

# The Empty Tomb & Rising Purpose

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we've been moving through a familiar part of the scripture, kind of making our way to the end, really.

We've been at this for the last three years, working through the Gospel of John, and now we're coming closer to the finish line. Pastor Knoyer will be finishing things up for us next week, so I want to encourage you to come and to hear kind of the concluding thoughts of the Gospel of John and to be encouraged as we end this chapter of our study in the life of Christ.

But as we've been working through and thinking about the resurrection narrative and the resurrection appearances, we've gotten to see that there are significant implications to our lives. The empty tomb does have practical implications to us personally. It changes things for us. It really helps to set a new trajectory for life, give us a rising faith and rising hope and rising peace. And this morning, I want to look at the fact that the empty tomb gives us a rising purpose. There is purposefulness. There is purposefulness. There is direction.

[ 1 : 25 ] There is a plan that God has for your life. And it is through the empty tomb that we can experience and take part in God's purpose for the world.

You ever felt directionless? You ever been in a situation where you've wondered where to go or essentially what path to take, what big decision to make?

Well, maybe on a smaller scale, I'm remembering in my own life the one thing that kind of sets me off, the one thing that really irritates me the most is being without a sense of direction.

And I'm remembering, I hate being lost. It's like, it's one of those things that drives me crazy. And my carnality comes out when I'm lost.

I don't think I'm like a typical male that just has fun kind of finding his own way. And I have to know where I am. I have to ask for directions.

[ 2 : 35 ] And I want to know how to get there because that end destination is where I want to be. Maybe one of the experiences that kind of added to the anxiety in my own heart when it comes to being lost, what happened back in Los Angeles, and I was trying to help a friend of mine who was visiting from another country get to the airport.

Now, that would have been no problem if he was taking off from LAX because I lived close to LAX. I'd been there several times. And so getting there and back was no problem at all.

But he wanted to go to an airport that was north of the city. I lived south of the city. So I had to actually go through the city in order to get there. And I had never been there before. So I had no idea how long it was going to take, no idea how to get there.

And this was the age before Google Maps. Okay? That kind of dates me a little bit. It was the age before smartphones. And so our Google Maps was called the Thomas Guide.

And a Thomas Guide is a collection of maps, really one gigantic map that's separated into 400 pages. So if you can envision a map that is then pieced out into 8.5 by 11 sheets, and then you kind of have to flip through and find the right page.

[ 4 : 00 ] It does have an index at the back. But navigating your way through that book took a little bit of experience. And so if you can imagine going from top to bottom on the map, from left to right on the map, the pages, if you're going west, you turn to the right.

If you're going, excuse me, going east, you turn to the right. Going west, you turn to the left. If you're going south, you have to turn to a page closer to the end of the book. And it is impossible if you're driving.

So you must have a navigator. And I happen to have a premier scientist in the car, but the fact that he only knew Russian was a little bit of a difficulty.

So here we are with a time crunch and knowing that he's got to be at the airport in like 20 minutes. And the traffic is nuts in the center of Los Angeles, and we are lost. Like, I don't know which freeway to take next, and I don't know how to get there. So, wow. That was not a happy moment for me.

[ 5 : 17 ] And unfortunately, poor Raphael didn't get to see the best side of Christ in the car that day. But anxiety continues.

In terms of being lost. I cannot stand being lost. There's a sense of needing to know direction. Wanting to know the destination.

Wanting to have a plan. Wanting to know where I am in the course of things and how to get to the final destination. And I think that the same applies to life.

That in life, we want to have a sense of purpose and direction in life. We want to know where we're going. We want to have a plan for the future.

We want to know what's coming. We want to be able to anticipate those next steps. We like purposefulness. And yet, if we were to really take an inventory of our past, of the times of growing up, we would have to admit that there are definitely seasons of life that although we like direction and purpose, there are seasons of life we would like to have a redo.

[ 6 : 27 ] That there are seasons of life we would like to do again because we realize that we didn't have the kind of purpose and direction we really wanted.

We were maybe piddling away some hours or even some months or even years that go by. And there's a sense of regret because as you look at those years, you say, I could have done so much more.

