

# Psalm 33: Music, Justice, and God

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Just bow your heads in prayer for a moment, please, while we remain standing. Father, we give you thanks and praise that your word has treasures for us to see and to hear.
- We give you thanks and praise that, Father, that as we read your word time and time and time again, that you continue to help us to notice new treasures in your word.
- We ask, Father, that you would do a wonderful and gentle but powerful work in our hearts this morning, that your Holy Spirit would bring the treasures of your word into our heart, that our hearts might treasure them, and that we might live upright, free lives to your honor and your glory and the furtherance of your kingdom.
- And we ask this in the precious name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So, I sometimes get to mentor people on how they speak and how they do sermons.
- And one of the things I tell people when I'm trying to help them learn how to give a sermon or a talk is I tell them that the sermon or talk always has to have a good introduction.
- [ 1 : 1 8 ] It should have some type of an introduction that gets people's attention and sort of makes them curious about what's going to happen next. So, I'm here to tell you that I don't have such an introduction today.
- I also tell the young people, the young men or women that I'm helping, that you can get away with saying you have no introduction once or twice a year, but if you do it every week, then people will think that's a bit lame and you should work harder.
- I tried. I just couldn't come up with a good introduction for the sermon this week. Maybe after the sermon's over, when you have coffee, you can say, George, this would have been a perfect illustration to get people into the sermon.
- So, there you go. It's Psalm 33. If you have Bibles, it would be great if you could look in the Bibles yourselves. And for those of you who don't have Bibles with you, the text will be up on the screen.
- And here's how the Psalm begins. I'm going to sort of look at it in a group of chunks. And here's how the Psalm begins. And by the way, the Psalm begins by not really seeming like it says very much, but there's actually something in this which really messes with your head and sort of just blows up.
- [ 2 : 3 6 ] Like, it's actually quite an astounding statement. But let's read it first, and I'll go back, and I don't know if you'll, maybe you'll notice it. Maybe you won't. We'll see. Here's how it goes. Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous.
- This praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre. Make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song.
- Play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts. In other words, with exuberance. And that's what it says.

Now, here's the thing which is actually quite astounding about this Psalm. Over the last couple of years, I've become aware of the fact that some of you know that I'm very interested in apologetics. And over the last couple of years, I've become aware of the fact that there's actually quite a powerful and persuasive argument for the existence and the truth of the Christian God from music.

That's not something I had thought of before a couple of years ago, but I've now read a couple of articles or parts of books which make, I think, a quite convincing claim that only in Christianity is there an explanation of music.

[ 3 : 45 ] Now, here's the question, here's the issue. There used to be a fellow who'd come to the 8 o'clock service, and the reason he came to the 8 o'clock service was because there was no music at the 8 o'clock service.

He really liked music. He just hated music in church. He thought all church music was just terrible and was only a distraction. And he came to realize one day that it's not a spiritual gift to be grumpy, so it would be just better if he only came to the 8 o'clock service and never had to hear any music.

But most of us have had different types of experiences with music. Experiences with music, something like this. We've heard a piece of music, we've been at a concert, and there's something about some pieces of music that are transcendent, that almost make you feel like you've left your body, that there's something about it just so, like you're touching something bigger than this physical reality, something bigger than this world, that there's some meaning here that you're entering into, there's something just sublime and beautiful and transcendent, and most of us have had some experiences like that with music.

Not every piece of music we hear, but with some pieces of music that we hear. It's just that there's something powerful, beautiful, transcendent, uplifting, almost as if we've left our body.

Now the question is, how do we explain this experience? Like, how does this experience make any sense? Now here's where the apologetic comes in. It's called an abductive argument.

[ 5 : 21 ] It's not something that it proves, it doesn't prove my point, but it's a pointer, it's a problem or a puzzle that only one viewpoint can sort of accurately explain it.

If you accept the basic story of Canada, which is that ultimately everything came into existence through some type of evolutionary process, and what that means, it's a naturalistic process.

There's no God, no designer, no creator. It's just, you know, when the Big Bang happened, just the very nature of the type of matter that got created and the way everything got propelled out of that, you know, massive bang, that sort of just inevitably one thing happens after another and after another and after another and after another, and eventually there's life and there's eventually you and me, but there's no purpose, there's no meaning, there's no direction.

