

A Most Unimaginable Benediction

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Date: 19 January 2025

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

According to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.

This is the word of the Lord. Well, the Christian satire website, the Babylon Bee, promises to deliver fake news you can trust.

Their news can be a bit too political at times for my taste, but I've found their news about corporate worship over the years to be quite funny. One headline, let's set aside distractions, says worship leader surrounded by lasers and fog.

[1 : 18] Another, miracle, worship leader plays him as it was written. It's amazing. It's amazing. Another, motion activated lights turn off during Presbyterian worship service.

Sorry to take a swipe at our friends. Another, Psalms expert. Lift up your hands actually means just stand there with your hands in your pocket.

That hits a little closer to home. Another, during powerful worship song, man moved to take hands slightly out of pockets.

Nothing says bless the Lord like that. Those last two headlines are funny because they touch on something which many professing Christians are uncomfortable.

We're comfortable with the rational side of the Christian faith. We're comfortable with the doctrines, the truths, the beliefs. We're not so comfortable with the affective side of the Christian faith.

[2 : 23] We're not so comfortable with the emotional side of Christianity. We do not well up with emotion and shout for joy. We do not lift up our hands to bless the Lord.

We cannot easily talk of joy that is inexpressible and full of glory. Many professing Christians attend church. Many have an appearance of godliness.

Many say the right things. Many attempt to do the right things. But few feel the right things. Few taste the goodness of God.

Few walk in the fear of the Lord. Few know the comfort of the Spirit. Few have been overwhelmed by a sense of the love of God. Few have known the peace that surpasses understanding.

Few can wholeheartedly sing, I once was blind. But now I see. I don't want Trinity Grace to be a good, traditional, complacent church.

[3 : 25] I don't think we are. But I want us more and more to be a church that hungers and thirsts for God. That is regularly overcome with joy. That is quick to joyfully sing and shout and lift up our hands.

Because the Christian faith is not merely about saying the right things. Or doing the right things. Or even believing the right things. Vital to the Christian faith is about feeling the right things.

The Christian faith is about a gospel that brings a new spiritual birth. In which suddenly dead senses are able to taste and see that the Lord is good.

In the midst of the second great awakening. Jonathan Edwards who will be rehearsing one of his sermons. Or reciting next Sunday at the great sermons class. Jonathan Edwards preached during the second great awakening.

And the Spirit of God fell on the churches. There were all sorts of people saying that wasn't really the Spirit. You know. And so Jonathan Edwards wrote a book. His most famous book called Religious Affections.

[4 : 30] To help sift through and discern where and how is the Spirit of God truly at work. He said this. Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of heart of spiritual beauty.

That was a vital phrase for him. A sense on the heart. Where the mind doesn't only speculate. So think and behold.

But relishes and feels. Famously said the difference between mere natural understanding and spiritual understanding.

Is the difference between knowing honey is sweet and tasting it. What he's getting at is true saving faith is not primarily about understanding truth.

Even the demons believe and shudder. True saving faith is about a new birth that brings forth a relishing and a feeling of these things.

[5 : 31] And in our text this morning the Apostle Paul feels something very greatly. He's overcome with emotion. He's relishing the truth of the gospel as he has been from chapters 1 through 3.

And then he erupts in praise to God. In a doxology in the midst of this letter. Wonderfully doxology is just a short song of praise.

We call our opening song the doxology. In chapter 1 the Apostle began by praising God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

And now he concludes that section of theology by blessing God. Praise God from whom every spiritual blessing comes.

He's been unpacking the power of God in raising Christ from the dead. And raising us too. So it's no surprise that this doxology is all about praising our great God.

[6 : 34] But it's not as though the Apostle is praising God because it's the right thing to do.

Throughout Paul's letters. His 13 New Testament letters. There are numerous doxologies.

Numerous eruptions of praise to God. These doxologies give us a window into the Apostle's vibrant saving faith. But they also give us a window into the appropriate response to the utterly staggering sovereign grace that comes to sinners in Jesus Christ.

These doxologies give us a glimpse into the faith we need. Into the faith we need. It doesn't merely hold to the right things. But feels them deeply.

That flows out in a new life. So where we're going is let us praise God. From whom every staggering spiritual blessing comes freely to us in Christ. Let us praise God.

From whom every staggering spiritual blessing comes freely to us in Christ. There's three points this morning. The first is there is no limit to the power God gives in Christ.

