very lonely in life. It can be very stressful. It can be very hectic. There can be lots of anxiety in our lives. And so, Father, we give you thanks and praise that you have invited us week by week to gather with others who are your people and to come into your presence to sit and stand and sing and pray in your presence and to receive grace from you Sunday by Sunday.
- Father, it is a great honour and privilege that you desire us to be in your presence to receive grace from you. And we know, Father, that you bestow grace on your people as we are in your presence.
- And we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would work deeply but gently in our hearts, that we might receive the grace you desire to give us this morning and that we might respond in a worthy manner, a manner which is worthy of your glory, worthy of us, and worthy of the great needs of the world.
- And so, Father, we ask that you would do this gentle but deep and mysterious miracle in our hearts once again today as we gather in your presence. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.
- [1 : 1 9] Amen. Please be seated. So I have a trigger warning this morning.
- And the trigger warning is, some of you might have noticed, if you're familiar with the fact that we preach through books of the Bible and we're preaching through Mark's Gospel, an ancient biography of Jesus, Jesus talks about money.
- So we're going to talk about money. And that is probably one of the least popular things to talk about. And if you're here online, you're thinking, oh, good grief, they're going to talk about money.
- Maybe some of you are thinking about the same thing. But Jesus talks about it. And, you know, really, if you think about it for a second, for us who are followers of Jesus, the question is, what does it mean to follow Jesus in a world where there is money?
- And what does it mean to follow Jesus in a world where money is very, very, very, very important? What does it mean to follow Jesus in a world where money is desired and we feel anxious about it?
- [2 : 3 2] What does it mean to follow Jesus and trust him as our Savior and Lord in such a world? And so while on one hand it might seem like a scary topic, probably some of you have heard me say it before, the thing which is so shocking about the Bible isn't that it's like a hallmark, unrealistic movie, but the problem we have with the Bible is that it's so deeply realistic that it talks about real life, it talks about suffering, and it talks about, in fact today we're not only going to talk about that, it talks about hypocrisy, it talks about climbing the greasy pole and stepping on others to climb the greasy pole, it talks about these profound things that make up our day-to-day life and we get a bit shocked, thinking we'll maybe just get a couple of little pleasing quotes to discover that it talks about what it really is like to live.

So we're going to look at that because we're looking at what the Bible says, but we have to get to, there's two other little short stories that all linked that we have to look at first. So if you have your Bibles, turn in them to Mark chapter 12, verses 35 and following, and if you're using these little booklets, it's on page 78, Mark chapter 12, verses 35 to 44, and here's what is happening.

And just one of the things to remember as we read this is that even though if you look at this, you have the whole book with a little study page on the side, there's still a fair amount of pages left in it, but what's happening here is just happening maybe two days before Jesus is dying on the cross.

So when you're reading this, you need to keep this in mind. Jesus knows that he's going to die on the cross. He's told his disciples he's going to die on the cross and rise from the dead. They don't believe him.

I don't know what they think. They think he's being metaphorical or poetical or something. Who knows? But they don't believe him. Nobody believes he's going to die on the cross. His enemies are plotting his death upon the cross and he knows he's going to rise from the dead.

[4 : 37] And so all of these words, you need to hear them remembering that that's what Jesus knows and also must be the, you know, for some of you who have really good imaginations, I'm not one of you, the emotional shock.

And then even just thinking back as the disciples, they go through the shock of seeing Jesus die. They see the shock of the blood coming out of his side, the shock that he's covered in spices, the shock that he's buried in a tomb.

And then the huge shock three days later when the tomb is empty and the grave cloths are there and the stone is rolled away and they can't find the body and he appears alive and they now start to think back to all of these things that he had said in the days preceding his death upon the cross and his resurrection.

That's how we have to amend and enter into this imaginatively and emotionally. And if we do that, we start to see the profound beauty of the text, that the way that it, you know, those who've been Christians for a long time and the gospel becomes real to their heart, it's that there's a deep emotional satisfaction with the gospel that grows as you become more, as the gospel becomes more real to your heart because there's this deep resonance with our deep longings and yearnings and the gospel has this profound ability to form us in ways that are for our good.

This, what Jesus teaches and what he does, well, let's look. So it begins in a bit of an odd way and for some people, it just seems like he's playing a bit of a word game.

[6 : 17] But look what happens first. Mark chapter 12, verse 35. And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, how can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?

Now, once again, some of you might remember, what's a scribe? A scribe, if you go back in time, or sorry, if you imagine today, imagine one person or a group of people who are three different things in our society.

