

The Message and the Miracles

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Date: 30 January 2022

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please turn with me to Mark chapter 1, Mark chapter 1. As most of you will know, we are in a new series, well, it's not a new series, but we are back to the series, Life of Christ, post-Christmas.

And as of last week, we are beginning to take a look at the Galilean ministry. This is the ministry where Jesus spent 18 months of his life ministering, predominantly spending his time in the Galilean region of Israel.

If you remember from last week, I spoke about that there's essentially three phases to the life of Christ. The first phase, phase 1, obviously the phase before this, includes both his leaving Nazareth, turning the water into wine, meeting John the Baptist, being baptized, also going into the wilderness to be tempted.

Then after that, he went to the temple, turned over a few tables, started to make a name for himself, started to draw people as he went and his disciples baptized along.

Alongside John the Baptist. And that time frame is essentially one year. After that, Jesus is switching over to phase 2 of his ministry, and that is to minister in the area of Galilee, the ministry phase we are in now.

[1 : 44] Why Galilee? We answered that last week. A couple of reasons. It was the most populous area of Israel with Jews. They were the group that were less attached to the temple.

They were more attached to the synagogues. So there tended to be less religious influences, or let's just say temple influences. And as you remember from a couple of weeks ago, the temple influences were not necessarily good, godly influences.

There was also less Roman influence. And as I stated just a few seconds ago, the synagogues readily provided places and opportunity for Jesus to teach.

And then we're going to find after these 18 months of being in Galilee, Jesus kind of excuses himself from the crowd.

And then he spends time building into his apostles because he knows at the end of that year, he will crucify, rise up, and then ascend.

[2 : 52] And the role of taking the gospel to the rest of the world will lay on his apostles and disciples. So that is phase three. But today we're going to be talking about phase two.

And as I stated, we're not going to cover every verse of scripture that deals with the Galilean ministry, but I want to touch on major themes of the ministry. I really believe that once you understand the themes and the details behind them, I really believe that your time spent reading and studying the gospels will really come alive.

Last week we began by looking at Jesus going to his home synagogue where he came and he shared from Isaiah 61 of who he is, announcing that he was going to be the Messiah.

And just in that small place, in that small town, we saw almost a replica or what would be the ministry of Jesus Christ throughout his time in Galilee.

Remember, he gets there, he teaches, they're all excited about him, they love Jesus, then they start saying, hey, show me more signs. We've heard you've been doing signs around Capernaum.

[4 : 10] Bring us those signs too. And then finally, when he confronts him, it's all over. He's condemned to death and they try to throw him over the ridge to kill him.

So I'm going to read you three passages, including the one in Mark 1 14. But this first ministry tour in Jesus Christ is going to go through all of Galilee three times.

And he's got this goal in mind. The goal is to saturate Galilee with the preaching of the kingdom of God. All right?

That is his first goal that he wants to accomplish. As he goes through Galilee, he's going to be preaching the kingdom of God. The second thing he's going to do, he's going to demonstrate that he is the Messiah, that his words are indeed true because of the miracles that he does.

So he's got his teaching ministry and then there's going to be these miracles which back up the teaching ministry. And then, of course, he's going to call people to follow him.

[5 : 17] So regarding this Galilean ministry, I want to focus on three aspects of this ministry for the next couple of weeks. One, which we will deal with this morning, is the message of Jesus.

The message of Jesus next week will be the miracles of Jesus. And following that, we're going to look at the men and women who follow Jesus.

So the ministry begins. As Matthew 4.17 says, From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The gospel of Luke starts off his ministry. And Luke 4.14.15 says, And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit of Galilee.

And a report about went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And today's key text, Mark 1, signifies the beginning of the ministry.

[6 : 24] Verse 14. Now, after John, and he's referring to John the Baptist, was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. So this is the message of Jesus Christ. We all know from our study of John the Baptist that this was the call.

Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Matthew calls it the kingdom of heaven. Mark called it the kingdom of God. Luke called it the kingdom of God.

