

Abiding in the Light

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[0 : 00] Well, I'd like to begin by thanking those of you who let us, Pastor David and I, spend the last several days, Wednesday, Thursday, Thursday, and Friday at the Together for the Gospel Conference.

Of godly men and hear gifted communicators expound on the scriptures. In many ways, it was a humbling experience, but also a blessed experience.

So thank you for letting us get away. Any of you who have spent time away from home, whether you're a mom or whether you're a dad, understand that when one of the two of you are gone, sometimes there's some misbalance in the house.

Things aren't quite the way that they should be. You know, there's a stabilizing force that comes when either mom or dad are both together. And so riding back in the car yesterday reminded one of the pastors that was riding with us was just sharing with me some of the challenges that were happening in his own home because he was away.

And then also being reminded of some of the challenges my own wife had with our children. And just sometimes the hardship of that.

[1 : 42] Dealing with kids when mom or dad are not around. You know that as a parent, there's a desire for there to be joy for your kids.

That's the end game, right? Your desire is to introduce to them the kinds of experiences that are going to lead them to wholesome and lasting joy.

You want to help in their behavior, but that's secondary to the ultimate goal of helping them be more like Christ. And so what that means is in your desire for joy for your family, sometimes there are those seeming moments of contradiction.

Where someone who was looking from the outside would say, Whoa! Are you really looking for joy in your home? Is that really the objective? Because that sure didn't seem very joy worthy, that moment in your family.

But you know that if you have a love for your kids, and if that love is true and deep, that sometimes it brings you to the point of saying, Stop! Don't put your hand on that stove!

[3 : 02] It's too hot. You're going to burn yourself. Or you're walking across the street, and there have been moments where we're making our way to a restaurant, and one of the kids is moving ahead, and you see the car coming.

He's like, Wait! Stop! And in that moment, there is the severity of the instruction and the sounding of the warning that goes out.

It's a sounding of warning because of a deep love for your child. And what seems to be severe, what seems to be harsh, what seems to be a bit strong in its force, is coming because of the ultimate desire for the preservation and the joy of that child.

Well, this past week, there were some moments in our home of trying to preserve joy. And it was interesting, yesterday, and it's hard not to be specific.

Oh well, poor little guy is going to get sold out again. You find that in moments of severity, it is in the moments of severity that often lead to the fullest joy.

[4 : 35] Yesterday, Timothy was watching a show, a cartoon. And it's a cartoon that kind of the life stories of Jesus, and the story was about Bethlehem.

And he asked me the question, What does Bethlehem mean, Daddy? And I says, Well, Bethlehem is the house of bread. And he said, Well, that's really interesting because Jesus says, I am the bread of life.

And he was born in Bethlehem. And I just sat back and, Wow, where did that come from? What a connection!

How did that happen? And it was because in the previous day, through a disciplined moment, the question posed for my wife was, What are some of the names of Jesus? What are some of the things you know about him? And one of those names that came up was, I am the bread of life. It is through the, sometimes the severe moments of correction and punishment, the hard words that seem to pierce, are the moments that lead to the fullest joy.

[5 : 53] Last week, our introduction in 1 John introduced us to a couple of purpose statements of this apostle for us.

So if you would, please open your Bibles to 1 John chapter 1. I want to just read through verses 1 through 4 as an introduction. And then we'll move into verses 5 to 10 as we begin our study. But I want to remind us of some things so that we know what John's heart is. Because from this point on, in our study of the gospel, of this letter of 1 John, it will be one hard thing after the other. It will leave us wondering, John, do you really care about us? I thought you were the apostle of love. I thought you cared about our joy.

And John will say, that's exactly why I'm doing this. That's exactly why I'm sharing these hard words with you. It's because I want your joy. So let me read for us verses 1 to 4.

[7 : 06] Here's what it says. That which we have seen and heard.

Proclaim to you. So that you too may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

There are two of the four purpose statements in this letter. Two of the purpose statements are found in those three verses. John wants us to understand front and center why he is writing this letter to this church of Ephesus.

Why he writes this letter to us. What is the point? What is the Holy Spirit trying to accomplish in your life and in my life through the instruction that He'll give through this letter?

The first purpose statement is there in verse 3. Notice what it says. That which we have seen and heard. We proclaim to you. Why? What does it say?

