

# Eph. 3:14-19 - Expressing Grace at Home

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[ 0 : 00 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

I'm going to start by reading Joshua, the book of Joshua, chapter 1, first 9 verses. After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, Moses, my servant, is dead.

Now therefore, rise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon, I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the great river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I'll be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

[ 1 : 13 ] Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses, my servant, commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may go have good success wherever you go.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, excuse me, do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

That passage has been something like out in front of me.

[ 2 : 21 ] There have been about three that have been out in front of me in the back of my mind at the same time. Sort of directing my motivation and setting my sights on where I think God really, the work that he's trying to do.

And I think it fits for all of us. And it's interesting to me that you know what the moment is.

Moses has died. God has said that. It's always interesting to me that God is so direct about that.

Moses, my servant, is dead. Huh. Okay.

I'm sure he cared about that, but he stated that fact. Making clear to Joshua, this is where you're at. And yet, you're going to lead this people and take this vast amount of territory that I promised to your fathers a long time ago.

And it's on you. It's the kind of situation where any of us would be like, uh-oh. Whoa. Really?

[ 3 : 31 ] How did I end up here? And yet, God doesn't do something that in this day and age especially we would expect and we would hope him to do.

Hope that he would do. He doesn't lay out the plans. He doesn't say, take this division of men and that division and send them there and send them there and accomplish that objective and so when you do that then they can do this and flank them and attack here, attack.

He doesn't do that. None of it. There's nothing like that. That would drive most of us nuts. It's like God's withholding the information and keep it in his pocket.

Part of me almost is, I don't know if this is true, but part of me is just like, sometimes God's just playing with us, isn't he?

Maybe he is a little bit because he respects and trusts us more than we trust ourselves. So we're looking for that information and that plan and all of that. Sometimes we're praying for God to tell us what to do and he's not telling us because he's like, I don't need to.

[ 4 : 58 ] I'm with you. So go, is what he says. I've listed there in the outline some specific things that God does.

In verse 2, God reminds Joshua who God is. What does he say there in verse 2?

Moses, my servant. I'm the leader. I am God. You remember, Moses used to go to that tent of meeting and meet with me.

maintaining that relationship in a special way that almost no one else on earth had ever done. To go to that tent of meeting and God's presence was there.

I say almost because there was an exception, Joshua, toward the end of Moses' life. This same passage is actually recorded in Deuteronomy.

[ 6 : 00 ] Deuteronomy. That moment where Joshua went with Moses to that tent of meeting and God says this. You're going to lead the people. Be strong and courageous.

Don't be afraid. I'm with you. That's all Joshua needed to know. So God reminds Joshua of who God is. God reminds Joshua of his relationship with Joshua.

I see it in verse 5 but it's really all over the passage. No man shall be able to stand before all the days, before you all the days of your life just as I was with Moses.

I'll be with you. Remember that. Just as I was with Moses, Joshua. I'll be with you. You just have to remember the relationship.

You don't need the plan. God gives limited information. I've talked about that. God encourages Joshua to be grounded in God's relationship with him.

[ 7 : 07 ] Again in verse 5. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. To be convinced he's not going away.

He's not going away. He's not going away. And he says then in verse 6, be strong and courageous. He's not asking Joshua to be strong and courageous to find something in himself and stir it up and bring it up and act out of that. He's saying, I'm with you.

So why couldn't you be strong and courageous? You don't have to be enough. You don't have to be strong enough. You just have to be grounded in the fact that I'm with you. The things that we're thinking about and talking about this weekend about our relationships as husbands and wives, our relationships as parents with our kids, our relationship as kids with our parents, might be, I could make a case to grow and and work on those things, being transformed in the quality of those relationships to really be taking care of each other's hearts might be the hardest battle that we have in our lives.

You won't hear from me. You haven't heard from me. And some of you might be a little frustrated. You know, that nugget, that specific how-to. Oh, okay.

[ 9 : 00 ] I can do that. That tool. Oh, I can take that and I can make things happen now. I think part of what God's showing us here in Joshua 1 is that's not His idea of how it works.

That's ours. And it's not really the best idea. His idea is, oh yeah, there are challenging things. You're going to go everywhere you set your foot.

