

# From Manger to Mission

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen, and good morning once again. It's that time of year again to get ready for a new year.

And so we're passing from 2025 and we're moving into 2026, and it's a great time to kind of reflect on what is taking place in 2025 and to anticipate what is going to happen in 2026.

And so maybe some of your highlights from 2025 have been some movies you've seen maybe it's some music you've listened to, maybe it's a vacation that you went on, or maybe there are some lowlights to 2025 that you're just so glad you're moving on from.

Maybe you've got some bad news. And as we turn to 2026, we move from reflection to anticipation, maybe there's some things that you're looking forward to.

Maybe there's a movie coming out. Maybe there's a show that's going to drop. Maybe that you've got a book that you're wanting to read. I've been given a book that I can't help. I am really looking forward to cutting through it.

[ 1 : 05 ] 2026, what does it hold, right? Maybe there's things that are going to happen where something's going to be painful in 2026.

Maybe it's a move. Maybe it's someone who's ill right now. It's going to go from bad to worse. What I want to help you do this morning is just not reflect and anticipate 2026.

I want to help move your gaze Godward. But I also need some new artwork in my office. So here's the plan. Everybody, I hope you have a bulletin.

The bulletin is this. As you can see, I'm going to be using the whiteboard this morning. I'm going to draw a diagram. And there's two reasons why I'm drawing this diagram.

I need artwork in my office. And so it's just kind of bland. It's kind of blasé. And so what I'm going to have you do is kind of follow my lead, write this diagram, and then give it to me afterwards.

[ 2 : 10 ] I'm going to have you sign it and either leave it in your pew or hand it to me. If you want to keep it, take a picture of it with your phone. But if you're a child in the room, you're not going to King's Kids today, I need you to draw this picture with me and then give it to me.

Okay? So this is very much I am in need of artwork in my office. If you need a bulletin, would you raise your hand? Or you need a pen? Would you raise your hand? We've got some people from our Connect team to help out with that.

Anybody? Okay. All right. But the primary reason why we're doing this is to move your gaze towards your God and move from manger to mission.

And so this morning, the way I'm going to do that is going to highlight five distinct features of God's glory plan to make disciples of all the nations.

So five distinct features. I'm going to draw them so that you can follow with me. I hope they'll kind of sink in for you. So here's what I'm going to be arguing. The triune God is presently, actively at work in our world making disciples, gathering for him worshipers of his name.

[ 3 : 23 ] He's doing that right now. So here's the argument. Here's what I'm trying to convince you of. Let's join him. Let's join him in what he is doing. Let's do this together as a church.

Let's join our great triune God in his global work of gathering worshipers in his name. And so with all that said, let's move to the first feature of this.

And it is, this is a, number one, this is a triune plan. This big plan for the fullness of time is a triune plan.

So I'm going to ask, what's distinct feature number one? And you're going to say triune. What's distinct feature number one? It's a triune plan. So when we're talking about triune, we're talking about the triune God over all things.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three distinct persons, each are fully God, one God. So three eternally existent people of the Godhead, each are fully God.

[ 4 : 30 ] There is one God, there is one God, that is kind of the biblical idea of what the Trinity is. And in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 through 14, we have the Trinity.

In verse 3, you might not have seen it. Blessed be the God and Father, first person of the Trinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

That spiritual blessing, it's probably better translated, spirit blessing. Spirit given blessing. So here in verse 3, we have a Trinity sighting.

But it doesn't stop there. There's more. And so if you look at verses 4 through 6, even as He, God the Father, first person of the Trinity, chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, He predestined to us.

So here we have God the Father who is ordaining our salvation, choosing us and predestining us, electing us.

[ 5 : 45 ] It is His glorious work in our salvation. So God the Father ordains our salvation from before the foundation of the world. This is deep waters theologically.

It's a beauty to it. It's His sovereign grace at work. So in verses 4 through 6, we see the first person of the Trinity getting, kind of getting some air time.