[8 : 38] That you may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. I write this to you because I want you to enjoy and experience true fellowship.

Without Jesus Christ, there can be no community. Without Jesus Christ, there can be no genuine fellowship. Without Jesus Christ, your hopes for a relationship that will last, that will go any deeper than the surface, you have no hope of that kind of relationship apart from Christ.

But with Christ, you can have true fellowship. True fellowship with God and true fellowship with God's people. That's what Christ came to do.

He came to restore what was broken in the fall. Jesus came to correct the sin, the damage that Adam and Eve did in Genesis chapter 3.

He came to correct all of those things for us so that the isolation and the rejection, the alienation that we rightly deserved and experienced, the hostility of God on sin, He came to correct that issue.

[10 : 06] He came to make things right with God. He came to reconcile us and to make us new with Him so that we could experience fellowship. Are you experiencing fellowship with God today?

Not just some casual relationship. Not just some, I talk to God once in a while kind of thing. But would you qualify your relationship with God as something that's intimate?

Something that's sweet? Something that is continual? Like, I just can't get enough of Him. That's the spirit you get from John.

Even though Jesus was now in heaven at this point of the writing, He was so caught up with the experience of Jesus, He just can't help but explain the enthusiasm that He has to the church of Ephesus.

It is the kind of experience that He had because He was able to touch and hear and see and behold Him. But in a way, He wants this church to understand what He had in practicality, what He had in the physicality, can also be experienced spiritually with Him today.

[11 : 31] Even though the church of Ephesus would never come to know Jesus personally in terms of a physical relationship, it was something that they could know.

Something that they could have for themselves. And He wants them to taste of that, to know that, and to have that. That's the purpose, one of the purposes of writing this letter.

I want you to know the sweetness and intimacy of knowing our Savior. The second purpose statement is there in verse 4. It says, And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

John wants you to experience joy. Not superficial joy. He wants you to experience enduring, lasting, hope-filled joy.

The kind of joy that will carry you through. The kind of joy that will overcome the various circumstances of life. Maybe not surprisingly, the time where Jesus talks about joy the most happens to be the night before He is crucified.

[12:39] Of the eight times that He mentions joy in the Gospel of John, seven of them occur in John 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

This time where He's spending the last final moments with His disciples before His crucifixion. How can anyone talk about joy in a time like that?

How can anyone promise future joy to a group of disciples who in a very short period of time are going to walk through some sorrow, some grieving, some departure of the one that they loved? And that this is the moment, the very moment where Jesus chooses to select out this special topic to talk about joy and to promise joy to them.

It's because joy comes from the Spirit. Joy comes from God Himself. And so joy overcomes any of the circumstances or situations in which you find yourself.

[13:52] And as John is reflecting on his experience with Christ, and as he's looking at this church, what he wants for them is to experience joy. Not just knowledge of God through some academic exercise, but he wants them to know true fellowship with God through this intimate experience with Him and with His people.

But it's through this fellowshiping experience, it's cultivating this joy that just overflows from their life. The satisfaction that they can't get any other way.

And with that in mind, that leads us now into a more difficult topic that we're going to begin to find in verses 5 to 10.

Throughout the course of this message, what I want to do is, I want to demonstrate, or maybe I should say, I want to ask for God throughout the course of this message to really do a work in our lives, to help make His Word abundantly clear.

So I'm just going to pause at this time. I'm going to pray for us. We're going to move from one point to the next and probably use prayer as a way, as a hinge, to get us from one point to the next.

[15:08] So let me pray for us, and we'll move to this next point. Amen. God, it is our desire this morning to lift up the glory of Christ, to be people who are pursuing passionately an experience with You, a fellowshiping experience with You that is cultivated with You and flows into our relationships with one another.

Lord, we want to enjoy fellowship that comes from God. This unity of experience because of having been placed into Christ, the work of Your Holy Spirit in making us one, one people.

And Lord, we also want to understand and know Your joy. We want it to be personal. We want it to be practical from day to day.

We want it to carry us, Lord, just like it carried Jesus Christ, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. And so whatever our experiences are this morning, Lord, I pray that Your joy would be tangible, would be real, would be personal, and that it would be such a radiant testimony in this world that it beckons others to want the same hope that we have.