A public intellectual, a legal scholar, and then think of somebody who's like an assistant deputy minister or a deputy minister in the government and is really competent and she just knows how things work in the government, in the real world.

And so when you see scribe, think of that. Somebody who knows how the world works, how bureaucracies and systems and the culture works. Somebody who's a public intellectual and somebody who's a legal scholar.

That's what a scribe is, okay? And they're experts in knowing what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh and what we would call the Old Testament in particular. And so one of the things which is interesting here is that Jesus asks a question and this is easy for us to miss the significance of this.

[7 : 28] On one hand, it's just fair. Just before this, people have been asking him hostile questions and then just immediately before this there was a friendly question. But here's the thing, if you think about it for a second, if there really is a triune God that actually does exist and if that triune God does exist and has created and sustained all things, and many here would of course believe and accept that, but for some of you that would be maybe some of you watching or some of you here, that's like, I don't know if I believe that, that's fine, but if, imagine for a second that there is really in fact the triune God who does exist, who's created everything, sustains all things, is sovereign over all things.

Our mental and spiritual and emotional and aesthetic and cultural and intellectual categories couldn't grasp him.

If you think about it for a second, if my, if the categories of thought in Ottawa in 2022, the aesthetic and spiritual and emotional and intellectual and philosophical and scientific categories, if our categories were adequate to completely understand such a God, that would mean we were bigger than God, which means that God doesn't exist.

And so one of the things which is important when Jesus asks questions in the Gospels is you see the questions of his critics and even the questions of the seekers aren't going to be adequate to understand who he is.

He needs to challenge my categories. He needs to challenge your categories. And actually, as we see just in a moment, if you think about it for a second, what he's doing is a profound challenge of our categories because in our categories, if such a God exists, we would set down criteria by which he should relate to the world.

[9 : 24] If you think about it for a second, you know, he should be inclusive. And in fact, the matter is, is no, no, no, no, no, don't do things in history. They should do things, God, you should reveal yourself at an emotional level or somewhere inside each of us in some way, which is sort of, I don't know, democratic and equitable, but it shouldn't be in history and it shouldn't be in the past and good grief, it shouldn't be a Jewish guy.

I mean, what's going on with that? And we'd have all of our criteria and it should be connected, your revelation about yourself should be connected to us in such a way that it's going to help me to thrive and be the best me that I, we'd have all our criteria.

And we put these criteria, see, what Jesus is doing here, he's challenging our criteria. and that has to be the case if there is in fact a God like Jesus describes.

If our criteria aren't challenged, then we're God. We're God. Not only we're God, our culture is God and we can look down our noses at other cultures who have different criteria because, you know, frankly, we have the God criteria.

So that's one of the subtle things which is going on in this question. All the times in the Bible that in the ancient biographies of Jesus, when Jesus asks a question and when he raises issues that we feel uncomfortable with, he's challenging our criteria, but that's exactly what should be happening if there is in fact a God that's real.

[11 : 00] So, read verse 35 again and as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, how can the scribes say that the Christ, in other words, that's one way of saying the Messiah, is the son of David and in that time period it was recognized that when the Messiah came, he would be, in a sense, in the lineage, the human lineage of David that you would be able to trace back whom his dad was or his mom was and trace them back and back and back and back and it would go all the way back, you know, dad to baby, you know, dad to baby, you know, parents to baby, all the way back to David and so that was one of his titles and so Jesus says, okay, it's accepted that he's going to be human and he's going to be in the lineage of David.

We all accept that and then what he does is he says these two things. He says, verse 36, David, that's King David, himself, in the Holy Spirit declared, and now Jesus is going to quote what we now know of as Psalm 110, verse 1.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. Now, King David calls his son Lord, so how is he his son?

And the great throng heard him gladly. Now, just a couple of things to sort of help us to understand what's going on here. There's no way in English to translate this to capture what's going on.

It's just, it's impossible to translate. And that's why you need to have gatherings like this where we talk about it. The first thing here, by the way, is like, true confessions, and this isn't like coming out, but for maybe some of you who are guests or some of you online, I believe that, on one hand, I believe this is a work of accurate history, that when we read Mark, we're reading an accurate historical account of things which happened in the past.

[13 : 03] I also believe that every word which is there is the word that God wanted there. Now, I don't believe this because I'm an uneducated, narrow-minded, bigoted, modernist whose mind needs to be decolonized.

Although, maybe I am all of those things. I believe it because I trust Jesus as my Savior and Lord, and that's what Jesus just taught us with his question.