There could have been so much more that could have been accomplished if I'd have just kept in mind the purpose that God had for my life.

I want to redo. I want to restart on those things. Well, this passage that we're going to look at this morning will help us see how Jesus is trying to hit the restart button for the disciples.

He wants to give them a renewed sense of focus and direction for the future. They had kind of reverted back to some of the old ways of life.

[ 7 : 28 ] And Jesus wanted to help them recognize that the calling that he had given to them was a calling that was going to change everything for their future. And it came as a result of the resurrection.

It came as a result of his work on the cross and rising from the dead, giving them new purpose and new identity. So if you will, please turn with me to John chapter 20.

We're going to finish what we started last week. And we're going to hopefully make it through to what I have in mind for this week in John chapter 21.

The two go well together. They really do fit together. It's probably of the Lord that we're dealing with these in one take because I want you to see the connection between peace and purpose.

The purpose that God gives to us, the purpose that Jesus commissions us with, is anchored in the peace that he offers.

[ 8 : 34 ] There is no purpose in life without the peace of Christ reigning and ruling in your heart. We looked at peace last week.

It was a peace that had direct application to your life and helping to overcome fear and helping you with doubt. And we're going to see that again this morning just as kind of a refresher.

But it's not a peace that we're to hoard. If we're going to be people who are following the example of Christ, we're going to be people who are offering peace to the world.

After all, Jesus says, My peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. If we're going to follow Christ's example of being peace people, we need to have his peace so we can convey his peace to the world.

Peace that Jesus came to offer. Peace that he wants us to experience personally. And so that's my point, the first point this morning.

[ 9 : 38 ] The point is that the purpose that we have springs from peace. The purpose that we have in this life springs from peace. We see that in John 20, verses 19 to 29.

Let me read a portion of these verses for us just to refresh our memories. Beginning in verse 19. It says, Jesus said to them again, Verse 24.

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them. When Jesus came, so the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Unless I see his hands, the mark of

the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, and said, Peace be with you.

The first thing I want you to notice in this passage this morning is, is where does peace come from? I want you to see that peace comes from Christ.

[ 11 : 38 ] Peace comes from Christ. Notice that Jesus is the one to initiate peace three times in this passage. We see it there in verse 19, Peace be with you.

In verse 21, Peace be with you. And in verse 26, Peace be with you. Jesus repeats this phrase, not only as a greeting to them, but to help initiate, and convey the peace of God to them.

It's a peace that comes from him, and through him. He had promised a couple of evenings before that he would give them peace eventually.

Peace I leave with you, he says. My peace I give to you. And on the night that Jesus, before he was crucified, if the disciples knew anything that was going to happen in the next few hours, they would have thought, there is no way that peace is possible in a moment like this.

And yet the greatest peace that we could ever experience come or came through the greatest difficulty that had ever been experienced.

[ 12 : 50 ] Jesus was going to convey peace to them because of the work on the cross and his resurrection. As Paul so well says in Romans chapter 5, 1, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are experiencing peace today because of a relationship with Jesus Christ, because of forgiveness from sin, and because of cleansing of your sin, it is because of Christ's work in your life. His work on the cross and his work of resurrection that gives you the opportunity to enjoy and experience the peace that only comes from him. They experience this peace momentarily.

Their hearts are glad. But Jesus wanted them to experience peace in an enduring way. Peace that would transcend the moment and would move into the future.

He wanted them to understand that the identity that he gave to them was an identity that was connected to peace. Identity that came because of a new relationship with God the Father.

[ 14 : 15 ] Relationship with Christ as now their brother. not just a slave and not just a servant and not just a friend but more. A brother.

And it was an identity that commissioned them to something more as well. That's why they're connected here in mission as you see in verse 21 here.

Peace I leave with you as the Father has sent me even so I am sending you. Now that we're connected in identity we're also connected in purpose.

It comes through the conduit of peace. Now Jesus came to bring peace in the world. We see that through the testimony of his entire life. It is evident even from the time he was born.

Remember the angels showed up and what is their announcement to the shepherds? What do they say to the shepherds? They say glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill towards men.