[7 : 41] There is no limit to the power God gives in Christ. Like the other doxologies in the New Testament. The Apostle begins by declaring who is being praised.

It's a verbal form but look down there in verse 20. It says now to him who is able. That's who is being praised.

Obviously he's praising God but he's telling us who exactly. Why exactly is he praising God? He's praising him to him who is able. Now that's the way the ESV renders it.

That's the way the ESV translated. But this is the word for power. The Apostle is not merely saying praise now to him who can do certain things.

He said now to him who is powerful. And we're about to see the lengths and the width of his power.

[8 : 41] The Apostle Paul continues and praises God for what he's powerful to do. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. Our God is powerful to do what we ask.

That makes sense contextually for why he is saying this. Because Paul has just prayed for us to know the breadth and length and height and depth.

And to know the love of God that surpasses knowledge. To be filled with all the fullness of God. It's a prayer that is the most daunting prayer in Holy Scripture.

To comprehend the incomprehensible. To measure the immeasurable. To know the unknowable.

And the Apostle Paul is saying our God is powerful to do that.

He's powerful to do what we ask. But he says he has power to do all we ask. Not just some of what we ask.

[9 : 40] But all that we ask. So often we think that we're going too far when we ask bold requests of God. We think it better to be more realistic.

We think it better to limit our prayers to what is possible. To what is probable. To what may actually happen. We think it better to be not too heavenly minded.

To lower our expectations. To shrink our prayers down to the real world. But when we do so we're not being polite. We're shrinking God. We're almost insulting God. God tells us he's powerful to do whatever we ask. So that we would hold nothing back. The requests that honor God are not polite requests. But bold. Daring. Perhaps even brash. John Newton captured it well when he said. Thou art coming to a king. Large petitions with thee bring. [10:46] For his grace and power are such. None can ever ask too much. The apostle continues. Our God is powerful to do all we ask.

But also all we think. Able to do all we ask. Verse 20. Or think. Why? Does the apostle draw this division between asking and thinking? I think it's because there's also often a division between what we ask and what we think. As we've said. We ask according to what is possible. To what is probable. To what really will happen. To life in the real world. But we imagine things quite differently. Right? Our imagination runs wild. We daydream about what we hope would happen. Our hopes and longings just continue to soar. We would never ask for what we imagine. [11:46] For what we think or dream. We're too afraid to put it into words. But the word says. Our God is powerful to do all we ask or think. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon.

Was converted at the age of 15. We studied one of his sermons several weeks ago. He was born into a congregationalist home. Which means he was baptized as an infant. After his conversion though. He became convinced of believer's baptism. One year later. He was baptized famously in the river Lark. Outside of this town where he lived. When his mother heard he'd been baptized. She exclaimed. Ah Charles. I often prayed for God to make you a Christian. But I never asked that you might become a Baptist.

He said. Ah mother. The Lord has answered your prayer with his usual bounty. And giving you exceedingly above what you asked or thought. [12:47] And that's the way the Lord is. He knows what you need before you ask. He knows what you need before you ask. Always giving far more.

Than what you could ask or think. Even those things you dare not to ask. Not only that. Our God is powerful to do far more abundantly. Than all we ask or think. Far more abundantly. Look down there with that. He's just loading up these phrases. He's able to do far more abundantly. Now that's one word in the original language. It underlines the truth that God is not just able to do more than we ask or think. Or not just able to do abundantly more than we ask or think. It's a word specifically saying. He's doing far more abundantly than all we ask or think. Our God is a God of super abundance. Of exceedingly great abundance. He has no limit. No lack. There's no limit to his power. None can restrain him. No one can say his hand. [13:52] No one can stand in his way. It's pointing to the absolute omnipotence of God. His all powerful nature. The only thing that limits our God.

Is his will. He's in the heavens. And he does whatever he pleases in the heaven. And the earth. And so he's able to do far more abundantly. Than all we ask or think. Perhaps we're tempted to ask. He can do far more abundantly. Than all we ask or think. But will he? Isn't that the context? Isn't that the question we need answered? Will he? I remember years ago. My wife and I visited a museum. Somewhere. I can't remember where. But saw an exhibit. Of rare craftsman furniture. I was an architecture major. And then I saw the light. In many ways. And got out of that quick. No offense. But it's great. Anywho.