And then in verses 7 through 12, the focus shifts from God the Father to God the Son. And in verses 7 through 12, we see the Son accomplishing what God has ordained, God the Father has ordained.

And so we have phrases like this. In verse 7, in Him, the beloved, verse 6, we have redemption through His blood. So it's the Son accomplishing what God the Father has ordained.

The word redemption, by the way, means to purchase someone from slavery at a price, at a ransom price. Do you remember what Jesus said in Mark 10, 45?

[ 6 : 53 ] I came not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many, to buy sinners back from slavery to sin, to set them free.

And so what we see in verses 7 through 12 is this time and again emphasis on what the Son has done. And so Jesus has accomplished our salvation by ransoming us.

And so another way to talk about it is those who are living in the domain of darkness have been transferred into the kingdom of the beloved Son through the redemption that's in His blood, through the forgiveness that comes through Him.

And so the Son has accomplished what God the Father has ordained. And then in verses 13 through 14, the focus shifts to the Holy Spirit. And so in verses 13 and 14, we see in Him you also, when you heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

Now there is a little bit of a risk when you hear the word sealed by the Holy Spirit, you start thinking like silicone caulk and kind of doing kind of window work or kind of sealing your kitchen sink onto your kind of cabinet top.

[ 8 : 16 ] That's not the kind of sealing we're talking about. What we're talking about is a signet ring sealing from God Himself. The Holy Spirit is sealing you, marking you as belonging to the triune God.

You're His. And so it's a guarantee that we are His possession, that we belong to Him. And that guarantees not only who we belong to, but it guarantees the inheritance to come.

And that's the work of the Holy Spirit. So what the Holy Spirit is doing, the Holy Spirit is applying the finished work of Christ, that Christ accomplished, to us in order to fulfill what God His Father has ordained.

So it is a whole kind of triune working of salvation. This plan, it's a triune plan. You see it? Is there a little amen? Okay.

Who likes jazz? All right. Imagine a jazz trio. Joodle-le-peep-ba-peep. A saxophonist like Ryan Cook's. Wee-da-peep-beep.

[ 9 : 22 ] Wee-da-peep-beep. And then you have a guy on the drums. T-t-t-pa-te-te-te-peep-erp.

And then you have a guy on the bass. B-ga-jig-a-de-ba-ga-jig-a-doo. And so these three musicians are working together, bringing about jazz music.

The thing about jazz music is it's spontaneous. The working of the triune God is a plan that was established before the foundation of the world. And they are working together in harmony in order to bring about the rescuing of sinners for the glory of God.

It is music to our souls. This is the good news. This is gospel good. So we start with this big plan of God, right?

This God's plan for the fullness of time. And the first thing you need to do, it's a triune plan. All right. Second. Second. I need you to turn now.

Oh, I should have told you this. I'm sorry to do this to you. You're going to want to make sure this is sideways. Yes. So I don't want you to, like, cross out the Trinity in a bad way.

[10:40] But think about this as the triune God up here. And now I'm going to have you put an arrow like this. You want to leave room on either side. Okay? So the second feature is that this is a big plan.

And do a big arrow like that. Sorry about messing up your diagram. Now when I draw a picture like that and say it's a big plan, you say how big is it?

It's a big plan. It's a God-sized big plan. It's not a Mike-sized big plan. It's a God-sized big plan.

This is a big plan. And it's big in two ways. Scope of it, it's all time. And the scale of it is all things.

So it's scope and scale big.

Bigger than you, bigger than me. And let me just show you where I find that in Ephesians chapter 1. It's in verse 10. Nine, making known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time.

[11:52] All of time. To unite all things in him. In Christ. Things in heaven and things on earth. So this is a big plan.

And it's a big plan in terms of scope and scale. The fullness of time. When you think of your time like I was born in 1991.

It's a joke. I was born in 71. And I have a start date. God and his plan doesn't have a start date.

