

Selected Verses - Ephesians, the Finale

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- [0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- Amen. What a great, great hymn. One of the great themes that we've been talking about, the name and power of Jesus overall. In the coming weeks, you'll be able to watch on television, if you enjoy this sort of thing, a lot of year-in-review shows.
- They start happening usually this week, I think, and you may be able to find the year 2015 in the news, or 2015 in sports, or in entertainment, or whatever it is you enjoy.
- I really like watching those shows. But what happens to me as I watch them is usually this. I think, that was this year? You mean that was just six months ago?
- I'd forgotten about that. I mean, it was in the headlines the day it happened, but it seems to me like I didn't even remember that going on. And I sit there and watch and think, well, it couldn't have been more than, you know, 11 and a half months ago or something like that.
- [1 : 1 2] And I've forgotten already. We move on from things so quickly, don't we? Life is very fast-paced. There's a lot going on. And things that seem like the most important thing in the world one day, we forget just a few weeks later.
- Many of us struggle to slow down and to process deeply things that are really meaningful, that we think, oh, man, that's a really significant event or something important that I've learned.
- And we struggle to slow down and consider, what does this actually mean for me? How should it impact me? How would I be different in light of that?
- And I don't want us to be guilty of that with God's word. Some of you are thinking, Will, you never rush through anything. We're not going to be guilty of that. Listen, we've spent most of a year and 25 sermons.
- I know some of you were counting in the book of Ephesians. And I want us to take the chance to slow down and do Ephesians in review, to look back and to ask ourselves, what's God teaching me?
- [2 : 1 9] What have I learned? What would he be doing in me and in us? So this is going to be a different kind of sermon, covering a lot of ground.
- It'll be different for me, so it'll feel different for you, I'm sure. But pray with me, and we're going to read from all over Ephesians as we go. Pray with me. Father, because I know these people and their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for each other, their love for all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for them.
- Thank you for this body. Thank you for these people. And Father, we pray this morning that you, God, the Father of glory, would give us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you, that we would know you, that we'd have the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we would know the hope to which you've called us, the riches of your glorious inheritance for us, and the immeasurable greatness of your power towards us who believe.

That's Paul's prayer. That's our prayer. And we ask it now as we open your word in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We looked last week at the letter to the church in Ephesus in the book of Revelation.

Stepped out of the book of Ephesians for a week, and we were reminded in that letter the importance of keeping our doctrine and our life connected. That what we believe must drive how we behave, right?

[4 : 02] That it makes a difference. And that's the way the book of Ephesians is laid out. Three chapters of glorious gospel truths, and three chapters applying those truths to every aspect of our lives.

So we're going to look back this morning first at those wonderful truths that this letter teaches us as Paul writes it to the Ephesian church. We're going to be asking as we look back through Ephesians first, what should we believe?

What is it, Paul, that's important for us to know and to believe? I've put the answers to that question in two categories. The first of those being that we have a new identity, a new identity connected in Christ to our Father.

That's been a theme of Ephesians. Over and over again, Paul says, let me tell you how important it is that you understand your union with Christ, the value of being connected to him.

And that's what we've talked about over and over. He uses phrases like in Christ, in him, in Christ, in the beloved, through Christ, in Christ again, over and over and over in the letter because he wants to remind us how important that is, the new identity that we have in relationship with Christ.

[5 : 20] Remember how he started the letter? Back in the beginning, this beautiful passage, what happens in Christ? Where's our identity? He's blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

Blessings like choosing us in him, like adopting us as sons through Jesus Christ, giving us redemption and forgiveness in him, in him obtaining an inheritance, and in him being sealed with the promised Holy Spirit over and over and over.

All of these things in our lives because we're connected to Christ, in Christ. There's been a remarkable change, Paul is telling the Ephesians. Something different about you.

You've gone from being enemies to sons. You've gone from being left out to welcomed in. You're dearly loved children now when you didn't deserve it at all.

And all of that, why? Because of Jesus. We pull up a seat at the Father's table, so to speak, because our name tag reads, guest of Jesus.

[6 : 29] Our access to God, our seat at his table is earned by Christ. So our relationship is based on what God has done for us, not on what we do for him, right?

That's the tenor of our relationship. Our relationship with the Father is in Christ. Every spiritual blessing in Christ because of what he has done.