So Lord, as we look into Your Word, as we understand where You want us to be, You want us to be in fellowship, and You want us to be people who are experiencing joy. So now, Lord, help us as we look at Your Word, know how that joy comes.

[16:57] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So verse 5 carries us to our first point this morning. It's what it says.

It says, This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

What does a life of fellowship with God look like? What does an abiding life produce? How do we enter into fellowship with God?

How do we experience the joy that He has for us? Well, we must first understand the supreme standard of fellowship. What is the supreme standard of fellowship?

That's our first point this morning. John says, This is the message we have heard and proclaimed to you that God is light. Those are the words you would have expected to see there?

[18 : 04] Maybe we fit better. God is love, right? Isn't that what we need to know?

That God is love? Certainly that's what Jesus came to demonstrate. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

And that is important. John will not miss that point later on. That's coming in 1 John 4, 8, 9, and 10. God is love.

But the first words, pen to ink, coming from Apostle John, is not God is love. The first thing I want you to understand is there is a standard here.

There is a supreme standard of purity. I want you to know this is not something you deserve. I want you to recognize the unapproachable nature of God.

[19 : 10] The unapproachable nature of God. That's where He begins. Are you gripped with the unapproachable, unapproachableness, of your God this morning?

Are you blown away by the fact that He is so immense and so pure and so holy that you couldn't even begin to have a relationship with Him if He had not bridged the gap?

Are you gripped by your own personal standing of where you are in this whole mix? Do you understand the significance of the fact that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all?

The Greek here actually wants to emphasize this. He says, there is no darkness, not even a hint. It is only purity, only radiance, only majesty, only holiness.

That's our God. John. I think why he is so amazed at the accessibility of God because he has come to appreciate the unapproachableness of God.

[20 : 42] John wants us to understand the impossible standard of his moral excellence. And there is not a subtle shift that takes place between verses 1 and 4 and now in verses 5 to 10.

It's clear in verses 1 to 4 that John is talking about Jesus. He's talking about that which we have heard and seen and looked upon.

That's Jesus. He's there in flesh and blood. We can see Him. We can experience Him personally. But now he wants to make a dramatic shift in verse 5 instead of just talking about Jesus.

Now he wants us to recognize the true character of God Himself. The desire is here to make a clear connection that he's going to continue to address throughout the rest of this letter.

That God is distinct from us. Don't imagine that fellowship with God can be achieved on your own. God is unapproachable.

[21 : 49] John is so caught up with this He actually begins His gospel in much the same way calling attention to the life and the light of Christ. He says in John 1.4 In Him was life and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. He is untouchable in this quality of light. light. And as we make our way through this letter we'll see the distinguishing marks of the light that God will produce in the lives of His people if there's genuineness to them.

If there's authenticity in their lives. Why the connection between life and light? I think it's because as John is thinking about what does a true life look like.

Jesus lived the life that He intended for all of us. He was the true life that was set in front of us as the model for how to live and how to really experience the kind of joy and power that comes from those who are walking with God and surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

That is life. the only life really lived since Adam and Eve. Every other life is a life that is given to death and given to darkness. Jesus' was the only life that was pure in every way.

[23 : 27] That is the life He wants us to experience. Life and light of Christ. Not only is Jesus the creator of life but He is the embodiment of life and He is the giver of true spiritual life.

You want to experience life? You got to go to the source. You got to go to God as the source of life and light. So there is an unapproachable nature of God but there is also the unblemished life of Christ.

The unblemished life of Christ. That's our next point. we just spent several years walking through the gospel of John and seeing the life of Christ up close.

Several years ago there was the movie The Passion. Any of you have watched that movie there are so many things to be said about that movie just the grotesqueness of the crucifixion.

But what my own heart was gripped over was the purity of Christ through that entire experience. No other period in Jesus' life was the details of those final events chronicled in such a way.

[24 : 55] We have more about the last 24 hours of Jesus' life than any of his previous ministry. history. And as I look at the chronicle of his life I wonder for myself how long would I have lasted even in that 24 hour cycle before something would have snapped in me.

Think about all that Jesus experienced in that last 24 hours. There he is in the upper room bending down to wash the feet of those disciples who continued to compete with one another about who is more important.

I think I wouldn't even last into that. And then there's Judas who thinks he's full in Jesus Christ about what he has in mind.