God says to Joshua, you're going to take the land, but it's not going to happen easily. You have to fight through to set your foot in all that territory. People will die. There'll be a big cost.

But it's not the plan that's going to carry you through and do the work that God has for you.

It's the fact that He's with you. And resting in that, being grounded in that fact that He's with you, that thing that you don't know as you enter into that hard moment actually isn't the point.

[ 10 : 16 ] The challenge is trusting in God's presence that He will enable you to first of all be courageous, to be strong in the sense of not being afraid.

He keeps those linked together so that we can be courageous. There might not be anything that takes more courage than for a man to look in his wife's eyes and ask her, I must be missing you. How am I missing you? Or for a woman to look in her husband's eyes and ask, have I been trying to control you?

Is that, what does it feel like for you to be married to me? That takes courage. Courage. That's a challenging thing.

In verse 9, have I not commanded you to be strong and courageous? Do not be frightened. Do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

[ 11 : 37 ] Wherever you go. It doesn't specify it. Wherever you go. I'm summarizing that as that all of this is so that Joshua can be enough even though he's not on his own.

The strong and courageous is not, you know, in preparation, lift those general weights, weights for generals, lift those weights for leaders, learn those lessons that you need to learn so that you can be strong and go be strong.

If no, in the moment, trust God to take what he's already built into you and to apply it in a courageous way which means being vulnerable and open-hearted for the other's good.

Sacrificially. So some things to consider, some truths to consider. It's as if I think I'm allergic to these things.

something always happens. Falls off my belt. Sorry. It's as if in Joshua 1 God's saying these wonderful truths but there are these other truths that are something of a but.

[ 13 : 05 ] That's really that Joshua 1 stuff is a little too hard. I just want us to think about why it's hard. You see that first line there because fear is hiding in your soul.

And it's sneaky and powerful. God knows what he's doing. That's a funny thing to say. God knows what he's doing when he comes to Joshua at such a key point and he says don't be afraid.

Jesus does the same thing with his disciples in that upper room preparing them for what's going to happen tomorrow. And he says let not your hearts be troubled.

God knows that the most challenging thing for us is there's this fear, there's this tendency to be afraid but it's sneaky and it hides and we don't see it which even adds to its power.

fear. But so often we live out of the fear more than the assurance that God is with us and that we can be strong enough with God's help as he works in us.

[ 14 : 31 ] That's one of the buts. another one is that those people that you care about the most the ones sitting next to you many of you your husband your wife your children your parents most of the time they're the ones you're afraid of the most.

You might think about that for a while it might be a surprise. Intimacy being known Genesis 2 tells us that Adam and Eve were naked without shame they were completely known and yet accepted. Since Adam and Eve sin that's way out there. The road to that sense of being naked without shame is a rocky twisted broken road.

It's possible but God has to do that work we have to collaborate in that work. It's important for us to recognize that in the most intimate moments most of us are looking for an escape.

It's so uncomfortable. The truth is we can't tolerate too much intimacy for very long. We need it. We need it.

[ 16 : 05 ] But at the best moments we will bail. Some of you might be like me and you don't like goodbyes.

not liking goodbyes is something about that because goodbyes get very intimate. When you're saying goodbye to someone and you don't know when you're going to see them again or if you will and they matter to you you want to be able to communicate that and there's something happening that you don't have any control of and it's just that you both know we really care for each other and we're approaching getting ready that we sense that this is going to change and we're losing something and something you feel so intensely there aren't really enough words or words aren't powerful enough words aren't big enough containers for those things that you feel we don't live in a world that's taught us that we actually can communicate things without words we do anyway but we're not used to that we don't trust that very much and so often in that sense of

I can't say it we run from the moment as I've aged I've gotten a little better at correcting myself I don't always do it because it's a hard thing what I mean by that is you know at that point that I say see you later to someone that I'm not going to see later you know it's the we're going to do this just like we always do as if to escape that discomfort of really connecting and being intimate around what are we feeling right now so the correction looks like no there I go again that's not it is it we're not we don't know until we have a little bit of conversation