It is, this plan is from eternity to eternity. It's a big plan. And it begins and ends with God.

And this plan, it encapsulates all of human history. And you can sum up human history in three words. Creation, fall, redemption, consummation.

[13:01] When God brings everything together in the end. Creation, fall, redemption, consummation. God's plan for the fullness of time captures it all. And so the whole Bible captures God's plan for the fullness of time from Genesis to Revelation.

And so God's plan to gather disciples for himself for the glory of his name, it's a big plan. All time.

Eternity past, eternity future, creation, fall, redemption, consummation. And the scale of it involves all things. In heaven and on earth, God has a plan for all time to unite all things.

That includes all eight plus billion people on the earth right now. And God will be glorified when a number of those eight billion people are worshiping him for eternity.

And then he will also be glorified when a portion of that eight billion people on the planet right now are under his torment, under his wrath for eternity. God will be glorified regardless.

[14:12] He'll be exalted. He'll be praised. He'll be honored. His justice will prevail. And this idea of uniting all things in his name, there's this sense of bringing it together.

There being this sense of reconciliation. There being this sense of full and final and forever shalom. Our relationship with God and with ourselves and each other and with all of creation.

This plan ultimately is aimed at bringing shalom as far as the curse is found. It's to unite all things in him.

Now, when you think about big plans for your life, you might be thinking marriage. Our marriages typically span decades. You might be thinking about raising children because raising children isn't just about 18 years.

We all, if you're beyond that, you know that. And then there's grandchildren, right? Maybe you're thinking about your career. Your career will span decades.

[15:23] Maybe you're thinking about your retirement. So when you hit that, you know, 68, 70, 70-something mark, you're able to say, you know what, we were saving for the last 50 years and we were just putting away things year after year after year and over those five decades, we just kind of built, built, built our nest egg and maybe you're on the other side of it in your retirement right now and you're kind of like, we're benefiting from that saving or you're like, I'm doing my best to catch up right now or maybe you're like, I'm not even thinking about my retirement right now.

But what we can do is we can frame our lives around our retirements but you got to understand that's just a drop in the bucket compared to God's eternal plan for the fullness of time.

It starts to beg the question, who are you living for? Are you living for your 70 to 80 years or are you living in light of eternity, God's plan for the fullness of time?

Are you living in light of not just the scope of all things but the scale of all things? Is that in your mindset? And so what we're talking about here is God's big plan and it's way bigger than any of us. We'll live 70, 80 years, maybe. This plan has been happening, unfolding before us and it'll unfold after us.

[16:55] Whose plan are you living for? Whose plan is central to your thinking and organizing your life around? So this is a big plan.

So, so far, this plan of God for the fullness of time to gather from self-worshippers for the glory of His name, we've learned it's triune, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and we learned it is a big plan, bigger than any one of us.

And that should cause us to step back a little bit and say, whoa, I'm not that big. This is God-sized big, not Mike-sized big, not fill in your name in the blank big.

It's bigger than you. Okay, the third distinctive feature right here. In fact, this third distinctive feature is so significant, I think there are three people in the room who have this particular symbol tattooed on their bodies.

Okay, so here it is. This is a Christocentric plan. In the middle of this plan is Jesus.

[18:17] So you see the J, do you see the cross? And this little arrow is not a roof, it points to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ, crucified and raised. This is a Christocentric, gospel-centered plan for the fullness of time. We also know that Jesus, we saw this in John 1, 1 through 3, is the creator of all things. And we also know that in Matthew 25, as well as in Revelation chapter 20, it's Jesus who's going to be the judge of all things.

And so this is a Christocentric plan. And what I love about this is how it gets carried out in this passage in Ephesians chapter 1. It's a triune plan, yes, but the focus is on Jesus.

Right now we are living between the first advent of Jesus and the second advent of Jesus. We're living in between here and here, if you will.

[19:28] in terms of a linear timeline. In verse 7, we read, in Him, Jesus, we have redemption through His, Jesus, Jesus' blood, according to the riches of His grace.