[ 15 : 23 ] It was also evident when Jesus sent his disciples out on their mission experience. He tells them in Luke chapter 10 whenever you go into a city I want you to mark out certain individuals and we saw this in our neighboring study earlier in this year that the thing that they were supposed to look for and the thing that they were supposed to say is peace be with you.

Remember that? And it says that if a son of peace is there then your peace will rest on it. If it's not then it will return to you.

It was also evident in the triumphal entry as the throngs of individuals lined the way and celebrated the triumphal entry of Christ.

the crowds cried out blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Christ came to offer peace.

Peace with God. And you cannot experience true enduring peace apart from him. If you want peace this morning you need to know Jesus.

[ 16 : 37 ] peace. He is the God of peace. And those who are who are identified with Christ those who are connected to Christ because of salvation now have a commission to be messengers!

of peace to the world. We see this in at least a couple of different places in Romans chapter 10 remember the apostle Paul says how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of

peace.

and then in Ephesians he says have your feet fitted with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Those who are in Christ must be people who are dominated infused with the peace of Christ so that they can fulfill the purpose in conveying that peace to the world.

Peace comes from Christ. Christ but here in our story our narrative in this passage we see that peace comes in two specific ways.

It comes and helps override the various hurdles in the lives of these disciples. First it comes and overrides the hurdle of fear peace for those who fear.

[ 17 : 57 ] We looked at that a little last week. We find the disciples that they're hiding together in the upper room. There's a pretty good reason from a human perspective for them to be cowering in fear.

After all the word on the street is that it was the disciples who had actually stolen the body of Christ. It was the disciples who apparently robbed the tomb and it's their fault that the body of Christ wasn't there after all.

That's what the scribes and the Pharisees paid the Roman guards to say. So if you're a disciple at this point you know what happened to the leader Christ and you know what the potential implications are for you.

Now that you are a threat to the religious leaders and now that you have been a rebel against the Roman authorities who were guarding that tomb now you've put yourself in a place that was a little threatening.

And so here they are they're tucked away in this upper room with doors locked cowering in fear. Huddling together wondering what will happen.

[ 19 : 09 ] Here they are on the evening of the resurrection. Now there were already several reports of Jesus' appearance among them.

There had just been a couple of disciples that had shown up. They came back from Emmaus seven and a half miles away. they tracked down these disciples in the upper room.

They obviously knocked on the door were given permission to enter and they had just recounted their story. They had just told these disciples and those that had gathered together in this room that they had met Jesus that day.

They had walked with him on the road. They had eaten a meal with him and then he vanished. And as soon as they finished their report Jesus shows up through locked doors.

And there he is in the midst of them. There he is showing to them his hands and his side. There he is reassuring them and offering them peace.

[ 20 : 15 ] Jesus intends to ease their fears. He comes to give them peace. peace. But as we find one of the eleven Thomas wasn't in the room.

Thomas wasn't there for whatever reason and even though he had heard first hand reports of all of these eyewitnesses that Jesus had shown up he makes a strong demand.

He will not believe. I will never believe he says. And that's where Jesus shows up again. We find that peace not only comes for those who fear but peace comes for those who doubt in verses 24 to 29.

This dramatic statement by Thomas I will never believe is preceded by two negative particles.

There are two expressions in the Greek language that essentially give the connotation this is never going to happen.

There aren't any exceptions except for what I've just given. My mind is made up. I will not believe unless these conditions are met. Unless Jesus meets my demands.

[ 21 : 34 ] So what are his demands? We find them there in verse 25. I need to see his hands the marks of the nails.

I need to place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side where I will never believe. I don't just need to see the physical evidence.

I need to know he's not just a figment of my imagination. I need to ram my finger right into those holes in his hands. I need to jab my fist into the hole of his side.

This is brutal language. This is dramatic language. This is strong language that Thomas is using.

These are my conditions and these are my demands. I won't have it any other way. And here Jesus shows up again eight days later.

[ 22 : 38 ] And instead of rebuking Thomas as all of us would probably feel inclined to do, Jesus is willing to accommodate his demands. Jesus is willing to do whatever it takes to move Thomas from faithlessness into faith.