It's just one thing that happens after another. It's all completely and utterly a coincidence and an accident that the things that we see in the world and exist are just the way they exist. Now, obviously, most people don't really think about that very much because if they thought about it very much, it's actually a very terrifying thought.

It's actually a very terrifying way to understand the world and understand yourself. But think about music. If, in fact, that account is correct, that it's just one thing that happened after another, there's no design, no intent, no purpose, it's just cause and effect.

[ 6 : 49 ] If that is the case, then our experience of music, well, music and all is just an accident. That's all it is.

If maybe at that big bang, things had been a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of something different, there wouldn't be any music, just like there wouldn't be any of us.

It's just purely and utterly a coincidence and an accident. And that means that if you think there's something significant about music, if when you're hearing certain pieces of music, there's something in there that transports you, that gives you a sense of something more, then what you're experiencing is a delusion.

By the way, you know, one of the best scenes that sort of partially captures that, one of my all-time favorite movies, like lots of other people, is The Shawshank Redemption.

And it's not a movie for everybody. There's some really sort of very brutal types of scenes sort of about a third of the way into the movie. But if you've seen that movie, there's that time in the movie when he takes over the place where the intercom is.

[ 8 : 01 ] And he plays opera music. And it completely and utterly transfixes all of the inmates. And you see that for a while they're not in prison.

They're transported. They experience something bigger than beyond themselves. But once again, our current philosophy basically says that those things are merely an accident. They have no meaning.

And if you think they have a meaning, that's just an illusion. You fooled yourself. Only the Christian faith ultimately helps you to understand that your experience of music...

Well, here, if you could put up the first point, Claire, that would be very helpful. Music is not a meaningless accident whose power is a delusion, a sin, or a trap.

It's beyond that. But as you know, for many parts of Islam, music is something to be... When the Taliban come, music stops. In a sense, in a Buddhist and Hindu worldview, in some ways, music is a bit of a trap.

[ 9 : 01 ] It connects you to this world. And from a naturalistic perspective, it's a delusion. And I would say that music is not a meaningless accident whose power is a delusion, a sin, or a trap.

In fact, if you could put up the next point, Claire, that would be very helpful. The triune God inextricably wove music into human beings.

Now, not inexplicably, inextricably. Very similar sounding words, but they're something quite different. Inextricably means you can't remove it. That when God created human beings, he created us in such a way that music, the ability to appreciate music and understand music and want music, is something just woven into us that can't be removed from us.

Where do I get that? Well, look at verse 1 again. Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright.

In other words, there's something about praise that fits. It fits with how God made human beings. It fits with how the universe is.

[ 10 : 17 ] And it's not just praise. It's praise involving music. Because it continues in verse 2. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre. Or with the six-string guitar.

Or however many strings there are in a piano. Make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song. Play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts. See, what the Bible is saying here is that God has woven music into human beings.

And he's woven music into human beings so that there is a way to use music which connects us to him. In other words, it's very, very clear. Unlike what our culture says, when a person, any person, it doesn't matter if you're a Muslim, a Buddhist, an atheist, it doesn't matter if you're a Hindu, it doesn't matter who you are, but when you experience music, and when you're experiencing music in such a way that it sort of lifts you out of yourself, it's a bit transcendent, there's just something you feel that's beautiful and significant about it, you're having a window into what the real world is.

God created you so that there would be times when you experience music and feel there's meaning and transcendence. And I actually think only the Christian view explains and makes that experience understandable.

Now, it's also very interesting that it's not just music that God has woven into our nature, but also, in some ways, goodness and love and beauty and justice are somehow or another woven into us as human beings and woven into the created order.

[ 12 : 05 ] It used to be, you know, you can't have people who want to claim, you don't meet them very often right now because we're in a, we're in sort of like a witch-hunting, absolutist culture right now.

Like we went from a relativist culture to a witch-hunting, absolutist culture, like in the blink of an eye. But when I used to have discussions with people who claimed they were moral relativists, they couldn't actually argue for moral relativism, nor could they argue for any type of thing at all in society without assuming the reality of moral truths and truths of justice and the demands of love.