And if you keep going down, you'll see Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him, Him. In verses 3, 4, and 5, there's a lot of hymns.

Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. In love, He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glory of grace, which He has blessed us in the beloved, in Him, which He lavished upon us. Verse 8, in all wisdom and light, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He sent forth in Christ in a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, Jesus Christ, to unite all things in Him.

In Him, we have obtained an inheritance. That's 11. That's Jesus' hymn. So this is just full of references to Jesus. 7, 3, 4, and 5, there's a number of them.

[20:41] Verse 9, verse 10, verse 11, verse 12, verse 13, in Him, in Him, in Him, in Him. So this redemption, that this whole plan is about is accomplished through Jesus Christ, through His death and through His resurrection.

Jesus is the hero of God's story for the fullness of time. In Luke 24, after Jesus has been raised from the dead, He appears to two different groups of His disciples.

And on both occasions, it's really interesting what He tells them. He tells both of them, both sets, both situations, that His coming, that His death and His resurrection, they were in the fulfillment of these full and frequent Old Testament passages anticipating the Messiah to come.

That what He was saying is that the Old Testament was pointing to Him in very specific, unique, and frequent ways, and not just to Him, to His death and His resurrection.

And so what Jesus says in Luke 24 is a Christocentric understanding of the Old Testament. that the Old Testament, many very unique and frequent ways are pointing to Him.

[22:10] And so what this means is that our Bibles, all of it, is some way, somehow, pointing to Jesus Christ because He is the center of God's plan for the fullness of time, His plan of salvation.

He's the hero of God's story. When we read in 10, as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, it's the Christ, Jesus, who is the shalom maker on earth. He's the unifier of all things. He brings it all together. God's plan of salvation centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ to accomplish it.

That's why we call it Christocentric. Christ-centered. Jesus is the controlling center, of God's plan for the fullness of time.

That's why He becomes our controlling center when we become Christians, when we become followers of Him. This is good news. This is what happens.

[ 23 : 21 ] This is what's been happening, whether you've been conscious of it or not. God has this plan for the fullness of time, and Jesus is at the center of it. You know, in pretty much every organization, you think about a football team, football teams have quarterbacks, orchestras have a lead chair, a first chair, theater has, they have a lead actor or actress, a business has a CEO, and so all of these organizations, you have a leader.

And then we, we as a culture, we love our superheroes, don't we? We love Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. I'm personally a big Aquaman fan.

We love our superheroes. There's a reason why we have this thing in us for a perfect human being to save us.

And Jesus is better than any superhero. He is the hero of heroes because he's 100% man, 100% God, and he has never sinned.

He has no weaknesses. There's no kryptonite for Jesus. He is all glorious and all powerful. He is the hero, the center of God's plan for the fullness of time.

[ 24 : 45 ] This is a Christocentric plan. So it's a big plan. It's Christocentric. Okay, everybody, how are you doing on your diagram?

So far, so good? All right. Do I have some good artwork coming from my office? I hope so. Okay.

Okay, so we've moved this way. This Christocentric plan, what it does is it changes people.

And so the fourth distinctive feature is that this is a disciple-making plan.

It's a people-moving plan. It's a Matthew 16, 18 church-building plan in the words of Jesus. And so it's moving people from one domain into another domain.

It's a movement from eternity to eternity. And so let me try to illustrate that for you. I'm grounding this, by the way, in a word.

[ 25 : 53 ] It's the word we in verse three. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us, it's actually the word us, in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

You see, we who are blessed in Christ were once under God's curse. and that dramatically changed because of what Jesus has done.

So here's the disciple-making, people-moving plan. Before, we became aware of who Jesus is and what he's done for us. We are living in the DOD, not the Department of Defense, the domain of darkness, Colossians 1, 13.

Okay? And we were running. This is very powerful artistry right here. We were running not to God but away from him.

