

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 16:25-33

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, forth. You guys must have been all that time off this week for many of you.

Came in energized. It's good. Well, it's good to be here this morning, amen. To begin our week to seek the Lord, to be refreshed by the fellowship of the body of Christ.

I'm thankful to be here this morning. Want to commend if you have not picked up a copy of the biography we're reading on John Newton. I've heard from a number of you who have been encouraged and blessed and heard from Scott this past week.

He was listening to it on audio as he was driving across Idaho and so forth and just really enjoying it. And want to encourage you if you are just needing to find ways to abide the summer.

It's a great way to read a Christian biography and we'll be gathering at our house for a barbecue and book discussion on August 21st.

[1 : 07] So you have a bit of time to get that read. Go ahead and turn it open to John chapter 16. We're actually going to finish the chapter this morning looking at verses 25 to the end, 33.

Let me pray for our time and then we'll move into our study. Father, it says from the rising of the sun to its setting that your name is to be praised.

And we want to be those that praise your name today. So Lord, regardless of what yesterday held or this past week, we've come here this morning to hear from you, to praise your name, to be refreshed and reminded of the gospel.

Lord from your word and as we celebrate communion in a bit. Lord, just speak the gospel over us this morning. Remind us that indeed you are our righteousness, that you are our defense.

And because of it we can stand before Holy God as sons, as daughters, as friends. So Lord, would you speak to us through the power of your word, your spirit this morning?

[2 : 27] Might we hear from you? Might you refresh us? Might we be closer to you as a result of the gathering this morning?

And we will give you thanks for all that you accomplish in us today in Jesus' name. Amen.

J.R.R. Tolkien said this. He said, it simply isn't an adventure worth telling if there aren't any dragons.

And he of course has written the classic, The Lord of the Rings. And I want to focus on a scene from that book to get our thinking going this morning.

There is a scene where the fellowship of nine, they are there in the Elves country in Laplaurian and in the Queen Galadriel, gives gifts to the members of the fellowship.

[3 : 31] And to each, a few of the gifts that she gives to Frodo, this hobbit, she gives the light of Arendelle. It says, may it be a light to you in dark places when all other lights go out.

To Sam, his friend, she gives Elven rope and a seed of the Malorn tree. To Legolas, she gives a bow strung with elf hair.

And then to Aragorn, he's given this mystical scabbard where when it's used to hold a sword, it would never be damaged. I know some of you are thinking, well, I didn't, I don't recall that.

That's because you're a movie watcher, not a book reader, okay? Separate our people here this morning.

But these gifts that were given, all of them were purposeful and they were actually given to aid the fellowship on their journey and their ultimate quest to destroy the ring of power.

[4 : 32] We could say they were graces for the journey. And this morning, if you want to title this message, you can entitle it that, graces for the journey. Because within the final words that we have here of Jesus speaking with his men, before he intercedes for them in chapter 17, he's reminding them of gifts that he has bestowed upon them for the journey that is ahead.

To allow them to live this Godward life until the end. And the list that Jesus gives, if they're woven, they're sort of hidden, we're going to have to unpack them a bit.

And it's not an exhaustive list. I'm going to just highlight three that come out of the passage here. There are many gifts the Lord has entrusted to us in this life to help us walk closely with him, to make much of him in this life.

One of the gifts that I think, one of the best gifts is just the fellowship of the body, which he doesn't mention here. He will next week when he prays for us that we would be one, just as he, the Father, are one.

But let's begin and see if we can find some graces for the journey within this text. So beginning here in verses 25 to 28, Jesus says, I have said these things to you in figures of speech.

[5 : 53] The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day, you will ask in my name.

And I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

I came from the Father and have come into the world and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.

So this final night where the apostles are together with Jesus, they are struggling to understand some of his words.

Jesus says here he is using figures of speech. And as we recall last week from verse 16, he said, you know, I'm in a little while, you're not going to see me and then in a little while you're going to see me.