And Jesus dismisses Judas and says go do what you're going to do Judas. Go ahead. Get busy. And there's the protesting Peter. No Jesus you're not going to wash my feet.

Oh really Peter who do you think I am? Who are you talking to Peter? Or they're on the way to the garden of Gethsemane and those conversations that are taking place and the disciples don't have a clue what's coming.

[26 : 21] Jesus had told them many times what to anticipate. They finally get to the garden and there they are and Jesus is just having a heart to heart conversation with them and says can you just pray for a few moments here.

He goes away to pour his heart out before the father. He comes back and they're all asleep. This happens on three different occasions and not once does Jesus demonstrate any carnality of his heart.

just continues to faithfully and lovingly encourage them to the task. And there comes this band of those who would think they're going to manhandle Jesus.

And with a word they all fall on their backs. But Judas still has the audacity to come and kiss Jesus on the face right there in front of them all.

And there's Peter again flying off the handle cutting off ears and in a tender moment Jesus' willingness to reach down scoop up Malchus' ear and have a little healing ceremony right there on the way to his trial.

[27 : 41] Standing in front of all the people that should know better Caiaphas and high priests there they are accusing Jesus of blasphemy when here they're looking at their God in the face slapping and hitting and plucking his beard and then Pilate has the audacity to think that he's actually the one in charge Jesus I could call down a legion of angels who do you think you are Pilate and then the decision between Barabbas and Christ to let that wicked man go and there you are on the cross mocked by the two thieves that are side by side enduring the same penalty as you and still in tenderness forgiving and looking forward to having one of those thieves with you in paradise moment by moment

I'm gripped by the purity of Christ at any of those moments my own flesh would have reeled up raised up but Jesus demonstrating faithfully and consistently a loving compassion for people and then in the final moments to say Father forgive them for they know not what they do to look forward to God working in hearts and lives of the very people who put you on the cross this is the beautiful unblemished life of our Savior who bridged the gap for us who demonstrated that although God was unapproachable that through Christ in fulfilling all the demands of the law we could have access through faith in him the beauty of our Savior who through love and compassion and submission and control and tenderness and faith and patience and a heart full of forgiveness demonstrated the purity that was running through his life meeting every demand of

God for him and for us this is our God coming next to the disqualifying effects of sin we find here in verse 6 let me read that for us so moving now from the supreme standard of fellowship to the disqualifying effects of sin how do we experience joy how do we experience fellowship with God that's where we're moving here we need to see who he is and now we need to get a hard look at ourselves recognize the significance of sin's effect in our lives let me pray oh God as we continue to work through this passage we continue to pray for your Holy Spirit to give us sensitivity help us not ever to get to the point where we think that we're beyond this we thank you for your

Holy Spirit that he is a spirit who convicts and even now Lord we pray that our hearts would be tender and open and sensitive to your work may we not grieve the spirit may we not quench the spirit help us to listen to the spirit in these moments we pray in Jesus name amen we find in verse 6 and 8 and 10 three different characters three different responses to sin now these aren't the only responses to sin but these are the ones that John brings to our attention this morning the first is found in verse 6 here's what it says if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness

we lie and do not practice the truth indifference now

John asked us a question this morning as we were worshipping the question went something along this along these lines I don't think I'll have the exact words but the question was something that said how many of us think we've arrived right and we all would nod our heads a hearty yes none of us think we've arrived maybe a complimentary question which would get to the heart of what John is dealing with here is how many of us care you may know where you are but do you give a rip and do you give a rip enough to do something about it there's a lot on the line John is trying to help us understand what a true fellowshiping community looks like and what a false fellowshiping community looks like which community do you belong in those who are indifferent are not in the community that's the message here and then you begin to say okay we've got how much how many months do we have of this

[33 : 32] I'm not sure how much of this I can take but remember this is for your joy John wants you to experience joy today you cannot experience joy until you have fellowship with him you cannot fellowship with him if you are indifferent about your sin if we say we fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth he uses some words here that he continues to work with throughout the rest of his letter now we've kind of titled this series the abiding life fellowship we've talked about walking he uses that word here in verse 6 this walking in darkness this is the heart of one who is inclined to sin is walking down the path is quite happy with the condition of how things are is moving in a direction that is not in the direction of

God it would be different from the kind of life that we find in Galatians chapter 5 where it says walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of flesh it's not that life it is the kind of life that is walking and is quite happy with its journey a journey that is away from God that is satisfied and settled in its sin!

how many of us are there this morning? How many of us are okay with a critical spirit?