And the Bible describes this as living in darkness. We were, Ephesians 2, 1 through 3, we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

[ 27 : 02 ] We were following the prince of the power of the air. We were children of wrath just like everybody else. We were dead in our sins. We had no desire to live for God.

In fact, before you became a Christian, if you wanted God, it was usually because you were trying to use God for yourself. And so we were all living in the domain of darkness and we were dead in our sins.

We were, at this point, underneath the wrath of the triune God justly. And then something happened. And so, this disciple making is a, not bigger than God.

God is bigger than this. And what God does is he brings people from the domain of darkness. He calls them to himself through Christ, Holy Spirit drawing them, and he flips them.

He repose them. He transforms them. He gives them new life. And now, instead of living apart from God and running away from him, God in his grace calls us to him through Christ, Christ, and because of Christ's finished work, he radically changes us from within.

[ 28 : 30 ] He gives us new hearts that actually want to live for God now. And he makes us, he gives us new life. And it's by believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

That's the only way you go from living in darkness to being brought into the kingdom of the beloved son. It's simply by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ. That's all that it is.

It's a gift. You don't work for it. You can't. It's by faith. And the moment that happens, you're a new creation. You've been changed.

You've been flipped. Now, in another kind of presentation I do, I talk about this as the Copernican revolution of the soul. We were once believers like in the old days when people thought that instead of the earth orbiting the sun, people thought the sun orbited the earth.

It was a geocentric view of the solar system. But Copernicus helped us realize that we live in a heliocentric solar system, that the earth actually orbits the sun.

[ 29 : 44 ] And what happens here is when we're living this way, we think that all things orbit us, that we're the center of all things. But praise be to God, he gives us new eyes and a new heart.

And now, we have Jesus Christ as the controlling center of our lives. And so, this is what this means. This is the part of the illustration I'm trying to develop more for us.

And so, here's what happens. On this side of Jesus, someone is living with Jesus as the controlling center of their life.

So, they're in Jesus' orbit now. Jesus has always been at the center. It's just now that they are actually functionally trying to live that out. Now, when you have multiple people living with Jesus at the center of their lives, in the same time, in the same place, under the same leadership, you've got a church.

So, we are a people with Jesus as the controlling center because we've been flipped by Jesus.

We've been repoed by Jesus and placed together by the living God.

[ 30 : 50 ] I've been saying repo a lot. Do you know what a repo man is? A repo man is someone who's hired by a bank. Let's say that this has never happened in the room, I'm sure.

You fall behind on your payments for your car. A repo man, what he does is he actually steals back the car because it belongs to the bank. You know, you default on your payments and you get reclaimed by the bank and the bank sends out the repo man.

Jesus is the great repo man. You defaulted on God, giving him the glory that he deserved. And so God, in his love for you, wanted you to be in, right relationship with him.

So he sent Jesus to steal you back to himself out of his love for you. You got repoed. If you're a Christian in the room, you got repoed. Repoed by the risen and reigning Christ.

And so now we live for him and we don't do that individually. We do that as a church and we do that together, together following our repo man, Jesus.

[ 32 : 01 ] And so what we have here, this people moving plan is part of God's plan for the fullness of time. We are making disciples. That's why Jesus commands us to go make disciples in Matthew 28.

It's not just an original idea. It's him making a command because this has been God's plan all along to go make disciples of all nations, to gather worshipers for yourself.

So the question becomes, are you aware of the plan? Are you joining in what God is doing in moving people from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son?

Now this process here is also called sanctification of growing in Christlikeness and we're all helping each other do that. But this is part of discipleship.

This is all part of following Jesus. How are you presently participating in this aspect of God's plan?

Right now, how are you participating in moving people towards Jesus?

[ 33 : 14 ] It's a good question to ask, to reflect on, and then to anticipate for 2026. So we've covered four of the five.

Will you repeat after me? Distinct feature number one is a triune plan. Distinct feature number two, it's a big plan. Number three, it's a Christocentric plan.