[14:56] So I was fascinated by this exhibit. I wanted to go. You know. Instead of stare at paintings all day. And we walked through the exhibit. And saw all sorts of rare beautiful chairs.

And couches. Frank Lloyd Wright had some things in there. We saw these just fascinating benches and stools. All different ways of forming a bench or stool. The problem was.

There was nowhere to sit down. You're walking around. An exhibit. Of furniture. But you can't sit down.

You know. It was like the crime of the century. It was designed for sitting. But no one could sit. Sometimes. I think we live as the promise of God. I like that.

Designed for you to look at. But not touch. To gaze upon. But not hold. But beloved. I'm here to tell you that all the promises of God are yes and amen.

[15:56] They're more certain than the chair you're sitting in. All the promises of God are yours in Jesus Christ. And God is powerful to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

And lavish in doing those things for us in Christ. That is what the apostle has been trying to say throughout this epistle. The great theme of this letter is the great power of God.

Isn't it the great power that he called us? That our eyes would be enlightened. That we might see the great power of God. That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion. Isn't it the great power that he wanted us to see in chapter 2? The great power that made us alive with him.

Raised us with him. Seated us with him in the heavenly places. Indeed it's the great power that he wants us to see. When he said he rescued us from being strangers and aliens.

[16:53] Becoming fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. These chapters are unfolding the power of God. Are meant to make it incredibly clear that the Lord is powerful to do whatever his people need.

And is eager to do it. He's rich in glory as we just studied last week. His riches are not to show off his storehouses.

But to show off his lavishness. Stephen Charnock in his book on the attributes of God.

The existence and attributes of God. Said this about his goodness. God is most delighted when he's most diffusive.

Most giving. Most sharing. And his pleasure in bestowing is larger than his creatures in possessing.

[17:56] He's more delighted in giving than you are in receiving. Now some of my friends tell me I got the gift of receiving. You know. I love receiving.

What you got for me today? You know. You can feel that way. Well he's more delighted in giving than you are in receiving. He's not covetous of his own treasures.

He lays up his goodness in order to laying it out with a delight. Holy. Divine. That's who you're coming to. What are these superlatives meant to do?

But to tell you you can ask anything of this God. And he's eager to bend his ear. What is it that stands in the way of the power of God?

What is it that you say is too great for God to overcome? Is it your continual stumbling? Is it your past?

[19:02] Either defined by sins you've committed or sins committed against you. Is it the utter hardness of heart of a family member? A neighbor?

A co-worker? Is it your broken heart? The paralyzing assumption that you will never change? What is it that you think is too great for the power of God?

These superlatives are meant to overwhelm any thought. To drive it out. Charles Bridges said difficulties heaped upon difficulties can never rise to the promise of God.

Now that's one to stick on your bathroom mirror. Difficulties heaped upon difficulties can never rise to the promise of God. There's no limit to the power God gives in Christ. There's no limit.

Point two, there's no limit to the glory God displays through Christ. There's no limit to the glory God displays through Christ. Like the other doxologies, the Apostle Paul continues by giving glory.

[20:10] Doxology literally means glory speech. Doxology, doxa, lagos, glory speech. The scriptures are filled with these glory, these glory speeches in which the people of God give glory to God.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory and strength. Psalm 29. To him be honor and glory throughout the New Testament. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might and revelation.

But who are we giving glory to here? It says in verse 21, look down to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.

For what are we giving glory here? We're giving glory for what he's doing in the church. But what does it mean to give glory to God? You know, glory is something we're all after.

Glory is that desire for fame and recognition and respect. Whether won through warfare, sports, popularity or power. I remember reading this biography called Where Men Win Glory.

[21 : 16] Talking about Pat Tillman quitting the NFL and entering the military to fight after 9-11. So that's where glory is won.

Well, the scriptures tell us God is after glory. We're glory thieves. He's the one who deserves glory. Psalm 19 says the heavens declare the glory of God.

Now how do the sky and stars declare the glory of God? They have no tongue. They have no mouth. What is it saying? Now they don't make God glorious. The wonderful heavens.

The Grand Canyons. The Orion's Belt. They don't make God glorious. But they show off His glory. Because this is what He made with His fingers. This is what He strung into place with His hands. He has no hands. He spoke them into existence to display His greatness. What are they doing? They're pointing to Him who is greater in glory than even the Milky Way galaxy.

