

# Wealth & the Fear of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning.

Since it's July and we are having a family service, I want to make sure I point out if you have children who are unused to being in the service, there's a table with some goodies in the back, and as the temperature gets warmer, just to remind you that there's water in the back, there's a water fountain in the back, and there is seating downstairs, which is a little cooler if you're finding it uncomfortable enough that it's hard to continue to be a part of the service.

So, all those resources are here, hopefully, to help you continue to be able to worship the Lord together with us this morning. In the movie, *All the President's Men*, the book about the Nixon-Watergate scandal, based on a book by journalists Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, there is a famous scene where these two journalists investigating the corruption in the White House meet with their informant deep throat.

And the movie, he says, follow the money. Follow the money because it would show where the power lay.

Follow the money because it would lead them to who was responsible. Follow the money because it would reveal the depths of the heart of those in power.

[ 1 : 45 ] For those of you who are under 35, you've got to go out and rent it. It would probably need to go to the coffee shop in Hamden because they probably don't have it on Netflix. It's a great movie. It's wonderful. But follow the money because it reveals the heart of the leaders.

As we look at money this morning and how wealth is used, it occurs to me that in our culture, money is a taboo subject almost like no other in our culture.

We don't like to talk about it, even more so than what happens in the bedroom. Don't ask me about my budget is a typical thing that is true of us.

And even more so, don't you dare tell me what I should do with my money. But oddly enough, when we look at the Bible, we recognize that it actually has a lot of things to say about money.

One count had over 2,000 different verses in the Bible that dealt with money and wealth. One other account figured that one-tenth of the Gospels Jesus teaching was about money and the use of money in our lives.

[ 3 : 06 ] Why does God care so much about it? Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount says this, For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.

Follow the money because it reveals your heart's treasure. And whether we have a little or whether we have a lot, what we do with our money is a key area where we show the degree to which we know and fear God or not.

And that's what our passage this morning leads us to. We're looking in Nehemiah chapter 5 in your pew Bibles. It's page 372.

So if you want to follow along in there, you can. The book of Nehemiah chapter 5. And just in case you're visiting or if you haven't been here for a couple weeks because you've been on vacation, remember we're looking at the story of Ezra and Nehemiah, how God was bringing his people back from exile to the promised land to rebuild them.

To rebuild the temple where they could worship him as he described and prescribed. To rebuild the people that they would know him and follow him in the distinct ways that he has called them to follow him.

[ 4 : 27 ] And to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. This place where God in that season in redemptive history said, this is a place where I will dwell on my people and my light will shine to all the nations of the world from this place.

And what we've seen in the early part of Nehemiah, it actually has this very cool structure in verses, in chapters 3 through 7, where chapters 1 and 2 set up the problem.

And then 3 through 7 you have this beginning of the work of building the wall in chapter 3. Chapter 4 talks about opposition to the building of the wall and how they overcome it.

And then chapter 6 talks about opposition again to the building it. And in the end of chapter 6 you see the finishing of the building of the wall. And right in the middle is chapter 5.

Where as God is helping the people do these external things, he also wants to continue to build their hearts. Their hearts to love him and fear him above all things.

[ 5 : 30 ] And it is in fact in the middle of the work of building the wall that a crisis occurs that reveals these things and brings it to light. And that leads us to our passage this morning.

Nehemiah chapter 5. We're going to read this together. So please read along with me. Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers.

For there were those who said, With our sons and daughters we are many. So let us get grain that we may eat and keep alive. And there were those who said, We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine.

And there were those who said, We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards. Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers.

Our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved. But it is not in our power to help it.

[ 6 : 34 ] For other men have our fields and our vineyards. I was very angry when I heard their outcry in these words.

I took counsel with myself. And I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, You are exacting interest, each from his brother. And I held a great assembly against them and said to them, We, as far as we are able, have brought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations.

But you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us. And they were silent and could not find a word to say.

And so I said, The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations, our enemies?

Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. Return to them this very day. Their fields, their vineyards, and their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.

[ 7 : 54 ] Then they said, We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say. And so I called the priests and I made them swear to do as they had promised.