[6 : 52] And they're struggling with some of the choices, the metaphors, the figures of speech that he's using. There's nothing new here. Jesus often used metaphors, parables to speak to the crowd, to his men.

And he did this often to veil truth. Why would he do this? Why would Jesus veil truth? Well, he did it both as a judgment, but also as a grace to keep those whose hearts were hard from reaping greater judgment due to the greater knowledge that they rejected.

And some of you guys maybe are thinking this morning, well, wait a second, Jay, if you reject Christ and his words, like isn't the judgment separation from him forever?

Isn't hell? That seems bad for everyone and it is, but there's indication within Scripture that there are actually different levels or degrees of judgment suffering in hell based upon what we do with truth in this life, regardless of whether we've rejected Christ.

In fact, it's interesting in Matthew 11, Jesus says this in verse 21, he says, woe to you, Corazin, woe to you, Bethsaida. So he's saying to these Galilean cities, woe to you.

[8 : 18] I did a lot of work here. I did a lot of miracles. I did a lot of teaching and he goes on and says, for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, these Gentiles, these Phoenician cities, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes, but I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

Interesting. So Jesus would at times veil his words as actually a grace. You've already rejected me. I'm not going to continue to give you more information about me because I don't want your judgment to increase as you suffer in hell.

So folks often miss Jesus's words during his earthly ministry. We recall in John 3 where he's speaking to Nicodemus. Nicodemus like, I don't know what you're talking about to be born again. How can this thing be? And here Jesus is telling his men there's a day coming when he says, when plain speech will be the order of the day. And when that day arrives, you will ask in my name. So what day is Jesus talking about here? Well it's when folks will begin to ask things in Jesus' name according to his will.

[9 : 46] When is that day? Well, it's after he's ascended. That's what he's referring to here. It's actually today that Jesus has ascended to the Father.

And so this is the day when we ask things in Jesus' name. And then Jesus says something that may sound really odd at first because he says in verse 20, 6 he says, in that day you will ask in my name.

Now catch this. And I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. What? Huh? So we go to Jesus and maybe he will help us and maybe he won't?

Like what is he saying here? It sounds like a nasty sibling rivalry dynamic, right? Maybe I will share the last piece of cake with you. Maybe I won't. Maybe I'll share my textbook with you.

You forgot yours at school. Is Jesus some capricious gatekeeper and sometimes decides to bring our requests to the Father?

[10:53] No. Jesus is not a gatekeeper who hears prayers first and then the supply chain kicks in and he sometimes communicates with the Father. It's a very Catholic idea that Jesus is too busy so you have to go to Mary or you have to go to another earthly saint who has died.

Jesus is our advocate, but we don't have to ask him to bring our request to the Father. Why? Because he prays for us on his own church.

That's the point here. In fact, we hear it a couple different ways in 1 John 2.1. It says, for if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Romans 8.34. Christ Jesus is the one who died, more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

So it's as if every time we sin, Jesus goes to the Father and says, charge that to my account. I've got that one covered.

[12:01] It's already paid for. Cancelled, covered. Let that stir your heart this morning, church, that God is that wonderful.

How many times has Jesus done that for you this past week? He's faithful to do so until we see him face to face, his forbearance, his mercy are off the chart towards his people.

That's the goodness. That's the power of the gospel. Amen? But what we need to catch from the above is this.

Jesus doesn't move us one step away from the Father. He gives us direct access to him through his once for all atoning, wrath-averting sacrifice upon the cross.

And so I say the first gift that we have been given for the journey, better than a stack of dry lemmas bread, is this.

[13:08] We have direct communication to the top. Prayer. It's a grace for the journey, church.

We have been given the gift of prayer. We have direct access to the Father.

The Creator God is accessible to us anytime. Church do you realize that there was one day a year when one man, the high priest, could enter into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in the temple?

Once a year, one time, the day of atonement, Yom Kippur. You can read about this day in Leviticus 16.

But once a year in April, the high priest was to offer two goats as a sacrifice. One slaughtered for the sin of the nation.

[14:12] One released into the wilderness to carry away sin. The scape goat. And you had both these images of what Christ will do in His death.