It's all the same thing. When Matthew is a book, gospel, predominantly written to a Jewish audience in keeping with sensitivities about not using the Lord of Jesus, the name of God in vain.

They didn't say God publicly. He just said, we're just going to call it the kingdom of heaven. But it's the exact same thing. But from now on, I'm going to use the kingdom of God.

[7 : 34] And for this segment, I want to focus in on this word that Mark uses that we are very familiar with. Repent and believe in the gospel.

Let me ask you a question. If you're a first century Jew and you are hearing someone telling you about the gospel, what does that mean?

Well, the definition, when we look at it in the Greek, it actually means good news. The good news. Repent and believe. The king has come. The Messiah is here. Now, for us, maybe not all of you, but some of us, if you have grown up in a gospel preaching church, you know there's more to that word gospel.

When I say, what is the gospel? Most of you guys think of John 3.16. Am I right? It's one of the first verses that children tend to learn in children's ministry or when we grow up.

[8 : 52] For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

This verse tells us. This verse tells us the good news. It tells us that God loves us. It tells us that God gave his only son, Jesus Christ, for us.

And that if we believe in him, we can have eternal life. But this means something differently to us than it would be to them because we know the full story.

We understand now that when John wrote Jesus' words, God gave us his only son, we know that means God gave us his son to die on the cross in our place.

He didn't give Jesus as the perfect example to follow. He didn't give us Jesus to teach us the perfect moral ethic. He didn't give us Jesus to teach us how to do miracles.

[10 : 33] No. He gave us Jesus to die for us. That our sin, our rebelliousness, our brokenness, our foolishness, has disqualified us from even being in the presence of God.

And what's interesting, even if we claim to be innocent, we are of the bloodline of Adam. So we've even inherited the sin that came before us.

God, being perfectly holy, cannot even be in the same presence as us unless we had something to cover up our sin.

If there was something to cover up our rebellion, our foolishness, our brokousness, our smell of corruption.

And it is. It's called the blood of Jesus Christ. Let me say this a little bit better.

[12 : 02] It's the innocent, perfect, sinless blood of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can make us acceptable in God's sight.

It is the only way to the Father. And what's interesting about this is we receive this free gift. And I know free gift is a redundant statement, right?

Any time someone gives you a gift, it is free. And we receive it by simply placing our faith, or I like to better say it, to place our life in Jesus Christ.

It's knowing that there and only there are we truly saved. You see, this is the gospel as we understand it today.

But if Jesus Christ is representing himself as the Messiah to the first century Jews and said, hey, the kingdom of here, kingdom of God is here, and I'm going to die for you.

[13 : 23] It'd be about that silent. What do you mean die for us? We're Jewish. We are children of Abraham. We don't need to die.

I've kept the law. In fact, I have not just kept the laws. I've kept the man-made laws beyond the laws of Moses. I give.

I serve. I never miss the Sabbath. I practice all the festivals. Why would the Messiah need to die? Why? So when Jesus says, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand, what does he mean?

If you remember when I taught on John the Baptist, the pinnacle point of John's baptism wasn't repentance itself, but it was a willingness to identify with the Messiah.

[14 : 38] You get me? You guys were living your life. You were doing your own thing. Now that repentance is turning your back on that, and now you're going to live for the Messiah as we understand the coming king from the Holy Scriptures, which would have been the Old Testament.

He's coming, that long-awaited Messiah. The call was, are you willing to identify with the Messiah who's really close to coming?

That Messiah who's clearly identified in the Old Testament. And on that river of Jordan, if you would have said yes, you would have come up, and he would simply ask you that question, and I'm paraphrasing in English, of course, are you willing to turn your back on how you were living, and now are you prepared for the Messiah?

And there was a part of cleanliness that was happening, like a ritual type of cleanliness. Yes, I want to get that old stuff off me, and I'm new, and I'm ready to be identified with the coming king. What's interesting about the word kingdom of God is that it's mentioned over a hundred times in the Gospels. And if you were to look in different commentaries and works today by theologians, you'd probably get about not a hundred different definitions, but you would get several different definitions.