I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise.

So may he be shaken out and emptied. And all the assembly said, Amen! And praised the Lord and the people did as they had promised.

Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the 20th year to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes the king, 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor.

The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration 40 shekels of silver.

[ 8 : 55 ] Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God. I also persevered in the work on this wall.

And we acquired no land and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us.

Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds and every 10 days all kinds of wine in abundance.

Yet for all this I did not demand a food allowance of the governor because the service was too heavy on this people.

Remember for my good, oh my God, all that I have done for this people. As we look at this, will you pray with me? Lord, we thank you for this word.

[10:00] We thank you for the way that it pierces to the depth of our heart, the way that it confronts and challenges us, the way that it shows us, Lord, what it means to be your people and to follow you.

God, I pray this morning by your spirit that you would help us, Lord, to see our own hearts more clearly. Lord, that you would confront and change places in our hearts that need to be changed. And Lord, that we would be a people who fear you and in fearing you live a life that brings glory and honor to you in all that we do.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So as we look at this passage this morning, I think the central idea is this, that God's people show that they fear God by how they use their wealth. God is building his people, restoring them to the promised land, having redeemed them from the slavery of exile and restoring them to the land of promise. And in the middle of this, he calls them to use their wealth to help God's people because they fear God.

[11:31] We see two things. We see that God shows us how to fear him by confronting our selfish use of wealth. And God shows us how to fear him with an example of sacrificial and costly use of wealth.

So this is what we're going to look at this morning, a confrontation and an example to help us understand what it means to fear God in the way that we use our wealth.

So first, God shows us how to fear him by confronting our selfish use of wealth. As we look at verses 1 through 13, the core verses, the core confrontation happens in verses 7 through 9. Verse 6 says that he was angry when he heard this and he comes to the people and he says, how could you be doing this? Specifically, how could you be doing this to your fellow Jewish people? How could you be exacting interest, taking advantage of the poor among you who don't have the resources to manage the famine that seemed to be the context of this, who don't have the resources to continue to manage their own fields while they're working the fields?

[12:42] How could you come and take advantage of them? This is what verses 1 through 5 show. The people cry out because they're being taken advantage of.

We have big families and we don't have enough food. And because we don't have enough food, we're having to mortgage our long-term resources. And because we're mortgaging our long-term resources, we're in a much more dire state of need such that when we still need more, we're having to give our children as debt slaves to others within the community of God's people so that we have food to feed them.

It's not hard to see some cycles of oppression and the ways that poverty can circle and become a greater and greater burden and how those with wealth can impose greater and greater cost in ways that crush people and destroy their lives.

Nehemiah comes and he says, this is not good. And in verse 9, the core of the confrontation, ought you not rather to fear God?

Why does Nehemiah talk about fearing God here? You might need to step back for a minute and think about what does it mean to fear God? Martin Luther famously made a distinction between two different kinds of fearing God.

[14:18] One is a servile fear of God. That is, a cowering, scared response to a cruel or an evil taskmaster.

He said that's one kind of fear that we might have and we might think of as what it means to fear God. But Martin Luther said rather biblically, fearing God is more of what he called a filial fear. It is the fear of a child not wanting to displease or disappoint or to cross their parents. It is a recognition we are under an authority, we are accountable for our lives to someone else, but that someone else is benevolent and loving and their instruction and even their correction is good for us. And we fear them not in a cowering sense, but in a sense of recognizing with awe and reverence the role that they're meant to have in our lives and to respond to them by saying, all of our lives is accountable to you and I choose and desire to do everything to please you.

In the context of this love relationship, we are to fear God. This is what Nehemiah means by it.

[15:41] Ought you not to fear God? What you are doing with your stuff, what you are doing with your wealth and power, you who have the ability to take advantage of those, you who are able to give out the loans, you who are the ones who are able to give grain in exchange for the deeds, you who are able to give help in exchange for the debt slavery of the children of Israel.

Ought you not to fear God in how you are managing your wealth? And notice that Nehemiah, he does not pull his punches.