We've said it, in fact, it's the Trinity, the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that works together for our salvation from eternity past into eternity future. Those verses we were just looking at, the Father's love chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in love.

He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. In eternity past, the Father's love for us before we've done anything to deserve it. And then the Son comes.

In human history, the cross purchasing our redemption and forgiveness by his blood. And it's not just something that happens once and God just lets us go and says, I hope you play this out well, it's forever.

[7 : 37] There's an eternity future that's already secure. How? Because of the Holy Spirit. A stake in eternity future that we've been sealed. He's the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working for your salvation. It's not what we've done, is it? It's not the basis of our relationship with him. He's connected us to himself in Christ.

And so as a result of that, our relationship with God is all about his grace and his glory. You remember the but God that Russell shared at the end of the confession?

You were dead in your trespasses and sins. You lived this way. And then that great phrase in Ephesians 2 verse 4, but God. But God had something to do with that.

He came to change your situation. He's rich in mercy because of the great love that he has. He makes you alive. That great love that we learn about in chapter 3, how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ for us.

[8 : 46] It's beyond measure, right? We can't comprehend how much God loves us. So that as a result of that, as a result of God's love for us moving towards us, we're saved by grace alone.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not your own doing. Don't be confused. This is a gift from God. It's not a result of works so that no one may boast.

All of it is of God. From the beginning, Paul is clear who the whole story is about, isn't he? That it's chapter 1 to the praise of his glory. To the praise of his glorious grace.

That even we would be to the praise of his glory. Even our salvation. When we think of our salvation, we think of that moment that we trusted Christ and we believed in him and accepted him.

The time we walked an aisle or prayed a prayer. And that's oftentimes in our minds what we remember in terms of our salvation. God says it's so much bigger than that.

[9 : 51] It's not about you or what you've done. It's about what I'm doing in your life. It's amazing grace. It's a gift. So he deserves all the credit and the praise for all of it.

None of it goes to us. We could stop right there, couldn't we? And have reason for rejoicing and thanking God and praising him and worship for the rest of our lives.

That he has come to us and given us a new identity by what he has done. We're united to Christ and loved by the heavenly father. What an amazing gift.

But there's actually more. Paul says there's more than that. The book of Ephesians is not merely about individual salvation. Paul is writing to a church here.

And he says your new identity, this change that God has brought in your life, connecting you to Jesus, is more significant, is farther reaching than you might have thought.

[10 : 55] Because of the power of that new identity in Christ, God establishes a new community. That we're connected in Christ not only to the father, but to each other.

People who otherwise are disconnected. People who are very different. Different religious backgrounds. Different races. Different political perspectives. They come together because Jesus is what's most important.

Right? I say it this way. God's presence in us outweighs our differences and unites previously disconnected enemies in the church.

The church is that new community. Do you remember chapter 2? What he says in verse 13? Now in Christ Jesus, you who were far off, who were distant, have been brought near.

Because Jesus is our peace who's made us both one and broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. What's he saying? That Jesus is bringing into one people who are otherwise separate.

[12 : 00] Who are otherwise distant. That he's breaking down the barriers between us and making us one. How? Just by wishing it were so? No, because all of us are defined primarily by the fact that we're connected to Jesus.

By the new identity that transforms each of us, we're now a new community. Gentiles and Jews here in Ephesians, right? Paul's talking a lot about those.

Those who were far off and those who were near. The outsiders and the insiders. The ones who've always gone to church and the ones who showed up for the first time today and never felt like they belong.

All of those are together because the cross destroys the barriers between us. It humbles all of us, brings us all together to the same point in our need for him and in our finding what we need in him.

Look what he says as he goes on in chapter 2. Jesus came and preached peace to the far off and peace to the near because through him we both have access in one spirit to the father.

[13 : 08] So now instead of being strangers, we're part of the household of God. The household where Jesus himself is the chief cornerstone and there's this structure being joined together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

In Jesus you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by his spirit. You see the new community Jesus is creating? He's making one family, isn't he?

How do you get people into the same family? Because they have the same father. He brings them into the same family because he gives them the same father through adoption.

He makes us one temple where together with Jesus as the cornerstone, there's this new identity that we have in Jesus that unites us, right? Jesus is the cornerstone of this temple and God's building us into something.