[16 : 10] But the one thing that we understand is the base understanding of kingdom means a territory which someone rules over, right?

When we hear the word kingdom, it is the place where God is, where someone is a king. For example, Queen Elizabeth, she's a sovereign. She's sovereign over Great Britain, and she's sovereign over Canada because we're a part of the Commonwealth, but she's not sovereign over the United States because they don't recognize her sovereignty.

You with me on that? So she's really only a queen where they accept her. Now, it gets a little bit tricky with God because we understand that God is the creator of all things.

The extent of his realm is the entire universe. There truly is no place that is not his kingdom.

So in effect, we can say that the kingdom of God is everywhere that God reigns. Therefore, the kingdom of God is everywhere because God reigns everywhere.

[17 : 25] Amen? He created it. But that's not what God or Jesus is offering at this moment.

Because if the kingdom of God is made up of all the universe over which God reigns, why would anyone announce the kingdom of God was near and at hand?

You with me? If he was referring to that whole other kingdom, so he's talking about something very specific.

And what I'm getting at is Jesus is offering something. And all those theologians that I tell you that have different views on exactly what the kingdom is, it doesn't really matter.

What matters is that we understand that Jesus Christ is making an offer for something. You with me on that? He's offering something.

So when we read the readings of Jesus and what he said about the kingdom, he's offering something. What is he offering? Now what's interesting is that the people of Galilee really like what

Jesus is offering.

[18 : 48] In fact, even as Chris read this morning, the multitudes who began to follow Jesus wanted what Jesus wanted. In fact, this man comes to be healed.

And first of all, later on we're going to read, Jesus couldn't even minister in towns or villages because there just wasn't enough room for people. You had to go out into the country, which would have been the fields, by the ocean.

The masses who followed Jesus were incredible, okay? Just thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people are following Jesus. And in fact, here are these people that, and this is the crazy thing about the story of the paralytic man.

They want to see Jesus do miracles. He's got four friends carrying him in and the people aren't even thoughtful enough to let him through. You get that?

There's this weird sense of irony or stupidity. I don't know. But here's this wonderful thing that Jesus can do for something and no one wants to get out of the way. So the guys actually crawl on the roof, lift him up, cut him down, and lower him to Jesus.

[20 : 01] So the crowds were excited about what Jesus Christ is offering, what this kingdom is.

And they do. They want the Messiah. But they want their version of the Messiah.

Their version of the Messiah is that he would come, rule over them, overthrow all foreign powers, and set up his throne.

His capital would be in Jerusalem. And Israel would rule over all the nations. Because the Bible actually prophesies that happening, if you don't know that.

It does. At some point, it does. So they think this is what is happening now. The Messiah would be the future deliverer and Savior who would rescue his people and usher in a time of prosperity and blessing.

[21 : 21] You see what's really interesting is the Jews, more than any other people who have lived on this earth, have tasted the goodness of God in a way that we never have.

In a way that we never have. When they were slaves in Egypt, God rose up a man named Moses and he brought them out of the slavery and he took care of them and taught them how to worship and he brought them to the promised land.

And God's people went into a land that God had essentially cleared out for them. And when Moses passed, the leadership went to Joshua and he ruled righteously.

God was to be their leader and to lead over them. But they got to a point where they forgot God. Remember last week I talked about the difference between believing in Jesus and believing Jesus? Well, they got to a point of believing in a lot of gods and not believing Yahweh.

[22 : 36] Then, after hundreds of years of chaos, God's people asked God, can you give us a king? You know, the thing with Moses, it kind of worked, but maybe if we had a king and the king built a capital and in that capital there was a temple and a throne, then maybe things would go better for us.

It'd be a lot easier for us to follow you, right? So God said, okay, I will anoint you a king. Well, you know, we kind of even want this Saul guy. He's kind of taller, better looking than the rest.

This guy will do. And God in his wonderful grace gives them Saul. He starts to lead them, but things go awry pretty quickly.