Number four is a disciple-making plan. And number five, and this tends to be my favorite, it's a glory plan.

You know how we were singing Gloria just a little bit ago? It's a glory plan. This is really cool in this passage. Look at verse six.

To the praise of His glorious grace. To the praise of God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, for ordaining salvation, praise to His glorious grace.

[ 34 : 16 ] You see the word glorious? Now, look at verse 12. After talking about the work of Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, so that we who are the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

There's that word glory again, but this time, after referencing the work of the second person of the Trinity. And then, after referencing the work of the third person of the Trinity, in verse 14, to the praise of His glory.

Glory. Glory. Glory. Glory is a wonderful word in your Bible. The Greek word is doxa, D-O-X-A. And the Hebrew word is kabod. Just say it. Kabod. Doesn't it come up? He said, Kabod. Now, the word kabod actually has, as its root, it means heavy.

It means weighty. And so, to give God His kabod, His weight, is to give Him glory. It's to give Him worship. It's to recognize who He is and what He's doing.

[ 35 : 20 ] It's to see His kind of like accumulative kind of weight and majesty across all of who He is. John Piper, in his book, Providence, talks about God's glory as not a distinct feature of His character, but it is the accumulative kind of effect of all of His perfections when they are seen and valued.

It's when you start to understand that God is big and He is wonderful and you start understanding these different kind of perfections or characteristics of God and how He has been acting in human history and in your history.

when you start understanding who God is and what He's doing and He's greater than you, you want to give Him kabod. You want to give Him doxa.

You want to give Him glory. And when that glory gets visibly manifested, it's spectacular. It can be blinding. It's about glory.

This plan is a glory plan. It's about making worshipers. The Westminster Catechism says it this way, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

[ 36 : 48 ] Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give kabod, give glory because of Your steadfast love and faithfulness. We're seeing God's glory a lot.

There's a reason for that because He is majestic and He is wonderful. This plan for the fullness of time through Christ delivers image bearers who are in the domain of darkness and transfers them into the kingdom of the beloved Son and it results in God's glory.

So let me try to illustrate it this way for you. when you have people who are spiritually dead made spiritually alive, their eternities change, you're populating.

You're populating heaven with worshipers. believers. And so right now, we know this from Revelation chapter 7, all around God's throne, you have myriads of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who are giving praise and glory to our God.

They're worshiping Him. They're making much of Him. And so, you know, it all starts, and we don't wait to start singing to God until glory. We're worshiping Him now, right?

[ 38 : 18 ] We're delighting in things that are very different than when we were living in the domain of darkness because our hearts have been changed. That's what the gospel does. It radically changes our hearts.

It radically changes us. God gets the glory for what He's been doing in us. You know, whenever you have an organization, a team, a band, you have objectives.

You're trying to accomplish something. There's an aim. There is a goal. There's a telos, a reason for your being. And this is our reason for our being.

God's glory, His worship, His praise. I was telling someone yesterday on the phone that worship actually comes from an old English word that means worth-ship, giving God His weight, giving Him His due, helping people see Him.

Imagine this. Has anybody been on a night flight? Yeah, you're flying over the United States at night. It's a lot of fun because you're looking out the window and you are going through just big sections of darkness darkness and then you hit this concentrated, brilliant light.

[ 39 : 42 ] It's a city of some sort. And big cities shine real bright. Think of that as the worship lens with which God sees the world.

Not in terms of kind of night and day, but in terms of spiritually alive or spiritually dead, people who are giving God worship or not. When God looks down on this planet, He is seeing the brightness, the light of those He's made alive in worshiping Him among this darkness of dead.

People who are worshiping things other than Him. And so what God is doing is He's radically changing people's hearts through the gospel to make worshipers for His name. And what it sounds like is that, man, God is very self-centered.

And He is. And He has every right to be because He's God. We get to give Him the glory that's due His name. One of my favorite quotes, this is probably my favorite quote on why there's mission is by John Piper.