How many of us are okay with firing off our mouths at our family when we feel angry about various things?

how many of us are okay with not continuing to cultivate that love relationship with Christ? How many of us are okay with keeping our lips shut about the gospel?

[35 : 58] How many of us have things at work we know are wrong but it's a whole lot easier just to kind of go with the flow and not buck the system? how many of us have those private sins in our lives that we've just learned to be okay with?

We can't be indifferent about sin if we want to fellowship with God. Maybe the first step this morning is to come clean. Come clean with somebody that you love.

Come clean with someone who know will hold you accountable. confess your sins one to another so that you might be healed. You want to experience the healing of God in your life?

Maybe this is the day to put away the indifference and start living in obedience. That's the first group.

The second group is in verse 8. I call it the group who is deceived. The group that's deceived, here's what it says. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[37 : 20] Okay, so this is the group of individuals and in John's day, there was this heresy known as Gnosticism where they kind of separated the material and the spiritual parts of your life.

they thought my physical life, it can do whatever it wants to do, I can indulge in the flesh just as long as my spiritual life has arrived. That was one extreme.

The other extreme was to say, okay, I'm going to live such a regimented life that I'm going to avoid every indulgence, every fleshly delight, and I'm not going to participate in certain things, so it became very legalistic in nature.

Either way, there were some in that group who had said, I finally arrived. I've sinned in the past, God has forgiven me for those things, but now things are good.

I'm where I need to be spiritually. John is trying to help them understand, the Christian life is a broken life.

[38 : 28] the Christian life is a humble life. The one who is really pursuing God, and the closer you get to the sun, the darker the spots in your life become.

You understand the blemishes in your own heart and life. The spotlight has been shining, and now there's nothing but exposure in your life. And as you submit yourself to the exposing light of God, you recognize those things that you were comfortable with before, you're not so comfortable with

now.

That's how the Apostle Paul could say, I'm the chief of sinners. It's because the closer he got to God, the more he understood the significance of sin in his own life.

And that's what John's trying to combat here, is the sense of deception that you have arrived spiritually.

And again, we might not ever say that vocally, but we do that functionally when we decide that there's no more progress to be had.

[39 : 47] John wants us to understand, if you want to experience joy in the presence of God, you need to continue to be broken as people. And then finally in verse 10, we've encountered the indifferent and the deceived, and now we encounter in verse 10 the defiant.

The defiant. It says, if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. These would be the people who would say, I have never sinned. I've not sinned in the past, I've not sinned currently. And we would say, how could anyone ever come to that kind of conclusion? In every sense of the word, this is a hopeless group. But to turn the spotlight on ourselves, we might never be so foolish as to say this, but functionally, this is how we act when we choose not to forgive. forgive. This is how we act when we choose to hang on to bitterness. You look at somebody else's sin, and you see all of the grotesqueness about that, and you think of yourself that you are more worthy, and they are less worthy because of the things taking place in their life.

[41 : 14] And Jesus deals with this. He says, don't even think that if you ask for my forgiveness, but you are unforgiving, that there's any forgiveness offered to you.

Don't think that there's never any point in your life where there is not sin taking place. Recognize your bankruptcy.

Don't make God into a liar. Look at the audacity of that. And now he begins to turn the spotlight on the hope that we find. That's the darkness, the difficulty of our own personal situation.

But now we can look at the abiding life with God. What does it look like? What does this abiding life with God look like? Let me pray for us.

God, as we look at this, give us hope. Help us to see that there is hope in Jesus. There is forgiveness in Jesus. There is cleansing in Jesus.

[42 : 16] Thank you for Jesus. We pray. Amen. First we find the abiding life with God is a life of fellowship. We see that in verse 7.

Verse 7. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. In the blood of Jesus Christ, his son cleanses us from all sin.

Now, that is a surprising conclusion. That's not how I would expect this verse to go. It says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

Now, I would expect we have fellowship with him, right? That's what you would expect to go in this verse. But John wants us to understand that something is going on here.