That He will cover sins by His death. That He will carry sins away. We will be separated from our sins. And this is a wonderful picture.

One slaughtered for the sin of the nation. One who carries sin away into the wilderness. This is the prediction, the promise of the coming King of Jesus.

The Lamb. Or as John the baptizer said in John 1, who takes away the sin of the world. And so people on this one day would travel a distance just to visit the temple to be near God, to be near His presence.

What's the first event after Christ's death? What's the first thing that occurred? Well Scripture tells us in Matthew 15 it says this in verse 37.

[15:22] It says, In Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. And the curtain of the temple was torn into from top to bottom.

The veil was ripped in two. Between the holy place and the holy of holies. According to the first century historian Josephus, Herod had increased the height of the temple to 40 cubits.

A cubit, one cubit is like a foot and a half. So 40 cubits you have a curtain like 60 feet high. I don't know was this 30 foot ceiling maybe?

So it could have been double the size. So just imagine this massive veil, this massive curtain.

Church history records that this curtain may have been 4 inches thick.

It's just a massive barrier and it was removed. When Jesus died it was removed. And it's this image that we have direct access to God.

[16:32] How often? One day a year? No. All the time church. All the time. Prayer is this first gift of this journey that we're on in this life.

Prayer tethers us to God's ear. It's a wonderful gift. Martin Luther said this about prayer. To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.

What it's interesting is we think about not the film but the book that Tolkien wrote. When were the gifts useful? It wasn't when they were hanging out at the shire, peaceful conditions, lounging around, resting.

Sam didn't need the light of Arendelle for napping. He needed it to fight the spider, Shelob, in the dark cave. Similarly we don't necessarily see prayer as this treasured gift if our posture within the journey is anything but faith.

And I would say risky faith. Which is how we've been called to live. Romans 1.17. The righteous shall live by faith.

[18:00] Do we see prayer that way? Are we living in such a way where we experience our reliance upon where we're like, man, I'm going to use that gift because I need that gift.

Cole is going to be taking some of our young adults hiking around the Olympic Peninsula. It's the young pastors that do cool ministry like that.

And could you just imagine if he geared up all of our young adults, they all had their packs and gear and everything. He's like, you know what? You guys got all your stuff, change of plans.

We're hanging out in my apartment for a week. It's going to be great, guys. And like, but we got all this cool stuff. No, no. We're just going to bask. It's going to be great.

It's going to be lovely. What a waste. You got all this equipment and what a waste. Sometimes prayer is like that because we're not living in such a posture where we're stepping out in faith.

[19:06] We're not finding ways to share our faith. We're not taking faith steps. We're not having a sense of God speaking and then acting in faith and then needing God's supply and help and we waste this wonderful gift.

Corey Ten Boom asked this question. Is prayer, is it your steering wheel or is it your spare tire? No other activity in my life has fostered my prayer life on a consistent basis. Right like driving rideshare because I'm with people all the time and it's like I'm relying on the Lord help me to know how to share with this individual.

Help me to know what to say, what not to say. Lord help me be patient with the other drivers on the road. I may go to church with some of them.

Help me, Lord. But there's things in all of our lives and I just want to encourage us. It's like as the Lord moves step into those things, walk by faith.

[20:18] Nothing as a family increased our prayer life quite like this journey of adoption. We said yes to the Lord when He said, this is what I want you to do and there was just mounds and mounds of prayer.

Lord, we need You. We need Your help. We need Your activity. And it's a wonderful gift.

It's a wonderful gift. And I think we see it as such as we live out a life of risky faith.

Faith is risky. I just added that adjective so that you catch what faith is. Right? It's stepping out. D.L. Moody says this, every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.

It's a wonderful gift church. It's the first gift we've been given for this journey to have God's ear.

Well, let's continue. Look at verse 29 and 30.

[21:17] His disciples said, ah, now you're speaking plainly and not using figures of speech. They like that, obviously. Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you.

This is why we believe that you came from God. So Jesus now is actually moving into plain speaking mode with His men, predicting His death and resurrection.