[22 : 18] Isaiah 43 says, Every person under the sun is stamped in His image and called to live for the glory of God. How do we give glory to God? How do we live for the glory of God?

It's not primarily by beating our chest or pointing up after a touchdown or hanging 1 Corinthians 10.31 in the kitchen. We give glory to God by viewing our life as not our own.

As receiving life and breath and food and drink and fellowship and intimacy and work as undeserved gifts for us to enjoy.

And blessing His name. That's how we give glory. That's how we give glory to God. But what most of all, what Paul wants us to see in these verses is we glorify God.

It's the glory of what He's doing in the church. To Him be glory. Look in verse 21 again. In the church. Other doxologies talk about glory and honor to God.

[23 : 19] Glory and honor to Jesus Christ. But this is the only doxology in the New Testament that includes the church. Now if you remember, the church has been the focus of the Apostle Paul's attention.

Paul has been helping us see the unparalleled purpose of the church and the plan of God. In the Old Testament, God called Abraham. He called him out of Ur of the Chaldeans.

He made a great people out of him. He made a promise to him. He called that same family out of Egypt. And made them into the people of Israel. He gave them the rights and privileges.

The promises and the feasts. They were the Jewish people. Everyone else were Gentiles. But God promised that all along. He promised Abraham his descendants would be more numerous than the stars.

That he would bring blessing to all people. How it's going to happen? A thousand years of history. And yet God has shown us that it's happened in Jesus Christ. I remember several months ago praying about this series back in the summer, spring.

[24 : 26] Coming back from a personal retreat of prayer and study. And Taylor saying, what is Ephesians all about?

I said it might be Ephesians 3.6. This mystery is that Gentiles are fellow heirs, partakers of the same promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

That's what the Apostle Paul is enamored with in these verses. That with the coming of Christ, the mystery is made known. It wasn't an unsolved mystery that needed a detective to solve it out.

It had been hidden in the plan of God. God had hidden what he was going to do in Jesus Christ.

And how what he was doing in Jesus Christ was going to go to all nations. And now the mystery is revealed.

Jews and Gentiles, people of every tribe, tongue, and nation, are members of the same body in Christ Jesus. The law is fulfilled so that all come to God through faith.

[25 : 28] And strikingly, chapter 1 concludes, you can flip there if you want. It says, Jesus is exalted. And look at verse 22. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.

Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all and all. Now verse 23 is quite a head-scratcher verse. What does it mean, the fullness of him who fills all and all?

But flip back to chapter 3. And he says, he concludes the prayer that you may be, verse 19, Know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Might be filled. Or the fullness of him who fills all and all. That you might be filled with the fullness of God. And then he tells us, glory is in the church. I think what he's saying here is in the Old Testament, The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

It filled the temple. You remember Solomon raising his hands and blessing the Lord. Because the glory of the Lord filled the temple. Well now the glory of the Lord fills the global church.

[26 : 34] The glory of the Lord does not have a zip code. It does not have a street address. It dwells in a people who are being built together into a dwelling place for God. By the Spirit of people of every tribe, tongue, and nation.

And scattered throughout this wonderful world that is our Father's world. That calls strangers and aliens home. And calls them citizens and saints and members of the household of God.

In the classic novel, East of Eden. Two brothers move west to find land and a new life. One of the brothers, Adam, becomes close friends with a great man named Samuel Hamilton.

Adam begins talking with Samuel about his horse, Doxology. I've shared this story before, but I just thought, Doxology? I've got to share it again.

Samuel had a horse named Doxology one afternoon. And John Steinbeck tells the story. Dox stood patiently in the stall, head down in his milky eyes, staring at the straw under his feet.

[27 : 44] You've had that horse forever, Adam said. He's 33, said Samuel. His teeth are worn off. I have to feed him warm mash with my fingers.

And he has bad dreams. He shivers and cries sometimes in his sleep. He's about as ugly a crow bait as I ever saw, said Adam. I know it.

I think that's why I picked him when he was a colt. Do you know I paid \$2 for him 33 years ago?

Everything was wrong with him. Hooves like flapjacks, a hawk so thick and short and straight.

There seems no joint at all. He's hammerheaded and sway-backed. He has a pinched chest and a big behind. He has an iron mouth and he still fights the crupper. With a saddle he feels as though you're riding a sled over a gravel pit.