Like it was actually impossible. One wag put it that it's like trying to argue with somebody that, who claims that air doesn't exist, but they can't actually even say a single word to you without breathing air.

But they're completely blind to it. And so the Bible actually shows something quite beautiful. It's for people outside of the Christian faith, it's, this gives a bit of an understanding about why as people grow within the Christian faith, there's a type of beauty and power to it.

Look at verses 4 to 9. It goes like this. For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.

[ 13 : 35 ] He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. You know, just before I pause, before I go any further, I mean, what this is saying here is that that God spoke the world into existence, and when he spoke the world into existence, not only did he design human beings so that music is something inextricable to them, and from music as well, art, but that also being right, like the goodness, and that type of justice or balance and fairness, and steadfast love was also woven into the created order.

Verse 6, If you could put up the third point, Claire, that would be very handy.

What this text is saying very clearly is the triune God spoke, and the universe came into being. There's no necessity. Everything is, to use fancy philosophical language, everything is contingent.

God just decided it would be good, and he spoke it into existence. Whether that ends up being a deep creation with a long history as seen in the Big Bang or some other type of mechanism, there's lots of different ways that Christians can easily connect this view with what science is discovering.

In fact, actually, one of the things which you should, those of you who aren't familiar, you should watch some videos by James Tours, who's an award-winning chemist and engineer at the University of Houston, and one of the things which isn't talked about very much in academic circles, is that the great breakthroughs that have been happening in the fields of biology and biochemistry in the last several decades have come about because people on one level are fundamentally rejecting evolution, and rather than trying to figure out how this happened by chance, they now look at it as something designed and are trying to figure out how it's designed.

[16:00] And it's not talked about formally that they've rejected evolution, but they're functionally acting as if evolution doesn't exist, as if things are designed, looking for the design, and then trying to figure out all the features of it.

So there's no problem with this statement with science, but you'll notice, if you could put up the next point, Claire, that would be handy. The created order reflects the goodness, justice, beauty, and love of the triune God.

See, that's why love is so important to us. That's why truth is so important to us. A couple of years ago, I was at an apologetics event, and I was on the stage because I had done a very small presentation.

That actually was the presentation on, it was a presentation when we did an apologetics conference on intelligent design. And one of the questions that came to me from the answer was, from the audience was, one of the questions that came from the audience was that, George, don't you think it's impossible to know the truth?

Don't you think just, you know, because of the way science works and because of bias and all of these, it's impossible to know the truth and speak the truth? And that was the question, and my answer was very simple.

[17:13] Do you want me to give you a true answer or not? And everybody laughed. Because, of course, this individual wanted me to give a true answer, and they've already answered their question. They wanted a true answer, not a false answer.

It was just a, it was a non-question, a question that we think we're being smart and clever with, but actually doesn't, it's not smart or clever.

But we all know that human beings need love. Then we crave it. And we know that at the end of the day, we want to know the truth.

I mean, that's really under attack in North America. Morris will tell you, if you come to the 8 o'clock service, I give a shorter sermon, but I also give some fairly politically incorrect comments at the 8 o'clock sermon because I know everybody's there and it's not on YouTube.

And so I don't have to worry about it haunting me down the years. But, you know, increasingly in our culture, language is being changed in such a way not to help us know the truth, but to stop us from knowing the truth.

[18:24] It's one of the reasons our culture is increasingly in trouble, is that language is being changed to obscure the truth rather than helping us to know the truth. And if we don't know the truth, we can't solve problems.

We need truth. We need justice. We need these things. And only the Christian, only the Christian scriptures explains why these are such deep needs and why we can't actually function without them.

Even people who are acting profoundly unjustly try to frame what they're doing within the language of justice. Putin's invasion of Ukraine, completely unprovoked, a completely and utterly terrible act, he, of course, will try to give you a justice reason for it.

And that's very telling. And it also shows you this next bit because, of course, you know, the thing that we might want to say, George, you know, that's all a very, very nice way of talking about the created world.