To overcome his doubt. So Jesus comes into the room and he offers his hands to Thomas. Go ahead Thomas. Go ahead do what you need to do.

Go ahead put your fingers right into those wounds. Here's my side Thomas. Go ahead put your hand into my side. Whatever it takes Thomas I'm willing to overcome your doubt.

The mercy of Christ in his willingness to accommodate to condescend to Thomas's stubborn demands. God But because of Thomas's doubt we have even more evidence of the fact that Jesus was flesh and blood.

He was physically present. But Thomas without having to follow through on any of his demands when he sees Christ show up he makes this significant statement here.

[ 24 : 02 ] He says in verse 28 he answers my Lord and my God. Perhaps there is no clearer or more direct statement in all of the gospel records to Jesus's identity in terms of divinity.

You are God not just the Son of God but you are God in the flesh. I affirm that I commend that to the rest of my fellow disciples I know that to be true for myself you are my Lord and my God and Jesus does not deny it.

Jesus does not correct it because it was true and we find in Thomas' heart that doubt has given way to faith that stubbornness has given way to surrender that skepticism has given way to sight in his life.

Thomas has come to a place of peace a place of faith and confidence in who Jesus is. And now they're ready to move to the next step. Now that they've experienced the peace of God now they can move to purpose.

Where will purpose come? What will that purpose be? And that's where we find ourselves in this next account in chapter 21. Let me read just that first verse for you and set the stage for where we are now in this narrative.

[ 25 : 40 ] No longer in Jerusalem but now in Galilee on the Sea of Galilee. It says in chapter 21 verse 1 after this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

Sea of Tiberias is just another name for the Sea of Galilee. But here they are now miles away from Jerusalem and several days journey that has now taken them up to this new location.

The place of their origins. The place where many of them or most of them had grown up. Maybe with the exception of Judas Iscariot.

But all the other disciples would be not only familiar with this area but have actually grown up in this place. And Jesus here wants to emphasize that their purpose will come out of understanding the emptiness of their former life.

Purpose that exposes the emptiness of their former lives. That's our point number two. Why Galilee? Jesus had something to show them.

[ 26 : 53 ] Jesus had something to illustrate. He had something for them to know. That there was something new, something different about their lives. And so he calls them back to a place they were familiar with.

He calls them back to Galilee so they can recognize why they exist, what their purpose is. And it's a purpose that exposes the emptiness of their former life.

Joey, if you can help me with that, that's point number two. Thank you. God to God to Galilee. Now this was not a whimsical trip. This was not just some sort of impulse in the disciples and they decided, hey, things are not so good here in Jerusalem, how about we go to Galilee?

No, this was in direct obedience to what Jesus had already told them to do on several occasions. in Matthew chapter 26. Why don't you keep your finger there in John chapter 21.

Turn with me to Matthew 26 and you'll see this for yourself. Matthew 26 verse 32. Actually, let's back up to verse 31.

[ 28 : 09 ] It says, When the Son of Man comes in glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Excuse me, that's 25. I need to get to 26.

Again, we'll start at verse 31. Then Jesus said to them, you will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

But after I'm raised, I will go before you to Galilee. If you turn over a page to chapter 28, Matthew chapter 28, notice in verse 16.

Now, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. This was intentional. This was a direct response to obedience to Christ's command.

Go to Galilee. Galilee. And then if you remember, the women who had heard the announcement from the angels were told to go back and tell the disciples that they were going to find Jesus in Galilee.

[ 29 : 22 ] Go there. Go to where Jesus is. He's in Galilee. That's actually in Matthew 28, verse 7. Go quickly. Tell his disciples that he's risen And indeed he is going before you into Galilee.

There you will see him. Behold, I have told you. And so, here they are in Galilee on the sea of Galilee and lo and behold Jesus shows up.

This is where we find Jesus and this is where we find the disciples. But why Galilee? Because they were eventually going to find their way back to Jerusalem, remember?

This is where Jesus was going to ascend to heaven. This is where Jesus was going to tell them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. Why the trip up to Galilee?

It doesn't seem to make sense. Why the extra traveling? What is the point of all of this? I think one of the points of this is this was the place of origins.