But David had another man ready, a man after God's own heart. And God brings David and David reigns under God's blessing and Israel prospers.

And after David's life ends, his son Solomon follows after him. Now Solomon couldn't have had it more easier. He's seeing his father made the mistakes that he has.

[23 : 55] He knows that if he follows after God, things will go well. Not only that, but he asked God for anything and he asked him, give me wisdom so that I might know the truth.

And God gives it to him. And sadly, as Solomon lives his life, things don't go so well.

Everything falls apart. And then of course, Israel can't decide who's a king. So they say there's a king in the north and a king in the south and they make war and life is a disaster.

God sends prophet after prophet after prophet, trying to call them back to God. Some of the prophets they killed, most of them they ignored.

Others will see they weeped after because of the judgment that they prophesied. So have you ever thought, this crowd is around Jesus, he's doing the miracles, he's teaching like no man has ever taught, and they're saying, Jesus, we want to make you king.

[25 : 10] We're going to lift you up, we're going to get behind you, and we're going to overthrow Rome. We are ready, we're ready to go. Will you do this? You ever thought, Jesus could have simply asked, why?

What's changed about you people that I would do that again? Right? Moses, they had a guy who spoke to God in this place with a tabernacle and a tent, and not only that, by day there was a pillar of cloud over the tabernacle and a pillar of fire at night that all of God's people could see God was there.

They ignored it. When they had the kings who God had given, they won great victories, they became wealthy, they expanded the land, they built the temple.

What happened then? So Jesus could say, well, what can I do?

Write laws. I already wrote you laws. Right? They were called the Ten Commandments, and I threw on another 550 laws on top of that to teach you how to love me and how to love others.

[26 : 43] But when you guys split in your kingdoms, the north and south, it was Jew versus Jew when you were killing each other. Why would I do that again?

Well, you know what they responded with, or what they would have said, we got more laws. Isn't that the way with man? Like, we want to rely on ourselves, and we're going to do something, right? We just hit January. We've got plans to lose weight, eat healthier. You know, you start writing out laws and rules that you're going to follow, and you're going to change yourself because you want to be the better you.

Listen, I'm not going to call you out at all, but it happens, right? But that's what they did. They actually wrote a book, and it was kind of codified in 200 A.D.

called the Mishnah. And before that, they called it the older traditions of the fathers. And there were commentaries written by rabbis about the Old Testament laws.

[27 : 52] So what they did is they created laws around laws around laws to protect us from each other. As an example, you don't want to be, let me think of how they could say, I remember I used this example when my first sermon that I preached here, it's kind of like, we're not supposed to drink alcohol, right?

So we're not going to drink alcohol. But then we're going to make the rule that you can't go to a store that sells alcohol, all right? So let's just say independent sold wines.

I'm not going to go shop at independent. I'm going to go to the wine-free store down at the other mall. But then I'm going to make that rule, you know how to really save us from temptation, is don't even go to that mall, right?

And then, you know, that might not be enough because you might be walking, driving by the highway, see the mall, which you know has the store, and it might, you know, it's all those.

So how about we just stay out of that side of town? So if you want to go into Vancouver and that mall is off Cleveland, the only way you're getting to Vancouver is to do the loop around Lillouette, right?

[29 : 15] That's the kind of stuff they used to do. In fact, you are not allowed to look in a mirror on the Sabbath. Why? Because you might see a gray hair and pluck it.

You're not, you, on the Sabbath, you could pick up a chair, but you couldn't drag a chair. You know why? Because when you drag the chair in the dirt, you're actually creating a mark which was like you're setting up your farm.

Like they had all these rules to protect you. Anybody from Toronto here? You've been downtown Bathurst Street where the Jews live? Okay, you guys might not know this.

When you go down Bathurst and there's a huge flux of very conservative Jews and there's fishing line running everywhere, house to house over the roads, okay?

And it's like, if you've been in a third world country and you have some of those poles, maybe second world countries, there's not enough poles for electricity. So there's like hundreds of things going all over.