But the fact of the matter is, George, that, you know, the world has elements like that. Partly you're true, but, I mean, there's the war in Ukraine, there's terrible injustices all around the world.

[ 19 : 34 ] Some of the people here in this congregation have been delivered from profound evil and profound injustices, death squads, terrible abuse.

And so, George, just to talk about all of these things isn't very helpful. We might even say, George, that's the problem I have with religious people like you. And I would just say to them, well, that's fine, you can have problems with religious people, but you can't have problems with the Bible because those objections are anticipated in the very next movement of the psalm.

They are. Look and see at verse 10. It doesn't just say, oh, yes, everything is just, you know, bluebells and happiness and, I don't know, little unicorns and all that.

No, no, look at verse 10. The Lord brings the councils of the nations. Another way to understand the word nations is people groups. The Lord brings the council of the people groups to nothing.

He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The council of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart to all generations.

[ 20 : 40 ] Blessed is the nation. Blessed is the people group. Blessed is the person whose God is the Lord. The people whom he has chosen as his heritage.

So, what this text is saying here is that the reason that there is evil in the world, there are terrible injustices in the world, that in fact, there are people and people groups who desire things and plan things and organize things and seek things and pursue things, and the things that they seek and the things that they pursue are very contrary to how the purpose is that God is woven into human beings and he's woven into the created order.

He's made us to know truth and we tell lies. He's made us to desire truth and we desire lies. He's made us to be faithful to each other and we betray each other.

He's made sexuality to work in a particular way and we've rejected those ways that he's made sexuality to work. and he's made us to love beauty and we love ugliness.

He's made us to encourage and we tear down. He's made us for these types of things and we do these types of things and sometimes we know why we're doing them and sometimes we don't know why we're doing them but that's what's going on in the earth and that's what's going on in people's hearts and one of the things that the psalm is saying, yes, I know these things are going on but you also need to know that you can never erase my purposes.

[ 22 : 12 ] Try as you might. You can't erase them. My purposes are unfailing. They're intergenerational. They will last until all things come to the end that I determine is the end.

Not Apple. Not the Supreme Court. Not the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party or any party. It is my end which will be the end that ultimately comes.

If you could put up the next point that would be very helpful. You see, the human problem is not that you have desires and pursue purposes. That's not the problem.

I mean, here is where Christianity parts paths very profoundly with Buddhism at a very, very deep level. It says that there's so much noble and beautiful about Buddhism but at a very deep level.

They're trying to do something which will erase you as a human being and take you in a desire and a direction that God does not want for you. You see, the problem isn't that you have desires and you pursue purposes.

- [ 23 : 22 ] The problem is that you cannot have desires or purposes without them being tainted by a rejection of God and an exalting of yourself.

That's the problem. That's my problem. That's my problem. You know, when I'm preparing a sermon and that's something that God wants me to do and do I take a turn of phrase to try to make it look like I'm wise?

Do I even tell you that as a way of making it look that I'm wise that I know that I'm being foolish? And do I say that next thing? You know, you can have this endless loop and all you can say to that is shut up, Satan.

Just keep going. It can taint, there's a tainting of even God's good purposes towards my exaltation.

You know, they say that one of the things if God, when God eventually is, that's a terrible way to put it, some of us have been praying that God will give us a building of our own that we can use 365 days a year, 24-7.

- [ 24 : 32 ] And one of the things that people who help you raise money say is that when you make, let's say you get a building or you get some land but you have to remodel the building or completely change the building or you have to build something on the land, one of the things that people always wonder first, whether they acknowledge it or not, is where will I be able to sit?

Like, how does this fit me? And of course, nobody wants to say I'm opposed to the plan because there's not a place for me. Nobody's going to say that. We can come up with other reasons about cost or this or that, but that's just a very powerful human drive.

You see, the Bible has a profound insight into the human heart, a profound insight into the human heart that doesn't leave us in despair but gives us hope.

Look at this next long section which, well, just look, verses 13 to 19. The Lord looks down from heaven.

He sees all the children of man from where he sits enthroned. He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth. He who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.

- [ 25 : 56 ] The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Just sort of pause there. We'll just stop at verse 17. Now, you know, here's something which, just listen to this text. It's actually, if you ask my wife at coffee time, she'll tell you that in many ways I am still a mystery to her.