And he says, missions exists because the worship of God does not. It's a beautiful way to think about this. And so the idea here is we mobilize and we reach out to our neighbors and friends and families ultimately for the worship of God, for the glory of His name, for populating the heavenlies with worshipers.

[ 41 : 10 ] It's a wonder. It's a wonder. God's plan for the fullness of time is a glory plan. Okay.

Triune, big, Christocentric, disciple-making, glory. These are the five distinct features of God's plan for the fullness of time. It moves us from manger to mission. And so just a few questions for you and then we'll wrap it up.

Question number one. Looking back on 2025, what has God personally done in your life that you can thank Him for?

What has God done in your life in 2025 that you can thank Him for? I would say, take some time today. Go for a walk. And if you're having a hard time thinking about things, ask God to show you. God, how have you worked in my life this past year? And then when you are shown that, give Him thanks for that. So this exercise is one towards thankfulness to God.

[ 42 : 16 ] God, thank you so much for getting me through that hard time. Thank you so much, God, for showing me that sin in my life and helping me take a step to become more like Jesus.

Thank you, God, for my friends. Thank you, God, for the support. Thank you for my church. Thank you for saving this person. So there's so much that we can be thankful for. So take some time to ask the question, God, what have you done for me this past year?

So that's reflection. Question number two. This is a prayerful question. Looking forward into 2026, here's what you pray.

God, would you change me? No qualifications, no limits, no reservations, no conditions.

Would you change me? Would you conform me to the image of Jesus? Would you make me holy as he is holy? Would you do a work in me in 2026 that I can look back on?

[ 43 : 18 ] If you don't return, I can look back on and say, all glory be to your name. Thank you for doing this in my life. God, would you do this work in me? Looking forward to 2026, make it a glory prayer.

God, help me to bring glory to you through a changed life. And question number three is this. It's another prayerful question. Where are you working, God, that you would have me join you in?

Where are you working that I can join you, that I can step in and be a part of what you're doing? If you're married, the answer starts here.

God, what are you doing in my, the question is, what are you doing in my spouse's life and how can I join you in what you're doing in my spouse's life? Or your parent, God, in each of your children, God, what are you doing in this child's life and how can I join you in what you're doing in his or her life?

These are the questions. God, what are you doing in my midst, in my orbit, that I can be part of what you are doing? If you're a student in the room, you're middle school and you're in high school, here's a question to ask.

[ 44 : 32 ] Think about your friends. They're extremely important to you. God, what are you doing in my friend's life and how can I join you in what you're doing in them? It changes the way you think about your friendships.

How can I be a part of what you're doing in my friends? Our church, God, what are you doing in and through our church and how can I be a part of that? God, I want to join in what you are doing.

So, we end 2025 and we start 2026 with a Godward gaze. God has a plan for the fullness of time to make disciples of Jesus.

It's a glory plan. Now, here's what I'd like you to do. That little diagram you just did, would you sign it? Date it? And after we're wrapped up, either bring it to me or just put it in your pew.

We'll collect it and I'll hang them this week in my office because I need artwork. But we all also need to have our gaze renewed from manger to mission and it is a glorious mission.

[ 45 : 41 ] I mean, that's why Jesus went to the manger. God, I'm going to pray so that you hang on a cross so that he would gather worshipers for his name for eternity. Let's pray together. God in heaven, thank you so much for giving us eyes to see this plan.

We are delighted to be part of what you are doing. God, we confess this morning that you don't exist for us.

We exist for you and we want to bring you honor and glory in all that we do. God, we don't know what you have for us in 2026, but we would ask that you would continue to make your presence known to us, that you would grow us, that you would grow us individually, make us more like Jesus and you'd grow us numerically.

Not for numbers, but for worshipers, that you would get all praise and glory and honor. God, would you fill us with your spirit that we would make much of Jesus in all that we do for the glory of your name.

Amen. Amen.