He can't trot and he stumbles over his feet when he walks. I have never in 33 years found one good thing about him. He even has an ugly disposition.

[28 : 50] He's selfish and quarrelsome and mean and disobedient. To this day I dare not walk behind him lest he take a kick at me. When I feed him mash he tries to bite my hand and I love him.

And you named him doxology, another man said. Samuel, surely so ill in doubt a creature deserved I thought one grand possession.

That's our story. So ill deserved a creature. And yet God has given us one grand possession. This is our doxology.

This is our glory song. The church of the Lord Jesus is our glory song. We were once lost but now we're found. We're once strangers but now we're fellow citizens.

We were once aliens but now we're members of the household of God. The church is what the Apostle Paul is telling us in this epistle. God's new society. The church is at the center of the purposes of God.

[29 : 59] How do we glorify God with what he's doing in the church? We build our lives on it. I was reading a book this week. One author said when one thinks about evangelicals.

That's just people that believe in the gospel and the inerrant word of God. When one thinks about evangelicals and what they hold dear. One would be forgiven for not immediately thinking of the church.

It's a way of saying the church is not important to most evangelicals. An evangelical committed to the church is an oxymoron. Like an honest thief or airline food.

But biblically an unchurched Christian is an oxymoron. It's a fish out of water. Evangelicals might say Christianity is about a personal relationship.

I love Jesus. I love his word. I read his word. I pray all the time. I enjoy my time with Christians. I'm just not really into the church. Well the New Testament knows no such Christian. I shudder to think what the Apostle Paul would say.

[31 : 05] What role does the church have in our lives? What does it have in our future plans? What role does it play in our life decisions? Job opportunities.

Vacation plans. Parenting decisions. If the church is at the center of God's purposes for the world. Is it at the center of your life? How do we glorify God in the church?

We give our lives to build it. We give our lives to protect it. Healthy churches take a long time to build. But they fall apart in a matter of moments.

Slander, gossip, self-interest, and selfish ambition cause the sheep to scatter. What God has joined together, let not man separate.

Don't play fast and loose with the church. We all have a responsibility to protect the church. The pillar and buttress of the truth. We give our lives to build it, to protect it, and to spread it.

[32 : 12] The glory of God and what he's doing in the church is a light to the world. It's meant to spread. It's meant to invade every nation under heaven.

The church is definitely not a museum for saints, but it's also not a hospital, merely a hospital for sinners. The church has a mission.

It's meant to be on mission, to spread, to produce new churches throughout the world for the glory of Jesus Christ. Why? Because there's no limit to the glory God displays through Christ.

God is not just after saving a little clique of people so they can ride happily into eternity. God's after and extending people throughout the world for the glory of Jesus Christ.

The light has invaded the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. And so we proclaim that Jesus is the light of the world and call all nations to him.

[33 : 12] There's no limit to the glory God displays through the church. Point three, there's no limit to the praise God will receive because of Christ. There's no limit to the praise God receives through Christ.

Like all the other doxologies in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul concludes by giving some reference to how long praise and glory are to be given. It's a reference to time.

He says, verse 21, at the end, throughout all generations forever and ever. Throughout all generations forever and ever.

There's no parallel. There's no exact parallel to this in the New Testament. Amen. Some say, to him be glory forevermore. Some say, to him be glory forever and ever.

But this unique expression means for all generations of the age of the ages, of the eternity of the eternity.

[34 : 13] What he's saying, just as there's no limit to the power God gives in Christ, there's no limit to the glory God displays through Christ, there's no limit to the praise God will receive because of Christ.

The church will praise God for millions and millions of years to come. Turn with me to Revelation 4. For millions of years, all the angels have praised God for his glory and his greatness.

We can only talk about God in terms of time, but he dwells outside of time. He never began. And in the throne room of God, people were praising him forever and ever.

Angels were praising him forever and ever. For thousands of years, all the angels have praised God for creation, for all that he made.

That's what we see in Isaiah 6, when Isaiah, the year that King Uzziah died, he's taken up. He sees the Lord high and lifted up. He sees the angels saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.

[35 : 19] The whole earth is full of his glory, blessing and praising God. That's the praise we hear in Revelation 4. Look there. Apostle John's writing from Patmos, and he's giving them a vision to the people.