We examined that last week. And just now He's mentioning His future departure, verse 28, and now I'm leaving the world and going to the Father.

And because Jesus is prophesying here, He's actually predicting the future. It says in verse 30, we know that you know all things. What do the apostles do? Because they're seeing, oh, Jesus, you know the future.

Now they're prophesying their faith that Jesus is from God. There's something unique about you, Jesus.

[22:23] You know the future. Who knows the future, church? Who knows the future? God knows the future. That's it.

Isaiah 46.10 says that God declares the end from the beginning. Only God knows the future. It's what makes God unique versus all that is, not God.

The prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 41, 23, speaking for God, speaking to an idol, a block of wood, writes this, tell us what is to come hereafter.

So it says, oh, God is speaking to this block, tell us what's to come. You can't even speak that we may know that you are God's.

Behold, you're nothing and your work is less than nothing. An abomination is He who chooses you.

[23 : 22] You worship the living God, you worship this idol. And here, Jesus is demonstrating that He knows the future, which means He is God.

You know all things. Second gift for the journey of risky-faced church. It's a gift of God's sovereignty.

We've been given the gift of prayer. We've also been given the gift of God's sovereignty. We see it demonstrated here by Jesus' omniscience.

This is a comforting, courage-inducing thought in chaotic days, church. Amen? God's never surprised.

We're heading into a political season. I get it. Everybody's like, right? God knows who's going to win every election.

[24 : 27] He's sovereign and He's got purposes that He's carrying out, regardless of who sits in the White House or any other governmental house of power in our nation.

So we can rest in that. I'm not saying that the elections aren't consequential, they are. Over 29-2 says, hey, if the wicked, if they rule man, the nation is going to groan.

People are affected by the choices that we make, of course. But God's sovereign, He's author. He's carrying out His purposes. He's not a chess master responding to moves, trying to correct things.

You know, when He was thrown over by the crew, it wasn't as though God had to improvise now.

Oh, no, my prophet's in the water.

I know what I'll do. Give me a fish. Swallow them up. Throw them up. Yeah, got it.

[25 : 37] That's not the biblical scene. That's not the record we've been given in God's Word.

Listen, in Jonah 2-3 it says, Jonah, speaking now, for you cast me into the deep, not you, the crew, you God.

You're the ultimate cause. You threw me in the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the floods surrounding me, and all your waves and your billows passed over me.

Those waves, that fish, it's yours. It's God's. He's the ultimate cause. The unseen cause oftentimes that put Jonah overboard.

It's all His. He's sovereign. It's all His. Job 41-11 says it this way, Who has first given to me that I should repay Him, God speaking? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.

Ah, comfort in that. God's sovereignty. It's a gift for this journey of faith, church. It's a comforting thought.

[26 : 45] It's a huge grace for the journey. God's never shaken. He's never surprised. He's never out of His depth.

He works all things as it says in Ephesians 1, according to the counsel of His will. Jesus Romans 8, 28 promises, For those who love God, for their good.

It's a wonderful gift. There's a warning though, for those that are not walking with the Lord, this doesn't seem like a glorious gift.

Because it's going to mess up my plans. It's going to somehow collide with my self-focused ambitions for comfort, for ease in this life.

But for those committed to the journey of faith, man, it's fuel. It's joy. Because we know who has our back and we know he has the chops to pull off.

[27 : 49] His purpose is in our lives. Church, I rest in God's sovereignty daily. Because I evangelize and oftentimes not very well.

I rest in His sovereignty. We have the testimony when Paul's in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:48. And when the Gentiles heard this, what did they hear?

They heard the gospel. They heard the good news. It says, They began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. And as many were appointed to eternal life, believed. Some are going to respond. God's sovereign in that. It's a gift for the journey. Man, we got prayer. God hears us. He responds.

He's in control. He has authority to pull things off. Man, I rest in God's sovereignty. I rest in His sovereignty as three members of Team Turner of Struggle with Chronic Illness over the years. [28 : 47] I don't have to know. I don't have to know why, but I can rest that God has purpose, that He's sovereign.