[30 : 24] When I was in China, there's like, you know, there's fire coming out and it's just everyone's getting electricity from that one pole and it kind of looks like that. And the reason is, you're not, you're only supposed to travel a certain distance on the Sabbath.

But if you're under the house, in your household, there's no limit to how far you go. So by taking a fishing line and going across the road to the store, guess what?

You're still in your house. Right? So they just create more and more rules, which leads to more and more silly things, right?

Because you want to ask, and I've asked a Jewish man this question, a rabbi. I said, you know, do you really think this is what God's about?

Because there's a thing about having the word on your wrist and he had the whole thing going on the airplane. You think that's what really the worship of God is about, that we're fooling him with these workarounds?

[31 : 29] Like, can he not see through that? But that's what they responded, or that's what they would have responded. You would have looked at the Pharisees.

They were dressing a certain way. And the other thing, hey, Jesus, not only do we have these extra rules, we keep the Gentiles out of here.

We keep them outside. The lepers unclean. Get them out. Oh, those widows and orphans, we get rid of them too. We don't really help them either. We're just going to help the healthy, the fruitful.

Isn't that what you want? What? What? Obviously, something has to change.

The people of God, the Jews, need to change to become the people of God. something needs to happen.

[32 : 40] What's interesting is the prophet Jeremiah tells us exactly what needed to happen to God's people. The words of Jeremiah that I'm going to read to you were told to the Jewish people just before the judgment of God fell on Judah.

Babylon was at the walls of Jerusalem. Destruction was coming. The temple was going to be destroyed.

And God didn't send the good, righteous Canadians to take over. He chose the very wicked Babylonians to go in.

One of the most devastating, cruel empires that has ever lived on the planet Earth.

This is what Jeremiah records in Jeremiah 31, starting in verse 31. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

[33 : 52] Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more. Ezekiel, contemporary of Jeremiah, after Jerusalem is destroyed, prophesied, Thus says the Lord God, Though I remove them far off among the nations and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.

Therefore say, Thus says the Lord God, I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered and I will give you the land of Israel.

[35 : 32] And when they come there, they will remove from all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them.

I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them.

And they shall be my people and I will be their God. But as for those whose heart goes after those detestable and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord God.

In case you missed it, the most important point of these passages is the statement, I will.

I will make a new covenant. I will make a house of Israel. I will put the hearts of the law within. I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God.

[36 : 40] I will remember their sin no more. I will forgive their iniquity. Ezekiel says, I will gather you. I will give you. I will give you them one heart and a new spirit.

I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh and they shall be my people and I will be their God.

I will bring their deeds upon their own heads. This is the kingdom of God that Jesus preached to these followers.

In fact, all who would hear his message, all his disciples, all his apostles, the place where I need to rule is in your heart.

The kingdom of God begins with a heart transformation. And the only way this heart can be transformed is if I do it.

[37 : 55] You and I, we know this story, don't we? Change isn't easy. We try to change versus willpower.

We try to change versus tricks. We look for better advice. We make up rules. We follow new ways to live. But unless the base code is rewritten in our hearts, nothing changes.

The greatest words that I have ever, I can't say the greatest words, but the best words I ever heard was once you're wired to be a night person, you're always going to be a night person.

Why? I had 7.30 morning classes when I was seminary. And I had to get up at 5.30 and I would try all the tricks and trade, going to bed at nine, doing all those things.

It just didn't happen. And then finally, there was a doctor at the seminary was going through. It's the way God made you. So just survive, right?

[39 : 03] The fact of the matter is we can follow the law. We can do all the right things. We can avoid all the wrong things. We can have the right feelings. We can attend the right church.

We can come from the right family. But those things don't gain us anything with God. It begins with God changing our hearts, rewriting our code.

Some of us, we want God to do that, don't we? We want to change. We hate making the same foolish mistakes. mistakes. We fall for the same traps.

We always want to hold something back. However, I read some wisdom this week when an author said that the big part of our problem is that we love Jesus for the spiritual stuff, but we don't trust him for the physical stuff.