We're going to be married 42 years in October. She would say that in many ways, George, she'd say, he's a mystery to me. And maybe not with the same amount of forthrightness.

I mean, in some ways, Louise is a bit of a mystery to me. And you know, if I'm honest, I'm a bit of a mystery to me. You know, when sometimes you ask yourself or think, why did you do that?

I mean, there doesn't really seem to be a reason why sometimes you do what you do. Where the reason you realize is really like a stupid reason that you think, why on earth could I have been so stupid to do that?

- [ 27 : 16 ] But you know, if you could put up the next point, that would be very helpful. You are a mystery to yourself, but you are not a mystery to the triune God. He sees your heart and your deeds.

You are a mystery to yourself, but you are not a mystery to the triune God. He sees your heart and your deeds. Right? That's what was in verses 13 to 15.

The Lord looks down from heaven. He sees the children of man. Where he's enthroned, he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth. He sees Steve and Louise and me and Andrew and Lisa and Rachel and Diane and Morris.

He sees each one of us. And he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. He's the one who created us to have a center, a heart. And he sees our hearts and he observes our deeds.

It's why you and I are not mysteries to him. Which is why the Bible can be so profound. Because it's ultimately he spoke the Bible into existence.

[ 28 : 17 ] I mean, obviously there was a human process to it. And notice how he, this psalm written, who knows, maybe 2,500 years ago, maybe 3,000 years ago, it nails the anthem of the average Canadian heart.

There's a song that we sing to ourselves. And there's a song that television and media sings to us. And it's encapsulated in verses 18 to 17.

16 to 17. We don't recognize it at first. The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation. By its great might it cannot rescue.

But if you could put up the point, Claire, doesn't this sound familiar? The anthem of the Canadian heart? I need to be king. I need a more powerful entourage.

I need to be a powerful warrior. I need powerful techniques and tools. You know, the problem I have in my night, right, you know, if the things that are going on in my family or in my workplace are all right now, if I could only be like the king, if I could only have more power, and the fact the matter, not only do I need more power, but I need more people to get around me and to gather to be like my entourage to help with this project.

[ 29 : 40 ] I mean, you know, one of the problems with people nowadays when we talk about romance and part of the problem with saying that we have a soul friend, and there's real truth in that, but there's also a trap in it because what we're really looking at is somebody who's going to be part of our entourage who's just supporting, like, we say we want like somebody who's like a, like we have a soul connection, but really what we want is somebody who's just going to help me be me, and you can see it just in the whole way, you know, anyway, you know, but I need to have more people around me who are powerful, I need to, and I need to be a more powerful warrior, I need to be able to handle these things, I need to be able to handle the boss, I need to be able to handle my neighbors, I just need to be more powerful, I need to have, sort of be like the king, I need to have people around me who are going to help me be powerful, who are powerful, and I need to be more powerful, and dang it all, I need more powerful techniques and tools, like I need the newest iPhone,

I need the newest laptop, I need the newest sound system, I need these things, and what are we told all of the time, not only do you need these things, you deserve these things, you deserve that F-150 truck, you deserve that Audi, you deserve that technology, you deserve this holiday, and that's the message of our culture, it's the anthem of the Canadian heart, that's what God sees, he sees your heart, he sees the anthem that you sing to yourself, and that you like it when others sing this anthem, and we just sort of automatically assume that it's those, this anthem reflects how God understands and sees the world, when we have any time to think of God as maybe having some type of place in our life, but it's a complete and utter shock that God completely ignores these people, look at what it says, in fact, you could put up point eight, point eight is just a quoting of verses 18 to 19, it's my final point, but it's just quoting 18 and 19, behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine, what is famine?



Famine is when you don't have the entourage, you don't have the powerful warrior, you don't have the powerful tools, and you're not king, and it's a famine, and his eyes are on you, his eyes are on you, and me, when we call out to him that he would deliver us.