And not just any structure, not just a random building, but a temple where what's going to happen? Where God dwells by his spirit. Isn't that what makes all the difference?

[14 : 11] Isn't that what makes the place holy? That's what makes the temple significant, that God dwells there, that he's determined to live with his people. That's what defines us.

God is determined to live among us. And it's his presence that makes the new community so exciting. Because God is there and present, it's not just this group of people who kind of are part of the same list somewhere, or occasionally, maybe once a week, show up in the same building.

It's much more than that, isn't it? It's not just a static, silent group of people. God's resurrection power works on behalf of the church enraptured by his love.

That's the promise of Ephesians. Do you remember the power that's on our side? Do you remember the way Paul talks about it in chapter 1? Look at verse 19. The immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, the working of his great might that he used, it's resurrection power when Christ was raised from the dead.

And seated where? Does Christ have power? Is it really all hail the power of Jesus' name? It is. Look at that. That he's over everything, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

[15 : 31] And every name that is named, not only in this age, but in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet because he's powerful over all. Resurrection power for those who believe.

Head over all things for the church. That's the good news. That he is powerful and we are his. That's the gospel in Ephesians.

Jesus is powerful and we are his. His people. So how do we access that power? Or is it just something that just kind of shows up?

It's magical? It just happens? How is it that in a church we see God working powerfully? We saw it's the love of God, isn't it? Having a vision of the incredible love of God.

The size of his love beyond what we can comprehend that does that. That brings his power. It's God's love and a vision of that rather than a focus on our own gifts or agendas.

[16 : 33] Rather than any pastor or program that you could come up with. It's seeing his love that's the fuel for the church.

That's what empowers us. Ephesians chapter 3. What does he say? I pray that you being rooted and established in love would have power, all of you together, all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

To know that love that surpasses knowledge. That's what allows you to be filled with the fullness of God. That's when he starts doing beyond all you can ask or imagine according to his power at work within us.

It's when we see his love as magnanimous. As beyond what we could comprehend. Right? That glorious 4D love we talked about.

That chases us down. Reaches even to those who are running away from him. That stoops down to the lowest and the most hurting and depressed and downtrodden.

[17 : 34] Those who thought they could never be worthy. And exalts all of us to heaven. That's what drives the church. That's what fuels the church.

A great vision of the love of God is what enables great actions for God. And that's true because it's his power that we're dependent on.

Right? He's the one with the power. Both individually and corporately. This dramatic reality change that has happened in our lives. That we have a new identity connected to Jesus.

That we're connected in him to the father and to each other. It's not just something to believe and rejoice in. Although it is that. And Ephesians says just stop and praise God for that.

But it's not only that. It's actually what gives us the power to live in a new way. It's what transforms the way we live now, isn't it? Let me see if I can explain.

[18 : 36] We've talked this year about several images of our union with Christ. It's hard to get our hands around that, isn't it? What does it mean, Will, that I'm connected to Jesus? What does that actually feel like and look like in my life that I'm somehow connected to Jesus?

We've talked about a lot of images to describe that. This one may be my favorite. You may have seen or heard of Team Hoyt. Team Hoyt is a father-son duo.

They love doing triathlons and marathons together. And they've competed in many of them. And Dick is the father. Rick is the son.

And so there's this father and son doing triathlons and marathons together. Except they're a little different from a lot of father-son duos. Rick, the son, has cerebral palsy.

So Rick's not really able to do much in a marathon. Much less in a triathlon. So here's how Team Hoyt does triathlons.

[19 : 38] It starts with a bike race. And so Dick, the father, straps Rick into this chair on the front of the bike before riding mile after mile after mile.

And they get to the end of the bike race. He picks him up. He carries him over to a boat, a raft. And he lays him in there, straps it, connects it to himself and starts swimming mile after mile after mile.

Then he has to run. So he picks Rick up out of the boat, puts him in this stroller-type contraption, and runs, pushing Rick ahead of him mile after mile after mile.

They get to the finish line. They finished a lot of them, by the way. Ironman triathlons multiple times. And there they are, Team Hoyt, crossing the finish line together. The power source driving it.

The father, Dick. But what a beautiful picture of our connection in Christ. As we go through the race of life, so to speak, as we have things to accomplish, challenges that we face, but our power source doesn't change.

[20 : 51] We're connected to Jesus. Rick couldn't run, much less do a marathon or a triathlon. But he's vitally connected to his father, isn't he?