That fellowship with God necessitates and overflows into fellowship with God's people. You cannot believe yourself an abiding life person if you're okay with not fellowshiping with God's people.

[43 : 36] sanctification. You see, the church is the context for sanctification. This is the way that we grow up into Christ.

It only happens as we're together. It only happens as we're ministering to and encouraging and stirring one another up to love and good deeds and doing all of the one anothering that God has called us to.

It only happens in the context of community. You see, this is the place where God has designed all of those things to happen, the sanctifying work of God to help us be more like Him in terms of shining His light in this world.

It only happens in the church. So if you're not fellowshiping with the church, you can't grow spiritually. This is the place where you learn.

how difficult love can be at times. And you learn the significance of pursuing peace and making things right and being held accountable and serving the body.

[44 : 51] I've always found it quite interesting in the scripture that we're commanded to do all of the things that the Holy Spirit has gifted us to do. So for example, we're commanded to be hospitable and yet there's a spiritual gift of hospitality.

We're commanded to be people of mercy and yet we find in the scripture that there is a gift, spiritual gift of mercy. We're commanded to share the gospel with other people and yet we find in the

scripture that there's actually a spiritual gift of evangelism.

You ever wonder why that happens? It's because we can't be like Christ without learning how it works from the Holy Spirit's help as he's gifted others to do what we cannot.

That make sense? And so as we spend time with one another and we see, oh, that's what effective evangelism looks like. Let me partner with that individual and learn this process or that's what hospitality looks like.

Let me learn from this individual how to be hospitable or be a person of mercy. We can only be like Christ in fellowshiping community.

[46 : 11] God has designed it that way. It is a life of fellowship. It is a life of sanctification. We also find it's a life of cleansing. A life of cleansing.

We see that at the end of verse 7. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of his son cleanses us from all sin.

What a wonderful promise. Cleansing that comes from Christ. Being placed into him, into his death, being placed into his resurrection, because of his sacrifice on the cross.

He experienced the wrath of God on the cross for us. And now because of that, the wonderful exchange, we exchange our sinfulness for his righteousness and cleansing comes through forgiveness, through faith in him.

Now there is freedom to live, truly live the way God has called us to live. And finally, a life of cleansing. We see that in verse 9.

[47 : 31] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God's grace. Do you want to experience fellowship with God? Do you want to know the joy that he has for you today?

Do you want to have that experience of fellowship with God's people? This is the starting point. It's the starting point for us.

confession. As we saw in Isaiah, in repentance and rest is salvation. That's what we're talking about here. Confession and repentance. And so now, I'm going to ask for all of you just to bow your head. And in these moments, as the musicians come, in these moments, I'm going to ask you to do what we're called to do right here in this verse. confess our sin.

[48 : 38] Only then can he forgive. What is it this morning you need a forgiveness for?

What is it this morning that will begin this process of helping to get you on the track of fellowship with him? Let's spend a few minutes. I'll close this in prayer.

And I'll turn it over to the worship team. to lead us in a song. Lord, this morning as we have looked at the unapproachable light of Christ, we recognize the alienation that we deserve.

Enemies of you, hostile towards you. And God, we thank you that through Jesus there is access, there is fellowship. Fellowship with you, fellowship with your people, forgiveness and cleansing. God, I pray that you would help us not to be one of those.

[50 : 12] Create within us a tenderness. Create within us a sense of brokenness. May there be an active obedience in us to seek accountability, to confess sin, to restore broken relationships, to commit ourselves to ministry here, to ministry of this church, but especially ministry to individuals.

May there be in us a love for you that flows into a love for your people. We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

This morning, if there's anyone who doesn't know Jesus, I just want to invite you as we sing this song to come and we want to introduce you to this fellowshiping life of joy with God.

We want you to have it. Maybe there's some brokenness here today. Maybe some of you are struggling with various things. You just need someone to carry your burden.

we would love to come alongside you, pray with you, and encourage you however we can. Maybe this morning, some of you say, you know, I'd like to just take a step here in obedience.

[51 : 30] I want to acknowledge I need help spiritually. And I want this to be the day where it's clear, this watershed moment, I am determined from this point to make Christ the Lord of my life.

Maybe some of you want to follow through in obedience of baptism or become a member of our church. We would just like to encourage you to do that as well. But let's stand as we sing. and I'll continue to with a little to see you in