I'm going to have to trust you to think about that some more I'm finding it hard to explain that we're afraid of intimacy afraid of being known maybe it has a lot to do with our own shame that we all have a certain dose of that even I know for me is I'm in that a moment like that saying goodbye and I can't I don't my whole life is words and here I am in this moment where I I don't have the words thing that's strange seems strange it's ironic is as God's worked in my life and I've gotten more grown the capacity to be more aware of what I feel I'm not any better at saying it or I'm not much better at saying it you know it's still hard in fact it's harder as I'm more aware it's harder because I don't

I'm more aware I don't have the words in that moment so it takes courage to attempt something and to remember it actually isn't the content in a moment the content that you express that's the point it's the process of trying to express it it's actually the impact that you have on the person not the content that you put in their cognitive portions of their brain it's the impact that you have on a person which has more to do with what you're projecting from yourself what you're feeling I may have said this last night I was reading some research on the plane Friday and it was on emotional intelligence in the work and leadership and business excuse me and they were talking about the fact that the leader of an organization that person's emotional style filters down through the whole organization [ 21 : 07 ] I've observed that I've observed when leaders change and the new leader comes in and is projecting something else and trying to change the culture which is really that emotional style filtered down and shaped an organization that it's a very difficult process and initially for those leaders and I've seen it more than once the responses are they react to that leader as if they want that other leader they want the same style that's what they're used to and it's what feels like home it doesn't matter if that leader was a tyrant it feels like home someone comes in who's different and they're trying to figure it out they're trying to feel safe at least comfortable sort of able to predict and it's a tough challenge the point being that leader's emotion even if he doesn't express it with words filters down through the organization so someone did research on this and they got three people they identified the person who was the most expressive emotionally and they're looking at how do you do that without words can you do it without words yes no so they put these three people at a table no words silent and within a few minutes not a very long time the two people that are less expressive in style know are able to say what the other person is feeling it's like we have more senses than we realize you ever walk in a room it could be this one everyone's milling around you come in the room you're finding a seat and you just have that feeling and you look and yes a person's looking at you how'd you know

I mean how did you know I don't know but we have an ability to somehow I mean some people start talking about energy and this and that it's like I don't know it's one of those it's a little bit of everything it's not just a simple because but it's true that happens all the time between parents and our kids and husbands and wives you know it happens in your day do you ever wonder how it is that people can look at you in the morning and they can say how you doing and they just mean you know how you doing and then other days they look at you and they kind of cock their head a little bit and it's how are you doing you know you okay how do they know to ask that and you're like how did they know you know am I wearing a sign I sometimes wonder why

I can go to Panera I do that a lot and maybe late on a Sunday night and sit down and I'm doing a little email or something or figuring out what's happening tomorrow and the manager that I kind of know because I go there a lot don't know her name sits down at the table and tells me about her son's suicide I'm just a guy sitting in a Panera eating this chocolate chip cookie you know and I'm just like do I have a sign on me how did she know that I'm sending the message somehow you all do the same thing you can think right now in ten seconds and come up with three names of people maybe even today as you came in where you knew ooh you know where you ask something you have this happen hey how you doing and you're walking by and they say something and you pause maybe you go back maybe you don't others you just see a face and you know those are little bits of intimacy that we bump into that maybe we're not so afraid of because they're derived by intimacy maybe those are pieces that we can reflect on and think about how can

I slow down the car and not drive by and just get used to knowing others as best I can in a moment and knowing letting others know me in that process it's one of the challenges to living this life the way Joshua 1 tells us is that we're not only afraid in general we're particularly afraid of intimacy with the people most important to us that's going to be very subtle it takes work but it's not a problem that you root out it's something that you address indirectly by growing the good stuff I'll give you an example this was in a previous outline but I didn't say it there was a man his name was Milton Erickson Erickson was one of those rare who's a psychiatrist one of those rare creatures rare people amazingly empathic and amazingly intuitive his therapy went in all kinds of directions and some of them

I don't necessarily believe in but the person of Erickson was just such a perceptive guy and a man named Bill O'Hanlon who's roughly my age Erickson's deceased quite a while ago worked with Erickson and he tells this story and Erickson told him about Erickson lived in Arizona and was taking a trip to Milwaukee Wisconsin and a colleague was concerned about his aunt that lived in