[ 30 : 25 ] This was the place where they had come from. There was strong evidence! That every one of the several day trip for them to get to Galilee.

And so this appearance of Christ to them would have been at least a week later. Having seen them on the first day, the resurrection day, then seeing them eight days later with Thomas, and now probably another week later now that they're in Galilee.

As we find in verse 14 of John chapter 21. If you're not in John again, we find this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised.

Jesus shows up to them now a third time. He has kind of popped in and out of their lives. It's not been something that's been regular or consistent. Jesus has just shown up out of the blue.

And here he is again showing up at the shore of the Sea of Galilee. This is a third witness to Jesus' resurrection.

[ 32 : 06 ] And so what do we find them doing? Well, they're not only in Galilee, but notice what comes next in verses 2 and 3. We find that Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathaniel of Cana of Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.

Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. And they said to him, we'll go with you. And they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Now, they have been told very emphatically by Jesus that just as the Father has sent me, so I'm sending you. That should have been very ingrained in their mind.

And having seen the ministry of Jesus, they knew what to expect. They knew what that ministry, that calling looked like. They knew what that sending would comprise.

Jesus had sent them on at least two different occasions to be missionaries. He told them what to say. He told them where to go. He told them what to take.

[ 33 : 15 ] He told them how to respond to the various people that they would be confronted with. And yet here they are for whatever reason deciding to change course and go back fishing.

Now there may be some practical reasons why they decided to fish. Now certainly they had a need for food. They needed to support themselves while they were waiting for Christ to give them the next set of instructions.

But the passage seems to indicate there's something more going on here than just recreational fishing taking place. But that Peter was actually saying we're going to go back and we're going to go back to our old way of life.

A couple of indicators for that. First when Jesus prophesies to them that the sheep will be scattered and you're going to go back to your own. That word your own includes possessions includes affairs and also includes your former occupation.

Jesus had actually predicted that something like this might occur. And here we find in this verse in verse three Simon Peter says I'm going fishing and they said to him we're going to go then they went out and got into the boat.

[ 34 : 36 ] Now in the English language the boat the definite article is not probably a big deal but in the Greek language the term the boat the fact that it is a definite article means it was probably Peter's boat.

It was a specific boat. Probably belonging to Peter. Going back to their old vocation. Going back to their old way of life.

And finally in the account that we'll look at next week that Pastor Knoyer will talk about we see in Jesus' address to them notice in verse 15 he says Peter Simon do you love me more than these pointing to the boats and the fish and the nets is your affection for me more than your old way of life Peter and if it is then I've got something for you to do there seems to be evidence that Peter and his buddies decided this waiting game was too difficult they were going to go back to their old way of life and that's what we find them doing going back to what they know best they know fishing they're going to do fishing but we find that as they go back to fishing Jesus uses the futility and the wastefulness of their energy all the fruitlessness of their labors that night come to nothing as they come up empty handed there are no fish to show for all the work they've just put in all their efforts ended in futility they come back empty handed exhausted in terms of energy but that was the point that was the point

I wonder this morning if the feelings that we have the feelings that you have today of wasted energy and fruitlessness in your life are the very thing that God is trying to use as a grace gift to you to help draw your attention to success and endeavors and the fulfillment of following the purposes of God because that's what Jesus did for his disciples he wanted to expose the futility the emptiness of their previous lives so he could point them to something greater he wanted to point them now to the fullness of a life with Christ the fullness of a life that only comes through Christ now don't misunderstand fishing!

was not a sin and those who are involved in vocational work those who are involved in as a layman working in various places just because God has placed you there does not mean that you are in sin don't hear me in the wrong way but if God has called us to a specific purpose to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness if we're not doing that in tandem with the places that he's called us to be then we're not following the purposes that he has for our lives Christ wants to point out that true fullness comes from a life with Christ and so what does he do for them we find that here in verses 5 or 4 through 11 just as the day was breaking it says in verse 4 Jesus stood on the shore yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus Jesus says to them children do you have any fish they answered him no he said cast the net on the right side of the boat you will find some so they cast and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of when