We, in effect, are dualists. dualists. God lives in one part of our life, but he doesn't live in the other part of our life. And unless we come to a point of recognizing that everything is spiritual, we will never get Jesus.

[40 : 28] Jesus. Now, this is the hard thing for us to understand.

It's a tough message. In fact, Acts chapter 1, Jesus is about to leave. The apostles come around him, and they ask him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

Just think about that question. He's done all these things. He's died. He's rose again. And their mind is still on Israel.

And Jesus Christ responds in a way that I'm sending you out to bring my message, to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

And these men, each and every one of them, will go out and die giving this message that we hear 2,022 years later, have received.

[41 : 55] A question that I have heard asked about before is, what if the Jews really believed when Jesus preached his message?

I mean, when Jesus presented, let's just say they all got saved. They all accepted the gospel.

Would Jesus have brought the kingdom come right then and there?

Would he have set up shop in Jerusalem, kicked all the Romans out, and ruled a wonderful and perfect life? Some theologians think possibly, but it didn't happen that way, so it's no use really arguing about it.

But here's the other question that I would have worried about. If Jesus Christ truly brought heaven on earth to Israel, why would they have ever wanted to leave to come into this place called hell and share the gospel with me?

I don't know about you, but I long for his return. Yet I give thanks that Jesus still reaches into our living hells, our hell-bound world, to continue saving sinners so that they can live with him in the eventual kingdom that will rule more than just in our hearts and our minds, but over the whole world.

[43 : 41] You see, that's what's so amazing about John 3.16. For God so loved the world. What that also means is God so loved every nation, every tribe, every tongue.

You see, it begins with knowing Jesus. Not knowing about Jesus, not reading books about Jesus, but knowing Jesus.

Knowing and understanding he is the only one who can change our hearts. You see, our prayer is to allow the Bible to tell us that there is nobody but God.

Well, let me just say that again. The Bible clearly tells us that there is nobody that God turns away who searches for him.

So how do we believe Jesus? When Jesus says that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, you say yes. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for you?

[44 : 52] You say yes. Do you believe that you are now a child of God? You say yes. And the prayer can simply be, God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

The Bible tells us to confess with our mouth and believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God and he offers you a kingdom that you can enter by faith right here, right now.

The kingdom of God already here but not quite yet. But there will be a time when there is no more reaching out. It will be too late to be in that kingdom. Let's pray.

Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, you have designed us to desire you. From the very beginning man has known that there has been a God.

[46 : 12] We know this because the nature attests to you. There's someone greater than us. Our consciences reveal to us what is right and wrong.

Yet it is in your Bible that we find special revelation, the way to you. that there is no way to God except through Jesus Christ.

How sad it is to read these stories. These people who reached out to Jesus, who saw Jesus, who would have perhaps touched him, seen the miracles, and were so confused as to what the kingdom that he offered.

What's interesting is that the kingdom is rarely mentioned outside of the gospels. And the reason is it's because you're now on the throne.

throne. You sit on the throne of God above. And it's a place where we can now make our strong and perfect plea.

[47 : 33] Where we can cry out and cry for salvation and it is granted. We know there's coming a time where you will undo this creation.

There will be no more crying out for you. But Father, until that ends, and I think of this crazy mixed up world we live in, yet I'm so very thankful you haven't returned because I know there's still souls to be saved.

That there's still many people who need to enter the kingdom of God, who need heart change, and you are still doing that work today just as you were 2,000 years ago.

The fact of the matter is all of us in this room who are saved, who proclaim you, know this to be true and we're thankful that you allowed us to hear and understand this message.

We have friends and family that we long for to hear and understand this message as well. God, we ask you to make yourself evident in this world so that our friends and family may turn to you.

[49 : 00] May the teachings that we teach and share bring others to the saving knowledge of Christ. God, give us insight into the souls of our friends and family.

Allow us to be able to disrupt their idols as skilled surgeons. Father, let us study your word, know it, and be made perfect in your wisdom.

God, be faithful on me, the greatest sinner I know. Have mercy on us all. In your most holy and precious name, amen.