Milwaukee she was older she lived alone in this great big house maybe a widow I don't remember that detail and the colleague was concerned that she was depressed so would Erickson go see her and so he did he went and visited this lady and talked with her and she gave him he may have asked for it a tour of her house and in the going through the house all of the rooms the shades were pulled down and they were dark except for one and in that room she grew

[ 28 : 29 ] African violets she had all these African violets in this room shades are up it's bright it's different there's life there so as Erickson was leaving I'm not sure how he discerned all of these details but he says to this woman you know your nephew wanted me to come by because he was concerned that you're depressed but I see that that's not the problem he said the problem is you're not a good Christian woman he was being a little provocative what he suggested was to take her church bulletin that had a list of shut ins on it and take an African violet to those people that's what he suggested and she did that she took his advice so Erickson reaches for a three ring binder notebook pulls it out flips through comes to a newspaper clipping and shows it to

Bill O'Hanlon the headline was African Violet Queen Dies Thousands Mourn O'Hanlon says to Erickson how did you know to do that and Erickson says it seemed better to grow the African violet part of her life than root out the depressed part I actually think if we get the whole biblical story that starts with creation and the dignity and the agency and the capacity that God builds in us before we get to our depravity that that's the biblical method it's the biblical model don't try to root out the depravity good luck with that even though

Jesus has conquered that battle ultimately on the cross that battle is not conquered now at this point in the story that's not the approach Jesus' work God's work in our lives is to grow the capacity so that the depravity doesn't really deter us from our mission which is to be growing at a heart level for the relationships that we have that are central to our mission I don't know what it means for you to grow the African violet part of your life in your marriage but I'm suggesting it's don't set out to root out the fear try to grow that part of you that longs for intimacy wants more and you do it by the process you try to have more conversation you try to have more conversation that's honest conversation honest in the sense of

I'm going to tell you right now how you need to change no no not that honesty the honesty of this is where I am this is who I am this is what I'm longing for this is what I'm missing this is what I'm celebrating I say a couple other things there I'm not going to dwell on them those people you are most angry at are the ones you fear most I'll just say this about it we're really good at trying to figure out the thing that's the cause of something if you want to really think about how good we are just listen to how often you use the word because so you're in a discussion with each other and one of you points the finger at the other one and says they've done something wrong we want the one over here we want that person to understand oh no no no no there was a good reason for that so what do we stay how do we start well that's because because we actually believe that if we can get that one thing that they're misunderstanding or just get that one thing that's the cause of this and if we agree that that's the cause of this then we can solve this we can work through it life doesn't work that way it just doesn't work that way where there is truth that cause and effect happens it's not the whole truth the

A if you do A B results there are consequences that is true if you want to understand the alternative to this really well go listen to the song by the group Dawes D-A-W-E-S fairly contemporary within the last ten years maybe their second album and it's a song starts out with a wonderfully poetic expression of a very hard moment a man is standing on the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge on the side that faces the prison they say he's throwing a leg over the rail phone calls made police cars show up quickly the sergeant slams his door and he says just tell me why you're doing this son and his answer is profound it's a little bit of everything it's the title of the song it's a little bit of everything it's the death of my first dog he says and there's this long list of things that you would think are little disappointments but they understand how life actually works it really is a little bit of everything and when we're in this contentious moment where we're trying to say

[ 35 : 38 ] I can't believe you did that I can't believe you don't understand you didn't understand what I was trying to do and we get down to this well it's because no it's because the truth is oh all kinds of things are happening all kinds of things are happening in that moment there's so much that you can't sort them all out you actually cannot solve problems through gaining more information you can dissect it and see more and more and maybe understand more but you won't solve the problems that way it's just the wrong method what needs to happen actually is going after each

other's heart it begins by rather than an attack or a withdraw or a trying to convince the other attack sounds more harsh than it always is it really begins by confiding by slowing down enough to take a look at what's really happening here maybe the problem actually is I'm afraid of intimacy but in that moment right there you were actually asking something of me you were asking me to move toward you