He's got to be connected to him if he's going to make it to the finish line. If anything impressive is going to happen in that race, it's going to be because Rick stays connected to his father.

So all the wonderful things we've learned, the things we're to believe, they have to transform how we live each day. It actually, it's not just that Rick would think, well, it would be nice if I had a good relationship with dad today during this triathlon.

Rick must stay connected to his father. And it has practical benefits. It makes a difference in how he runs the race, doesn't it?

So we've got to ask not only what glorious things we should believe, but what should believing these things look like? Sometimes that's a little harder question.

[21 : 54] We are not too bad on what we're supposed to believe. I can write some things down and remember them and nod and say that's what I believe. But Paul pushes in Ephesians. He transitions in the middle of the book.

He says, Therefore, in light of the first three chapters, Therefore, walk in a manner worthy of the calling you've received. Live in a way that fits these things you believe, the things God has done for you.

And so personally, that means living out our new identity. Living as God's child. There's something that changes in us when God begins renewing us.

And we don't live the same way anymore. I'd say it this way. Freed to respond to a smiling father, our actions must reflect God's glory in every area of life.

Chapter 5 starts with, Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. Having his love and smile already secured, love.

[23 : 02] Knowing how he's loved you and continues to love you, go love others like that. He created and redeemed us for good works and prepared them beforehand for each of us to do.

That's chapter 2. So that as someone given a new life, we would live in a new way. In a way that's fitting with that new life. Like someone in witness protection who's given a new identity and a new home and a new life.

We must live in a way that fits the new life. In fact, the hope in the midst of that is that God is constantly working in us to restore us to what he intended for us.

How does chapter 4 describe it? We're being renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

He's committed to that. That's the way he's making you. And that reality has implications for every arena of life. The fact that God is making you into somebody new, giving you a new life to live, it's not just a new life on Sunday morning, is it?

- [24 : 09] Sometimes that's easier to picture. I will now start to go somewhere different on Sunday morning than I used to. It's much more than that. Paul says what's different, what's new, the way you speak, how you deal with your anger, how you approach your work.
- He especially spends a lot of time focusing on relationships and relationships within the family and how you treat your children and your spouse. In marriage, he says, you've got this great chance to tell the story of my relationship between Christ and the church in your marriage.
- The story of the prince, right, who steps off his throne and steps down to rescue the one that he loves at great cost to himself, who would love like that.
- And so that the one who is loved desires to respond with respect and joy and trust. All those areas of our life that are changed by what God has done.
- And so we're living a new life. Everything's different, right? And it's all just the way it was supposed to be except that at the same time as we're embracing this new life God has given us, we're reminded it's not always so easy.
- [25 : 29] At the same time, we must remain aware of our spiritual warfare. We must battle against sin by abiding actively in Christ. We can't think we're all right now just to go off on our own.
- That we've got the strength, that we've got this under control, this is easy, there's no more challenges left. Sin still wars against us, right? And so Paul says, don't live like peace in the midst of war.
- Don't act like there's peace all around in the middle of a war. Don't declare a truce with an enemy Jesus died to defeat. Instead, fight. Fight against falsehood, against idolatry, against seeking fulfillment in wine or anywhere else other than Jesus.
- Fight against the spiritual forces of evil, right? Fight. Over and over again, he's calling us to fight. And how? We do it by trusting day by day in Christ and his power to which we are connected.
- It's what he's saying. In chapter six, he gets to the armor of God, right? What's he gonna tell us? How are we gonna fight? Tell me how strong I am and what I'm gonna do. And he says, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
- [26 : 40] Put on not your armor, the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Don't try to do it on your own. Don't try to run in your own strength.
- Stay connected to Christ. Jesus is the strong one, right? It's his power, the strength of his might. And we stand only in him and actively arming ourselves by depending on him, having faith in him, believing his promises.
- That's how we're, each of us, called to live the new life God has called us to. But there's another area that our connection to Jesus transforms.
- And that's our corporate lives as a body. So there's also a new community where we need to figure out what does it mean to live as God's church? Now that Jesus has connected us to each other, we've established that, we believe that, Jesus has broken those barriers down, what does that mean for how the church operates?
- First, we must passionately pursue unity with each other, crossing any barriers to love and partner with people different from us. We saw Jesus brought enemies together, right?
- [27 : 54] He did that. He made them a part of the same group, but that doesn't mean they're gonna get along. Now that they're there, we actually have to love each other because of his love for us.
- So chapter four, verse two says, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Notice, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit, not the unity of the people like me. Not the unity of those of us who are easy to get along with, the ones I prefer.