And he's saying, look in verse 11, he says, Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory, glory, and honor, and power. For you created all things, and by your will, they existed and were created.

We could praise God forever for what he's done in creation. The heavens declare the glory of God. The sky above proclaim his handiwork. When I consider the heavens the work of your fingers, I think, what is man that you're mindful of him?

Or the son of man that you care for him? He stretched out the sky. He's the everlasting God. He doesn't faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He rules over all things.

We could bless him forever and ever and ever. But Revelation shifts to another song in Revelation 5. For millions of years, or thousands of years, we praise God for creation.

[36 : 26] But for millions of years, we'll sing a new song. That's what's going on in Revelation 4 and 5. We bless the Lord for creation.

Now it shifts in Revelation 5 to blessing the Lord for what he's done in Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world. Look in verse 9, chapter 5.

And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and open the seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nations.

And you made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth. And I looked and I heard around the throne living creatures and the elders, the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and blessing and glory.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

[37 : 43] Amen. The end of all things is the unending worship of our great God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Writing about this song, this song of redemption, Jim Ellis says, One is taken aback by the emphasis on the cross in Revelation. We thought it was all about when Jesus was going to come back.

One is taken aback by the emphasis on the cross. Heaven does not get over the cross as if there are better things to think about. Heaven is not only Christ-centered but cross-centered and quite blaring about it.

The praise, this is what I want you to see, the praise that begins in the newly born-again heart will never end. I'll never forget being born again.

I was thanking the Lord for it this morning, 23 years ago. I was all into all sorts of music, Radiohead and things like that. Suddenly my favorite song was Over the Hills or whatever it was, the delirious song, Over the Mountains and the Sea.

[38 : 53] A corny praise song, but it was my favorite song. Why? Because God had built my heart to praise His name. The praise of Jesus Christ at His ascension to the right hand of the Father will never end.

One day soon He will return and bring all of His children home and the praise of Jesus Christ will continue forever forever and ever and ever for all the staggering spiritual blessing that flow freely to hell-deserving sinners in Christ.

There is no better song. There is no more beautiful song. There is no more wonderful song. There is no other song of praise that heaven will sing but about the one who was rich but became poor. The one who was Lord but became a servant. The one who was spotless but became cursed. The one who was innocent but became guilty. The one who was dead but became alive for sinners like you and me.

That is the song. That is the gospel I offer you to this morning. You want to learn how to praise. You want to know the glory that you were born for. It's the glory of being wrapped up this amazing God who did not spare His own son but gave Him up for you and for me so that through Him we might be raised up to everlasting life.

[40 : 08] life. And so in conclusion we say Amen. Amen. Whatever it is. You know we say Amen. What's that mean? Truly or so be it.

Yes. It's a word of affirmation of approval. It's one of those rare words that the Old Testament Hebrew is carried into the New Testament.

Amen means the same thing in both languages. It just means it's a proper response to the people of God to the truth of God. We say Amen. Yes.

We bless the Lord. Let the people say Amen. The Psalms say let the church say Amen. It's what we want to respond to. Do you know there is one who has no limit to His power?

There is one who no man can stand against and stay His hand. The one who works for those who call on Him. Do you know there is one who says there is no limit to His glory?

[41 : 07] There is none too far. None too lost. None too broken. No one who cannot come clean. Do you know there is one to whom there will be no limit to His praise?

You were born for a person and a place and that place is where the praise of that person will never end. that's what God's doing in the church.

Gathering the people for His praise who don't just know the right things or say them but feel them. Just like Lewis said if I find in myself something in myself that nothing in this world can satisfy it must be that I was born for another world.

That's what Christianity is all about. This world is not our home. May we not be a good traditional complacent church cruises into eternity thinking about other things.

May we be a church that hungers and thirsts for God. I pray that's your greatest prayer this year. Regularly overcome with joy quick to sing and shout lift up our hands let's don't play the game. [42 : 26] Let us be a church that sees and savors Jesus Christ above all. Amen. Father in heaven thank you.

Thank you. Father in heaven we offer ourselves to you sincerely and completely.

Thank you. we feel so unworthy of love and affection goodness kindness so often our lives are marked by the low expectations that flow from that.

God I pray that we would not shrink you to our size but instead ask you to expand our hearts to see you as you are.

Come Lord Jesus we pray. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee.

[43 : 45] For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com