I love the scene that C.S. Lewis pens in the horse and his boy. And by the way, C.S. Lewis wrote the Narnia Chronicles towards the end of his life after you write all this robust theology. So there's so much great theology packed into these children's stories. But the horse and his boy, you have some wonderful reminders of God's sovereignty in that particular book in the series. But in the book, there's a character named Shasta. And this young boy is on horseback trying to get to the allies of Narnia to warn them in time of the king's treachery. And then he falls behind. And as he falls behind on horseback, he realizes that he's actually not alone. He's a lion running beside him in the difficult hours of the ride. [29 : 53] Aslan is revealing his sovereign hand on his life. And Aslan speaks to Shasta and says this, I was the lion who forced you to join with Erevs.

I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the horses the new strength of fear for the last mile so that you should reach King Loon in time.

And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay a child near death so that it came to shore or a man sat, sat, wakeful at midnight to receive you.

I was the lion. And that's the Lord in your life. If you have trusted in Christ in this life, God's sovereignty is there.

His providential hand is moving things in your life to carry out His purposes. It's wonderful because the alternative is this, suffering?

[30 : 58] It's just random. It's meaningless. Church, if we're going to suffer, let it be purposeful. Amen?

We don't always have to know the purpose. Maybe it's discipline so that we would share in His holiness.

Maybe it's like what Paul said in Philippians 1. He's in jail. I don't know. But I know the Gospel is advancing. There's purpose here and we rest in that.

Wonderful gift. Now here's a question I have. How do the gifts of God's sovereignty relate to the gift of prayer? I don't know. I mean, think about it.

Maybe you've had these thoughts in your darker hours of like, man, I don't want God to be sovereign because that means my prayers are meaningless. Right? I mean, if He's just going to do what He's going to do, I'll show Him.

[31 : 58] I won't pray. Right? Okay. If God were not sovereign, He wouldn't have full ability to answer your prayers.

There would be something that stood above God. Yes, this is a deep mystery how these things fit together, but these gifts do. And I would say this, as we abide, as we stay tethered to Christ, as we align our hearts to God, we're actually more apt to pray in Jesus' name according to His will.

And as we pray, right, according to His will, the Lord will always answer in the affirmative. And so if you want to like improve your prayers, it starts with spending time with the Lord each and every day.

Amen? We hear His heart. We know His heart and we start praying His heart. All right. That's the second gift. God's sovereignty. Verse 31, Jesus answered them, Do you now believe, behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come when you will be scattered each to his own home and will leave me alone?

Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation.

[33 : 19] But take heart. Take heart. Fourth, I have overcome the world.

There's a bit of a veiled encouragement here first for us in this section. Jesus says you're going to be scattered each to his own home and will leave me alone.

When fear hits folks, they either fight or they flight and Jesus predicts that they will flee from the scene of the cross.

And it's actually a fulfillment of prophecy in Zachariah 13.7. It says strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. So if a filled prophecy, I guess there's some encouragement there, right?

God's sovereign. He said it, it occurred. But even when they flee, Jesus remains steadfast. He remains encouraged. I'm not alone. The Father is with me.

[34 : 19] But here's the encouragement I want to highlight. And there's a couple actually. First, God knew what he was getting when he hung on the cross.

That should encourage some of you. And maybe in some of your weaker hours of faith, you're like, Lord, why would you choose me? I'll just grow up. Why would you choose?

He knew what he was getting. And you have the testimony of his like A team and the night when Jesus needed the most, they scattered.

But secondly, there's encouragement because we know how they live following this total failure. So maybe you feel stuck today, but it doesn't mean that this is how you have to continue to live out your faith today.

Today's a new day. God's a genius because he broke time up into these 24 hour sections. And I think some of that is for us to go, okay, it's a new day.

[35 : 21] From the rising to the setting, it's a new day. Today, I'm going to seek you, Lord, to be used of you and to live for your glory. And these men, they started poorly, but they ended their lives aligned proclaiming Jesus, Peter to his wife when she's being executed for remember the Lord, he says to her, don't reject the Lord, remember the Lord.