The unity of the Spirit, rather. All of us who have the same Savior and therefore the same Father. It's that unity we're to be seeking.

Humbly, gently, patiently, lovingly, moving toward different relationships, cross-cultural relationships with people who love Jesus but who are different in their ages, in their income levels, in their skin colors, in their moral values, in their political perspectives, celebrating our differences, actually.

[29 : 10] Finding the beauty in the diversity within the body. Repenting of our self-righteousness that actually we believe my way is actually better than yours. And repenting of that and eagerly pursuing each other, moving toward the other, the one who's different.

Partnering, right? We need each other. Partnering with all sorts of people for the sake of the gospel. That's what God has for His church for this new community. And as they do that, we must connect truth and love so that we reflect God's heart to the world.

Remember what a mature church looks like? What does God say this new community is gonna be when it grows up and gets to be real mature? Sure, speaking the truth in love, we're to grow up in every way into Him who's the head, into Christ.

That's what Christ is like. Truth and love connected. Truthing in love, we said. We've got to hold on to both of them. And that's gonna cost us, isn't it?

How do we know that? When Jesus held on most tightly to truth and love at the cross, it cost Him. When He said, your sin, I'm not gonna sugarcoat it. It's serious.

[30 : 24] That's the truth. Your sin needs to be addressed. And He said, I'm gonna do it and it's gonna cost me. I'm gonna love you at the same time. And so He does that at the cross. And we're to be like Him, truthing in love.

What a great opportunity for Southwood to hold passionately to the truth at the same time holding to the rejected and the marginalized and those who are outsiders to hold tightly to both of those things at the same time and actually bring them together.

Absolute truth without compromise and amazing grace without end. That's what God offers us. It's what He calls us to as His church because that's His heart, right?

It's the way He treats us. And so how are we gonna do it? We tap into Him, rely on His power, pray for Him to continue pouring out His grace as He has promised so that His character increasingly overflows from His church so that we love the way He does so people recognize Him when they see us.

Slow down this morning. I have to take a drink to make me slow down. Slow down and ask what God has taught you. How is He renewing you?

[31 : 45] How is He renewing us? I think it'd be great to write something down. That always helps me. He promises to do both of those things.

He promises to be making you a new person and to be making us a new church. So think about those questions. In light of Ephesians, this may be the first Ephesians sermon you've heard all year.

That's all right, you got the whole thing in one sitting, good strategy. You may have heard all 26. What's God teaching you? Where's He challenging your heart?

How's He renewing you? How is He renewing us? Think not just of yourself, but of the church God has called you into. Encourage you to think about those, to write something down.

In the meantime, I got to think ahead. So I asked myself those questions. God has changed me so much through this study this year.