Just to start to wrap things up, you know, you look at that verse 19, that he may, 18 and 19, behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him and those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine, it's this picture of people who've come to realize that they, it's like the anthem of the Canadian heart is playing all of the time and all of the time and all of the time and all of the time, and in the midst of all of it, sort of in between it, you realize that you need mercy from God, and it has this, you know, beautiful promise of his delivery from death.

If you have Bibles and you turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1, verses 8 to 14, I think it's, I think it'll be up on the screen for those of you who don't have Bibles.

[ 33 : 21 ] Listen to this, these words of Paul written towards the end of his life. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

Here's the thing, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a teacher, which is why I suffer as I do, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

Back in the psalm, they hope that God will deliver them from death, and they're looking forward to that great deliverance of death that will come in Christ. So how should we live?

Turn back to Psalm 33. The first thing is, if we spend our week and our time singing the anthem of the Canadian heart, then we need to, we either need to come into that relationship with God where we call out to him to save us and deliver us, but once we've done that, we need to come and recommit.

[ 35 : 10 ] We need to hear God's word to remind us of what's true. We need to gather around the Lord's table to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, and in a sense, every Sunday is a time for us to gather and say, some of us will say, I've been at best an ordinary Christian this week, and some of us might come and say, I've been a terrible, crappy, horrible Christian this week, and I really need to come to recommit, not to be saved again and again and again, but to recommit, to affirm the creed, to hear God's word, to remember who Jesus is and what he did for me on the cross.

I need that. Listen to verses 20 and 21. Our soul waits for the Lord. He is our help and our shield. Our heart is glad in him because we trust in his holy name.

We need to recommit. And the second thing we need to do is pray. The psalm ends with a one-sentence prayer. The psalmist turns to God and says, let your steadfast love be upon us even as we hope in you.

I mean, we need to gather to recommit and we need to learn how to pray. He's made us to talk to him and we need to gather and say, Father, Lord, let your steadfast love be upon us, be upon me even as I hope in you.

Help me to hope in you. And then the final thing is actually if you put up the first three verses, we need to gather and sing.

[ 36 : 47 ] We need to sing God's praises. We need to come together and shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre.

Make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song. Play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts. We need that. God's made us to sing his praises.

Just in closing, as I finished working through the outline of my sermon last night, we had some people over, some of my grandkids.

I had some sound-cancelling headphones on and I'd finished working and I, while I was working on this sermon, I listened to Arvo Part. I don't know how many of you are familiar with him.

He's an Estonian Christian composer. He might have just died recently, if not, he's very old. And his music is just transcendently beautiful. And as I, as I, as I finished the preparation, I just, I mean, how could I not?

[ 37 : 45 ] I just was convicted that I just really needed to hear God's praises being sung. And so, one of my favorite, over the last couple of years, I love Austin Stone Worship's live version of Great is Thy Faithfulness.

And I, I just, I just had to put it on. And my grandkids probably thought I was weird because my eyes were all moist. Because I just loved hearing them sing Great is Thy Faithfulness, their live version at the Gospel Coalition Women's Conference in 2018.

And that's how I finished preparing for the sermon. And if I could have waved a magic wand, we'd all stand up and watch it right now on the screen and sing along. But we won't.

We're just going to stand and close with prayer and then we're going to go into intercession. And we're going to sing some more later and we're going to recommit around the Lord's table. Let's stand in closing in prayer.

You might not like the version, but if you're looking for a really, to my mind, powerful version of Great is Thy Faithfulness, check out Austin Stone Worship's live version of that song. Let's pray. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you know our hearts, you know our deeds and still you love us.

[ 39 : 02 ] We give you thanks and praise that you know our hearts and deeds and you sent your Son to die for us, that we might hope in you and in hope in you that we might have eternal life, an eternal life that begins on this side of the grave and will continue through the valley of the shadow of death into the new heaven and the new earth.

We thank and praise you, Father, that your word helps us to understand why love and justice and righteousness is so important to us. We thank you that your word helps us to understand why music can have such power and we ask, Lord, that you help us to sing lustily unto you, that you help us to recommit every week when we gather with your people and that we might learn to pray as you have prayed.

Father, we ask that your steadfast love would fall upon us and rest upon us and move deep within us as we hope more and more in you. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.

Amen.