The apostles, they started fearful and they ended their lives as courageous soldiers. How? Well, they had some of these gifts that we've already mentioned.

They had the gift of prayer. They had the gift of knowledge of God's sovereignty over their lives. But here Jesus reminds them of his presence and his victory. He says in 33.

I have said these things to you that in me, you might have peace in the world. You're going to have tribulation, but take heart. I have overcome the world. Take heart. And I think the third gift that Jesus is referencing here for this journey of faith, we have hope.

We have the gift of hope. The gift of prayer, the gift of God's sovereignty. We have the gift of hope. Take heart, he says.

[36 : 35] Just a hope filled. Externate. Exertache. Take hope. Take heart.

It's a gift of hope. Church hope is powerful. Hope is fuel for a turbulent journey.

Think about Jacob willing to work seven long years as he looked to the hope of taking Rachel as his wife.

And it's so interesting, the commentary that we have in Scripture from Genesis 29.20, he says it seemed like just a few days.

He was fueled by that hope for seven years. Church, even though this life will be full of tribulation, we have peace in the knowledge that Jesus has already overcome the world.

[37 : 39] He's already conquered sin. Death, Satan. Satan can't take our salvation. The cat has been declawed.

First Corinthians 15, 55, the victory. Where's your victory death? It's gone. Where's your sting death? It's gone. So the command from Jesus is take heart.

Or we can say this way, be hopeful. Walk in courage. Walk in risky faith knowing that we are clean forever.

That we're on the winning team. And church biblical hope, it's looking forward to Christ's return.

That's the blessed hope that Titus talks about in Titus 2.13.

Very different than worldly hope. Worldly hope has this degree of uncertainty. I mean, I don't know. I hope this happens. I mean, I hope I get the job.

[38 : 37] I don't know if I'm going to. I hope I make the team. I don't know if I'm going to. Biblical hope is not like that. Biblical hope is the confident expectation of receiving what God has promised.

We have been given assurance of the king's victory.

We've been given assurance of his future return. We've got this wonderful book called Revelations. It's the assurance of what's going to occur. I think sometimes our Christology is just informed solely by the Gospels and not enough by who Christ is now today.

He's not the suffering servant today. He's not the sacrificial lamb today. He's already done that for us. The future is that he returns as a warrior.

[39 : 39] As the king. The king will return. The exalted Christ of Isaiah 6. Here's a picture from Revelation 19. It says this in verse 11, Then I saw the heaven open and behold a white horse.

One sitting on it is called faithful and true. In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems, many crowns.

He has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.

The armies of heaven are raid and fine linen. White and pure were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

He will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty on his robe and on his thigh. He has a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

[40 : 43] Jesus wins in the end church and we're on his side. We're on his team. No joy friends, that's hope.

That's hope. Tolkien said it this way, the birth, the death, the resurrection of Christ means that one day everything sad will come untrue.

That's a hope and there's a confidence in that. So church live. What does walk in this life in risky faith because he's actually supplied everything we need for the journey ahead.

Amen? Just pray. Father, I think about Paul's words in Romans 12-2 to rejoice in hope.

And you've given us that. We know how the story ends and we rest in that.

[41 : 48] He also says be patient in tribulation and we can because we rest in your sovereignty that you're working out your plans.

Nothing takes you by surprise. You're not shaken. You're not out of your depth. You're not reacting. You're carrying out things according to your sovereign plan.

And then finally Paul says be patient in prayer. Just a reminder of these three gifts that you have bestowed upon us Lord.

Lord would you refresh us today as we now remember what you have done. And it's the assurance that if we're in Christ today that we're forgiven.

That we're clean. Oh Lord, there's works that you want us to carry out for your namesake.

[42 : 49] Keep us close tethered to you that we would be useful in your hands and we will give you thanks.

We love you Jesus. We pray in your name we pray. All God's people say. Amen.