[ 38 : 46 ] Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for the work and he threw himself into the sea the other disciple came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from the land but about a hundred yards off when they got on the land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on Jesus said to them bring some of the fish that you have just caught so Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish 153 of them and although there were so many the net was not torn Jesus said to them come and have breakfast now none of the disciples dared ask him who are you they knew it was the Lord Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and so with all the fish this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead we see here that Jesus replaces the emptiness with fullness fullness that comes through him and he fills things up in at least two different ways first we find that he fills the nets and second we find that he fills their tummies he fills them up he affirms them he strengthens them for the task he meets their physical needs he demonstrates that all of the labors that they had and were empty and fruitless on their own can be full and fruitful with when they're accompanied by the strength of

God and they're coupled with the purposes of God for them they had a rough night of fishing but who was this stranger on the shore who could he be and this person expecting a negative answer says hey you haven't caught any fish have you there's a dagger in the heart for any accomplished fisherman Jesus knew the answer was no and so did they so they respond no there's no fish and Jesus says well throw the net on the other side and for whatever reason the disciples whether in desperation or maybe to prove their point there's no fish in this lake or just to give it one more shot decide to follow this stranger's orders and when they do they haul in this gigantic haul of fish so why Galilee we find that

Galilee is also the place of their calling it was a similar experience almost virtually exact to this when Jesus had experienced the same kind of thing with these disciples with Peter and Andrew and James and John they had been fishing all night remember and Jesus now goes out to them and tells them to cast on the other side and they do and they haul the fish together this is now at the

beginning of Jesus ministry the moment before he says follow me there's a flash of recollection in the mind of John this is a familiar event this has happened before Peter that's the Lord on the shore!

So Peter dives in with this flash of recollection remembering back three years before on a similar experience and now they realize this is Jesus here he is he's shown up again he's brought them to the place of their origins but he's also brought them back to the place of their calling because it was at this point three years before when Jesus says follow me and they left all that full net and their boats and their family and they followed him and at that point Jesus says to them he says no longer will you catch fish you will be fishers of men you will be fishers of men he confirms their mission you have been fishers of fish before now you will be fishers of men and we will find in this next account from verses 15 excuse me 20 to the end 15 to the end that

Jesus will begin to anchor their hearts Peter in particular into the mission that he wants them to accomplish feed my sheep after having just eaten from the fish now Jesus instructs Peter to be about the same work and not just feeding in a physical way but feeding particularly in a spiritual way you have a new mission disciples it really harkens back to the first mission that I've given to you from the beginning not only to follow me but to be my ambassadors to be commissioned by me to do my father's work and sure enough some days later we don't know exactly when we find the account of Matthew chapter 28 it says the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain that Jesus had directed them and that's where Jesus commissions them to ministry you will be my disciples go make disciples teach them train them equip them

[ 44 : 40 ] I'm going to be with you wherever you go the power of God will rest on your life will give you success for the work that I've called you to do you cannot fail because you have my power if you're following my purposes for your life so to bring this to a close this morning do you realize you have been commissioned if you are a child of God you have been commissioned for a great work that great work may happen as a mom or as a dad that great work may happen as an engineer or as a teacher or as a nurse or as a doctor wherever you might be we are commissioned to do the work of God to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness it's not independent of what God has called us to do vocationally it is coupled with that and if we are operating in the strength of the spirit we will be successful in the things that

God has called us to do!

to the great task that he has set before us every disciple commissioned by God to do the father's work let's pray Lord this morning we understand that you are the one who fills the nets of our lives you are the one who makes us successful not in earthly endeavors but in heavenly endeavors as we look back on our life and we see seasons of barrenness Lord as we commit ourselves to follow your purposes we won't see barrenness we'll see fullness we'll see fruit spiritually for us as you are working in our life to form Christ in us and we'll see the evidence of the work of God coming through us and affecting the people you have put us in touch with Lord help us to be faithful help us not to give up help us not to revert back to what is comfortable but help us to press on help us to be bold help us to be faithful and diligent and Lord as we do that may we be fruitful by your power we pray in Jesus name amen let's stand as we sing holy

We are waiting. Jesus. You're all to us.