Did you notice what he says? Look back at verse 35. David, so he's acknowledging that David wrote Psalm 110, verse 1, but he also said that David wrote it in the Holy Spirit.

In other words, when you read, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet, you are hearing the Holy Spirit speak words to you and me.

Unworthy, ungrateful, presumptuous, ignorant, sinful, foolish, all those things that we are, people who are going to die someday.

[14 : 19] This is the Holy Spirit speaking word by word. That's what Jesus is just telling us. They're the real words of David, but the Holy Spirit superintended them so that the very words that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit wanted were communicated and written down to us.

You see, that's one of the reasons why if you're a guest or you're watching online and you're curious, that's one of the reasons. Like, if in fact it really is the case that the triune God, the creator and sustainer of the entire universe, the one who is sovereign over the entire universe, if he really has spoken, doesn't it make sense to want to sit and listen?

And that's why it's part of a worship service in a church, not only the reading of the scripture, but us trying to enter into it and meditate upon it and hear it speak directly to us.

But here's the other thing which is going on in the text. In the original Hebrew, and all of, not all, but most of the hearers would have understood this when Jesus was speaking.

What he says is this. Look at verse 36. He's quoting Psalm 110. The Yahweh said to my Adonai, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.

[15 : 36] David himself calls him Adonai, so how is he his son? And the throng heard him greatly. Now Yahweh is the ancient Jewish name, a covenant name for God.

He is the true God that exists that's over all things and he is the God who is in a covenant relationship. A covenant relationship is sort of like a marriage with his people.

And maybe another way to put it is every one of my kids at some point in time in their life, they would call me George. And I would correct them and say there's eight billion people in the world who can call me George.

There's only nine who can call me Dad. And you're one of them. So call me Dad. It's a special covenant name. And so there's all sorts of ways to talk about God and the high God, but for the Jewish people, it's Yahweh.

And that became such a special name that we don't even know if we're pronouncing the name correctly now because that's a whole other long story. But the other thing is that in the Old Testament, one of the most other common names for God was Adonai.

[16 : 44] And it means most high, the most high ruler, the highest of all gods. If you went to the pagan Romans, if you went to the pagan Greeks and they believe in, I don't know, 50, 100, 200, 300 gods, and if they have a sense that there might be a high God, when a Jewish person said Adonai, they would mean above all gods, above all gods and goddesses that you think you know, above all of them is Adonai.

And so that's what's going on in the text. And Jesus is just pointing out this is a really weird thing. Yahweh says to Adonai, but David also knows, we all know that the Messiah, everybody knew this was a messianic text, that the Messiah was going to come, but now, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, the Messiah is called Adonai?

And how can the Messiah be both a human being and be God? And Jesus is posing a riddle to them, a riddle that he himself would show that he is the answer to the riddle, because he's ultimately referring to himself.

And this is going to become very important when we talk about money and when we talk about climbing the greasy pole and stepping on people, because what Jesus is saying here, I mean, part of, why is it that I as a, I mean, there's all sorts of reasons why I as a Christian believe that Jesus, in fact, is the Messiah, that he is both fully human and fully God, but not two different beings, but one person, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who set aside his glory and divine prerogatives and his appearance of God as God, and emptied himself and takes the form of a servant and comes and he becomes Emmanuel, he comes and lives amongst us in all of our mess, and he lives amongst us, and what Jesus is saying here, just remember, this is two days before he dies on the cross, Jesus is telling them, when you see me hanging on the cross, you are seeing Adonai hanging on the cross, that is who is dying, you are seeing the Messiah, the Christ, you are seeing God die on the cross, and that is nonsense to all human categories, the prime minister sends others to go to die in war, the king sends others to go to die in war, the prime minister, the king, are protected by others at the cost of their life, and Jesus is revealing that all of those depictions of God that fit in our categories are massively missing the God who actually does exist because the God who actually does exist isn't the God who sends others to die for his glory, but he is one who dies for others so they might be glorified.

He becomes rich, that we, through his poverty, sorry, he became poor so that we, through his poverty, might become rich. We'll see how it works out in a very common human problem which is described immediately afterwards, and it's actually, as you look at these two common human problems that come right after this, you start to get a sense of the deep emotional power once you come to accept that Christ is in fact the Savior and the Lord, that the gospel is true, that there is this profound good news that God loves you so much that he himself emptied himself of all of his glory and splendor and divine prerogatives.