- [32 : 47] I'll just mention a couple of things that He's done because y'all don't want my whole list. A couple of things on mine. My view, and I think a little more slowly, my practice of prayer.
- I've seen the need for it, the need for myself, for my family, for my church family, the need for being dependent on God's power.
- How much I need that, I've seen it more. And at the same time, the beautiful thing about prayer that I've loved this year is God's provision that's equal to our need. We see more of our need for it.
- We also have greater confidence in Him and in His power. However, I'd ask you, are you more dependent on Him? Not just theoretically, would you say you were, but do you pray like you're more dependent on Him?
- Do you pray like you're more confident in Him? Like you really expect His power to come through for you? I think God is molding and is molding my view of the church through this book.
- [33 : 54] I've seen more of the beauty of this church family. There's so much love here. So much that I'd love for us to be able to share with more and more people.
- And I've seen more of the barriers that can separate us from others and those who need to experience the love and grace of God that He's shown to us. As I've thought about it, I've realized the nearest schools to our building are noticeably more diverse in many ways than our sanctuary.
- And that that's true in no small part because they're more diverse than my circle of friends. And one of those is likely to drive the other.
- Who am I in relationship with? Listen, we have the message of the gospel, the hope for all kinds of people, the good news for those who are very different and don't look like us or live like us and we actually have the good news that they need to hear.
- Are we actually moving towards them? Who do you, who can you think of that would expect to be held at arm's length by Christians, by the church, that's gonna find a welcome at your dinner table?
- [35 : 08] Maybe before they ever sit in here. Which brother or sister have you allowed your relationship to stay at arm's length rather than healing and bringing them in?
- I'm so excited about what God's gonna do at Southwood in the years ahead. It is so exciting to imagine what God will do. I believe part of what He's gonna do is He's gonna make us a refuge for people who are hurting, who are in a sense shipwrecked, whose lives have crashed.
- And we'll be able to be a refuge not because we're so great but because we're anchored to the rock. That we're gonna, by God's grace, hold on to truth. I believe that. I pray for that.
- But at the same time, not just hold on to the truth, we're gonna live out the unending, sacrificial love of God to all sorts of people because that's what's happening in our culture right now, isn't it?
- People are looking for safety. They're looking for fulfillment. They're looking in all sorts of places. They've got different worldviews. They've got different answers to the questions you ask.
- [36 : 15] They're trying out different behaviors. They're trying out different beliefs. They think about things differently. And they're looking in all sorts of places to find what God provides through Jesus, to provide the relationship that is ours in Him.
- And what's gonna happen is that the world's going to let them down. they'll end up disappointed and hurting and distressed, fearful, not able to find the answers.

And they'll be hopeless. And the great opportunity for us is to be found not shaking our heads, looking in all the wrong places.

Wish you would've looked where I looked. not in shaking our heads, but in showing them grace, in welcoming them in, in pointing them to a God of truth and love that they've been looking for and didn't even realize it.

Don't you want to be a part of that? Isn't that something that you'd love not just to see from a distance, but actually get to be a part of, to get engaged in, that as the flood of people would come running in, as the Spirit moves, as Jesus is lifted up and people find Him as their place of refuge and say, oh, that's what my heart has been longing for.

[37 : 38] Don't you want to be there and be a part of that? Don't you want to be bandaging their wounds? Don't you want to be giving hugs, sharing smiles, offering hope?

Getting to actually be a part of the incredible things God is going to do because He is and He lets us be a part of it. I want to leave you with one last image.

One more picture of Team Hoyt. When you see them crossing the finish line, you almost always see Rick, the son's excitement.

Usually he's pumping his fist like that. They're finishing a race here. Yeah! I did it! Finished the marathon! The joy, the excitement, the celebrating.

I look at him and I see myself in Rick. I see us in Rick. Aren't you going to be celebrating? Wouldn't that be so exciting that God starts to do things and continues to do things in Huntsville and we get to be a part of it?

[38 : 44] And we'll be so excited and we'll be celebrating and high-fiving and pumping our fists. And yet at the same time realizing that we really didn't have a lot to do with it.

Who deserves all the credit? Is anybody confused at the end of the race who gets the credit here? Who's been the power source of this whole operation? God says, listen, stay connected to Christ.

Press into him. Stay there. Don't move past it. I've got great things for you. In fact, beyond anything you could ask or imagine, we're going to make triathlons seem like child's play.

He's absolutely committed to that. To doing things that are beyond what we could ask or imagine. Isn't that how he's always related to us? That we get to have this joy.

Our joy becomes great. We love it. We experience it and at the same time his glory is great. He gets the glory and we get to be a part of it. He's always treated us like that.

[39 : 50] He poured out his grace to us to overflowing in our salvation. To the praise of his glorious grace, right? That it would be all about him even when he saved us.

And he's going to keep pouring it out. To keep working in and through us and we'll get to enjoy it. We'll get to pump our fists. Don't you love that? Yes! We did it!

We finished! It happened! And there will be the Father. He'll be there.

The one without whom we couldn't have entered the race. The one who's carried us all the way along. Every step of the way the one who's done the work.

And he'll always be there. Why? Why do we know that? Why when he does those great things? When he even lets us be a part of it? Why do we know he's going to be there? Because we're connected to him in Christ.

[40 : 53] Connected in Christ forever to the praise of his glorious grace. Pray with me. Father, we want to see that happen.

We want to be a part of that. Would we, your church, being rooted and established in love, have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

And to know that love that surpasses knowledge that we would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Would you do that for the glory of your name?

Amen. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.