I didn't think about it I just reacted against that because that scares me I don't even maybe I can't even say it out loud because it scares me so being so being known is your biggest fear your biggest need and your biggest fear there are very few either or's in this either not much because and there aren't either or's it's either this or it's that no it's all of it we need to be known when God said it's not good for man to be alone that applies to women too he's saying it's not good to be alone we need each other we need to be known when he expresses the state of Adam and Eve before the fall they were naked without shame I'm saying that's both literally true and figuratively true they were known without shame accepted we need that it's built into who we are the Trinity as the Father and the Son and the Spirit and the Spirit to the Father and the Spirit to the Son all of those three persons in that Godhead that one God they know each other completely that's the model of how it's supposed to be for us and it was that way until Adam sinned Adam sinned brought in this alienation and the distortion and the breaking of the circuits so that it's not that way we get tastes of it because of God's grace common grace and his special grace all of it we get tastes of it but it's not like it was someday it will be in the meantime we still need and it's hard and we're afraid at least a little bit and probably more than we know I'm thinking that

Joshua 1 suggests gives us some ideas on how to deal with this how to work with this and that how do we bring home it's again it's an indirect way but it's to seek pursue try to not figure out but experience what God says here and many other places I am with you I am with you right now Jesus said in that upper room I'm going but I send another the spirit will be with you who will teach you it's hard to be have a lot of knowledge about that there's not a lot written in the book on the spirit shows up pretty late in the story there are hints but you know people don't start wrestling with the trinity until after Jesus it's like you know post 0 AD post 32 post 200 post 100 at least because he doesn't show up in the story much he's there he has a role and you can see it but it's it's more hints and there's not that much written that doesn't mean he's less it means he's the one currently that God expresses his presence with us and maybe there's a intention in God's very limited explanation I suspect that God knew that we were going to get to a place through the course of time in our philosophy and our theology and they were almost the same thing a few centuries ago to where we do life mostly out of our head and mostly by what we know you could say it's the brilliance of God knowing that that he could say hey I'm not going to explain this too much I'm just going to say there he is and all through the story I'm going to be saying the point is I am with you that's not just the father speaking it's God speaking I am with you so what if we set out to seek and pursue what that actually is like not to learn more it's going to be hard to you can read books where people have tried to expand

[ 42 : 29 ] I'm not saying that you need to become charismatic Presbyterians if you're starting to get nervous about that I'm saying we need to do some work to actually know what a relationship with God is by seeking the experience of it not facts about it and I'm suggesting that that growing intimacy with God himself will be the thing that gets you grounded in a place where you feel safe enough to move forward with less fear in your intimacy with other people especially those that are most important to you I'm trying to decide whether to abandon the outline which I think I already have somewhat and I think I will I mentioned last night that I started meeting with an old friend who's in training to be certified as a spiritual director this is a protestant group connected with

Gordon Conwell that he's doing this seminary that is doing this training through and I think I said last night that the very first time that I met with this man I was really confronted with my friend confronted with how much I hold people off and hold God off that I try to keep people and God at a safe distance so in the course of that conversation my friend had asked me could I see God as the father of the prodigal son with his arms open running toward me he was expecting a response at some point and I did not respond I stayed silent because in my mind I was saying no and no way and I'm not going there which opened a door eventually I said that something like that and my friend said something like in his amazing and wonderful persistence that

God is present in speaking through everything he asked me what I think God was trying to tell me through that thought and we talked about that and we were getting somewhere and in that process I

was becoming aware that in my history my story the death of my father that felt like abandonment and my mom's getting to work so hard she did such a wonderful job to raise her three boys alone back there in the 1950s and early 60s and beyond in my case as the youngest but she wasn't emotionally equipped to step in our father was the nurturing one and she wasn't emotionally equipped to do that and I experienced that shorthand as another abandonment and that sort of set me up and I really from there on was smart enough that's a liability to go through life living out of my head and all this other stuff just putting it away somewhere a very fragmented person sidebar that's the way we do theology in this tradition mostly out of our head and it's really fragmented most of what I've been trying to do this weekend is help us put the human person back together and to see that