[20 : 33] He emptied himself of all of that and emptied himself of all of the praise which was due with him, and he left the safety and the glory of heaven to come and live amongst us and experience human life in all of its fullness, and then out of love for you, he dies in your place and in your stead.

Out of love for you. This is a story of one, of two things. Your need for salvation, your potential doom is vastly worse than the worst three o'clock in the morning time you have ever had when you wake up terribly anxious.

Your condition is actually vastly worse. But on the other hand, you are vastly more loved than you can possibly imagine. And that is the news of the gospel.

You are vastly more loved than you can dare to dream. Look how it works out in this.

This is a problem of appearances and of climbing the greasy pole and of, well, look what Jesus says, verse 38. And in his teaching, he said, beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogue and the places of honor at feasts.

[21 : 56] And then look at this little neat little thing he puts in, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

And look at this. This is really a sobering thing. I mean, on one level, he's talking about the general problem of, he's talking about the general problem of hypocrisy. He's talking about the general problem that we appear to be one thing but we're actually something very different.

He's talking about the problem of how we look to the rich or we look to the popular or we look to the powerful and we do things to cater their favor. We do things so that they'll like us, that the rich person will like us, that the powerful person would like us, that the influential person would like us, that if we're in business or government we look for who the cool person is, the person on the up and coming and we try to ingratiate ourselves into them and fit in with them and fit in with their circle in the hope that as they rise that we will rise with them and it's a very, very common human problem.

And on one level, Jesus' words is speaking to this common human problem but he's also looking very specifically into that which is the visible church and he's making it say that it's very possible for me as a minister to start to maybe, you know, to want to just look with appearances and whatever's going to make myself more popular and maybe bring in crowds or maybe bring in more money or, you know, maybe get, you know, have more, you know, influence, have more, whatever it is, that it's easy for me to change the way I dress, the way I speak, the topics I speak on and do all of these types of things because I want to connect with the rich, the popular and the powerful and I want to move up and if I want to move up I step on those who are little people because that's the only way you move up.

You can't move up to those people without stepping on little people. It's completely and utterly impossible. If you're spending all your time looking up at those people, you don't see the others that you're stepping on and we all know it and Jesus says that when it happens within the visible church, when he says the greater condemnation, he doesn't say this about LGBTQ plus activists.

[24 : 13] He doesn't say it about the people who are off just spending all their time drinking in bars. He says it about people like me and you. This is a profound warning to us.

And you see, we're going to get to the good news in a moment.

But you see how there's this very, very profound if in fact the news that I have just shared with you at different times throughout this sermon and the news of this that Jesus is saying all of this just before he dies on the cross.

Nobody thinks he looks like God. Nobody thinks he's anybody special. He doesn't have any armies. He doesn't have a PhD. He doesn't have villas.

He doesn't have sermons. He's a nobody. And he dies on a cross stripped naked not even having his clothes at the end as they embarrass him and humiliate him.

[25 : 25] The religious leaders and the cultural leaders and the political leaders and the intellectual leaders and the aesthetic leaders who want to climb the greasy ladder have stepped on him on their way up that greasy pole.

He's the one stepped on on the way up. and he does it out of love for you and me. And you see if you begin to have the gospel become if you realize I can give my life to Christ it's it makes sense it's what I need it's the I need to give my life to Christ and it's the story of Christ and the good news of what he has done for us as that starts to become more real to us at a deep level it forms us not to be a person who is going to be one thing in public and another thing in private who's going to be one who's never looking at the little people and we don't care if we step on them it's going to create within us a very different thing because our our imagination and our heart is captivated by the picture and the truth of God setting aside his glory and divine prerogatives and entering into our human existence entering into the existence of the little people the forgotten people that they might loved and lovely be at a very very deep level it starts to form us in a very different way of living but it's exactly the way of living that most Canadians want we do not want to be separate people and for most people we might brush it off if somebody if you confronted somebody about how they've stepped on this person and this person and this person up to the top and you confronted them about it and they might they might rail at you and stuff like that but inwardly they would either rage or be ashamed because nobody wants to be that guy nobody wants to be that gal and what we see here is at a very very very deep level

Jesus is forming us for something that on one level we deeply deeply deeply desire to be when we accept the gospel it's in that context that he talks about money now just before I read this I'm going to have my standard caveat if you're here today and you don't know what you think about Jesus you're not sure whether you believe in him or want to belong to him maybe you're thinking you're going to leave maybe you're trying to figure out what to do if you're watching online and you're just curious so I love what before you hear anything else just listen to what he has to say but I want to make you aware of the fact that the council and myself would like it if that describes you you haven't given your life to Christ we don't want you to give us any money like really literally we don't want you to give us any money because it's not about money it's about figuring out whether Jesus is in fact the one who can reconcile you to the triune God the creator and sustainer of all things and that's the great existential question and money is completely and utterly irrelevant and and I'll explain in a moment why Jesus says what he says and why it matters to us once we're following him but if you haven't decided to follow him yet we don't want your money not about money it really isn't what does Jesus say and this is a very scary thing it touches on our deep fears about Christ and money verse 41 and he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box many rich people put in large sums and a poor widow came in and put in two small copper coins which make a penny now that's a very inadequate translation and there's not really any good way to make an English translation unless if you had a study bible or something there might be a footnote there

I looked up the average Canadian salary and so basically what you understand is imagine that in Canadian society and I've known people who've had to had their money managed for them and so every day they have a couple of dollars or whatever the amount is in the bank and five days a week they get money available to them and in Canadian in our current current day this is somebody who every day from Monday to Friday gets two toonies that's what it means for Canadians two toonies four bucks Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday they go to wherever the social service center hand them two toonies and that's what she has to live on and she puts both of them aside for the glory of God now and then Jesus says this verse 43 and he calls his disciples to him and said to them truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box for they all contributed out of their abundance but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had all she had to live on be a little bit as if

Bill Gates came to visit us and by the way Bill if you're watching you're always welcome but he comes and after the sermon he you know ignores what I've said about not giving us money and he writes us a check for \$25,000 I don't know how many billions he has left over but he has lots of billions left over after \$25,000 my guess is most of you here couldn't drop a check for \$25,000 very easily maybe a couple of you could but here's the deep fear we have with the text if we're honest with it what is Jesus doing here George don't you think this woman was foolish George don't you think does God just want us to be poor George I would like to be able to own a condo or a house someday

[31 : 49] I want to make some money so I can just like I don't want to have a McMansion I would just like to be able to have a house of my own and yet Jesus seems to be talking here in a particular way as if what he wants is that the best thing I could possibly be is a poor widow giving all of my money until I starve to death like George this just seems to be completely kooky doesn't he know what it's like to be human doesn't he know what it's like to have to worry about money doesn't he know the answer is he does know all of those things he does know all of those things and if we just listen to our heart for a second why is it that it would be like a dagger in our heart if all of a sudden I don't know God showed up just in front of us and said I need you to write a check for \$3,000 and for almost every single one of us here that would be like that's not all your money in most cases here probably but why is it that we get so anxious around money and why is it that we hate being anxious around money yet we are anxious around money and you know if you think about it for a second if you're anxious around money and you're having problems with money doesn't that usually indicate that you need someone who loves you so much that he died for you that maybe you need his help with your money it's not that he wants us to be poor first of all

Jesus is pointing to what he's about to do on the cross Flannery O'Connor wrote a book back in the 50s and one of her lines in it which I love is that you can't be poorer than dead you can't be poorer than dead and Jesus literally does he is the true and greater widow he literally truly gives all that he has there's a very wonderful quote I'm sure St.

Paul was thinking about this story when he wrote this wonderful quote it's not going to be up on your screen you just have to listen to it it's 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 verses 9 and 10 and it says this for you know the for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich you know if you think about it for a second there's no free lunch about 15 years ago there was a very wealthy man in the congregation and he invited me out and Louise out to a \$500 a plate banquet this is 15 years ago I don't know what that would be today with inflation a \$1,500 \$2,000 a plate banquet and he invited us to it and of course Louise said oh yeah we have like an extra \$2,000 each in our pockets we'll buy no we said we can't afford it I said no no it's on us it's on me it's on me you're my guest now did I get a free meal yeah was the meal free no for

Tom to take us out to that meal in today's dollars he was out four grand somebody had to pay and what Jesus is saying here is that he is going to pour himself out he is pouring himself he is becoming completely and utterly poor and he's becoming poor so he will pay the cost that you cannot pay he will pay to cover that heavenly banquet and that time of eternity that you cannot possibly ever imaginatively pay and he will pay it all and he does it all for you out of love for you and it's not that these things are free they come at a cost but he bears the cost not you he offers it to you completely and utterly out of grace and out of love and so when we see Jesus dying on the cross we see him dying on the cross to pay that price that we cannot says he pays it for the hypocrites he pays it for the people who climb the greasy pole he pays it for the people who are squashed by the greasy pole he pays it for the indifferent rich he pays it for the poor widows he pays it for you and me that's who he pays it for for you and me this is not a text to condemn us but to show us our need for a savior and here's the thing how can