God's trying to grow full human beings that's like his main goal full human beings end of sidebar so as I'm meeting with my friend I'm having that conversation and I'm thinking about this he prayed we prayed and we're sitting outside we have a little tiny five acres for a farm we have an old farm that used to be 80 or 100 120 acres and all that land got sold off and we have the remaining five acres just big enough for a pasture for two horses if we had three they would be hungry and we're sitting about four rows from the fence a pasture under a big walnut tree and after we pray I look up and my friend is saying something I'm kind of listening and I'm looking at this dove this morning dove that's sitting on that fence

I think I remember that it was there before we started to pray I'm not sure and after a while I asked my friend how long has that bird been sitting there he's kind of like I don't know and we kept on talking we talked for about an hour that day at that moment you know it was like 45 minutes more and that bird didn't go anywhere it's just kind of strange as I'm thinking about I hold God off and I really assume that he's like my father long distance far away untouchable hero because everybody says he's a great guy I think he probably was but I don't know what he was like as a person really and I look at God that way distant far off untouchable and I'm wrestling with that and that bird it's a dove sitting on that fence so we got up left we had our it's morning we have our day to get to bird didn't move

[ 48 : 54 ] I went in the house to get ready to go to work got in the car bird still there drove out the driveway and we have this gravel road that we go down half mile to the highway and as I hit our gate look over the bird still there I kind of knew what was going to happen I came home about five o'clock the bird was still there he'd moved so maybe he'd gone away and come back or maybe he'd just gone down to the other end of the rail I don't know the bird was still there before that happened my friend was just like you know all the images in scripture about the spirit and I'm like yeah yeah I know that but I already had the point for me for me and that's the way God works is he knows ways that we need to hear him and he whispers in a language that maybe only we can understand in that moment it's part of the reason I was hesitant should I do this because I know many of you will be like nah

I don't get that I don't see how he made that out of that and I understand that because that was for me that was God for me and my friend said it but I knew it but he put better words to it God wants you to know he's not going anywhere he's always there and I knew the truth of that I experienced the truth of that and I knew it was true that didn't stop me from my default but it gave me a lever it gave me some leverage against that default and when I came home that night wondering is that birds going to be there after the whole day and he was or she okay and I drove up between the two barns parked looked at the bird kind of laughed okay

I think I get it now went in the house told my wife the story looked out the bird was gone but for many many days from that experience I had a piece of knowledge that was more than knowledge it was knowledge and an understanding even pushing to something like wisdom something I could hang on to and something I could be regularly evaluating each moment with for those few days in an intense way it became more like Joshua 1 don't be afraid be strong and courageous I'm with you I'm with you I'm just here on the fence I'm just waiting notice me and to notice I just have to slow my heart down I'm still working on that my most recent meeting with my friend was all about realizing that

I work first and rest second and when I say rest I'm not talking about sabbatical I'm talking about being resting in God's goodness and his presence and his work and his spirit and getting recalibrated that it's really not the outcome of this moment of standing in front of you all which is like the last thing I'd like to do I'm actually very shy in my heart my beginning years of teaching I hit the

back of the classroom which was the entrance and I would ask myself what am I doing here but that bird on the fence gave me a way to wrestle with am I trusting him to be with me really trusting him not trusting my knowledge of him not trusting my ability to play it safe so I can make it through not trusting my ability to live out of my head and push all that stuff away not trusting my ability to be less of a full person rather than being willing to trust him so I can enter in and be a full person and even do something like tell kind of a strange story to a bunch of people

I don't know that I'm kind of afraid of if I'm honest there's a bunch of stuff in the outline that you can read and I think I hope it makes sense in the booklet there but it's time for us to close let me pray for us thank you father that you are present thank you father that Jesus tells his disciples and through him telling his disciples he tells us that even though he's going away he's going for a purpose to prepare a place but that's not the whole thing of the story there's one that comes the spirit to be with us thank you father it's always been like that from the early pages God walking in the garden with Adam and Eve

[ 54 : 49 ] God present with Moses God present with Joshua present with David all the way through father help us to slow down and to rest in that truth that you're waiting you're whispering you're desiring relationship you're repeating I'm with you I'm with you you can be strong you can be courageous because I'm with you grow our hearts stretch our hearts we know you need to do that work so we can work along with you as you make us into more as you make us into people you made us to be we pray in your name amen for more information visit us online at [southwood.org](https://southwood.org) amen to the more escape