I say that I follow the one who is meek and lowly if I am arrogant shouldn't it mean that if my heart is set on the one who in meekness and lowliness died for me that I should learn to be meek and lowly how can I say that I follow the man who shunned appearances to really deal with reality if I in my life only want to deal with appearances and not reality shouldn't that wonderful tale that he in reality deals even if the appearances don't seem to match up shouldn't that form within me this deep desire for integrity and how can I say I follow the God who gave him his all if I give nothing how does that make any sense to say that I am being saved by the one who has given it all if I give nothing I'm not we're going to say this right now just so it's very out front by those of you who know me know that I am not even remotely organized enough to orchestrate anything like this like you know me

[38 : 07] I used to say regularly people who don't like organized religion should come to my church because we have disorganized religion lots of times but I was going to in the announcements announce that those of you who call this your church home just so you know that as of the end of last Sunday we needed \$58,000 to balance our books I didn't preach this sermon because of that complete and utter coincidence really is or providence I didn't plan it that way and I'm not preaching this sermon because we have a need for \$58,000 to balance our books I present that to you for this is your church home whether you're online or here and not everybody can give that much money but everybody can pray and pray that we as a church are always seeking to know God to do his will to bring him glory to make a difference in the world for him trusting that he will supply the issue isn't about that the issue here is about how can you follow the God who gave himself for you if you never give the Bible gives you a very very rough estimate of how to handle that generosity and what it is and it's called a tithe it's 10% of your income which is a shock and when

Louise and I began to move towards tithing we didn't do it by just instantly doing because we were scaredy cats or I was probably more of a scaredy cat Louise is less of a scaredy cat than I am and but we moved to that point where we would give 10% of our income to the local church and to others for the furtherance of the gospel and that's just a very simple rule of thumb to understand what it means to follow the one whose gave is all for you and that means you are going to be formed to be one who gives and once again that's the answer to our longings and our yearnings nobody at their funeral if you could go over here what people said nobody would want at their funeral to say you know the problem with George is he was really cheap the problem with George is he was really miserly the problem with George is he was unbelievably ungenerous if I was to hear that I would be crushed what would we like people to say we'd like to hear people say you know the problem with George is he was too generous the problem is that you know

Sue is too giving the problem with Bob is they just he's so giving it's almost like a problem wouldn't that be the error we'd like to have to be known for let's stand and bow our heads in prayer and if you're here or you're watching online and if you'd like to know more about Jesus let us know we'd love to connect you with some people who could just walk with you as you maybe look at one of the gospels Mark or John and talk it through so you get to know him and maybe it is that you've never really considered Christ but now you feel maybe that you should become his child by adoption and grace there's no better time than now than just to stop listening to me and say Jesus please I need you to be my savior and Lord please take me and if you say that with your heart he will never turn you away he will take you as his own and for all of us let's pray father you know how anxious we are about money you know how anxious we are about appearances you know how anxious we are about our health and how anxious we can get about our future you know how anxious we can be about relationships you know you know you know how anxious we can be about having our needs met and father we know that you you know these things about us and still you love us and you have invited us to be your children by adoption and grace you have provided a wonderful savior for us who loves us loved us to the point of death and rose from the dead and has come into our lives and this is your world you are our father in heaven and we give you thanks and praise that you know us and that we can pour out our hearts to you about the things that make us worried and afraid and the things that we feel guilty about and that everything about you all you know all of these things and you and you knowing them all you still sent Jesus to die on the cross for us because you love us and so we thank and praise you help us father to make the gospel so real to our hearts that we can be more and more honest to you and pour out our hearts to you and that we can pour out our hearts to your people and with one another and feel through their arms and their prayers your love and concern for us and lord we ask that you help us to be people of integrity to put aside the appearances that so beguile us to help us to put aside trying to step on others in our pursuit of the popular the powerful the influential as we try to climb the greasy pole and father help us to be so enamored and in love with the gospel that we like him might become people who are people of giving and generosity and you know how hard it is we ask that you help us to trust you that you will only walk with us through the world of appearances and money and all those other things in hypocrisy that you will walk with us in a way that leads to our freedom and our wholeness and our integrity and our beauty and our loveliness because you died for the loveless that loved and lovely we might be please make the gospel more real to our heart we ask this in the name of Jesus your son and our savior and all

God's people said amen