He said, I was angry, I thought about it for a little while and then I let him have it and I didn't do this in private. Or maybe he did and they didn't respond.

It's not clear, that's a possibility. But he went public with it. He called an assembly of the people of God and said, you rich people are oppressing the poor among us.

This is not right. And not only is it not right because you are hurting your brothers, but it is not right because you are opening up God's people to the taunts of the nations around.

[17:02] Do you remember back in Ezra where Ezra didn't want to ask the king for a guard because he had said, our God is able to protect us. Here what we have is Nehemiah saying, we have said our God is able to provide for us.

Our God is able to rebuild this nation and to rebuild this people. And now you are destroying that in selfishness.

And in doing that, the name of God is being tarnished in the world. You who are meant to display the glory of God, the abundance of God's goodness and his generosity and his favor and his grace are showing instead selfishness in a profound way.

And beautifully in the story, the people respond. Nehemiah says, this is what you must do. You must make this right. Give them back their lands.

Give them back their things. Give them back the interest you have charged. One would assume, although it's not in the text, give them back their children. Make it right.

[18:24] Undo it all. And the people do respond. And maybe it's because they were not principally committed to this being the right way to do it.

Maybe because they weren't hard-heartedly saying, let's wring every ounce of mammon that we can out of our fellow Jews.

Maybe they were just going with the flow. Maybe they were just living within the culture and the society that they lived in. This is what you do. Someone comes and asks you for something. You give them help, but you make your peace out of it.

Maybe that's true. That's a conjecture. Maybe it's being too kind to them. But maybe they were just swimming in the tide of the culture that they knew. And therefore, when God's clear path of righteousness was laid forth, when God's clear path of how to use wealth and power, not selfishly, but to bless God's people, they responded and said, yes, we will do that.

And they did. Nehemiah held them to it, made the priests take an oath, to make sure that they would follow through.

[19:40] He called down a curse on them. He shook his garments and said, may God shake you out. May you end up with nothing if you don't follow through. But they did. And it's a beautiful picture.

And again, we noticed this earlier. One of the interesting things in Ezra and Nehemiah is that compared to much of the Old Testament, when God's people are confronted, they tend to be stiff-necked and hard-hearted.

And yet, in this story of Ezra and Nehemiah, we see glimpses of God's grace and his people responding with a humble heart and a teachable spirit. And they actually do what is right and turn away from their sin.

So what about us? What does this first part of the chapter 5 of Nehemiah teach us? It seems at the heart of the matter is how do we use our wealth in ways that don't fear God.

And we just need to be honest. It's very easy for us to be selfish. It's very easy for us to think, I got to keep getting more because you never know what's coming around the corner.

[20:58] It's up to me to take care of myself. It's very easy for us to think, I work hard. I deserve this. This is mine to do what I want with.

Maybe we think with a sense of hyper-responsibility, I've got to take care of my own before I can help anyone else. But sometimes that's a mask for just our selfishness.

I wonder too if in our modern society, in our culture today here in New Haven, that it's less I won't help people in need but more I'm too busy to even know that you have a need.

I live such an isolated life that I'm not engaged in the people of God and the community of God enough to know where the needs are. I'm not coming alongside people and loving them and engaging in a way that I could know how I might be able to help.

Maybe we swim in the cultural tide of I'd love to help but it's all tied up in investments.

[ 22 : 08 ] I need my ING number, my retirement number of seven or eight digits or whatever that silly ad shows us on TV. We don't think about how we might use it differently.

We find money to be a place of security and safety for us. And often we fall into pride about what we've earned, what we've accomplished and the life that we've built.

And we don't want that to be put into jeopardy or at risk. And in all of this, what it shows is a heart that does not fear God. We don't recognize that everything we have comes from God.

We don't recognize and live out of a heart of God, everything I have is yours. How do I use it to please you? It's a pattern that says I've got to take care of my own.

I can't think about others and their needs. Sometimes it's I don't want to look like a fool. My friends who invest wisely, the parents who I know who spend the money on their kids, I don't want to look like a fool to feel like I'm depriving my kids by being generous even at a cost.

[ 23 : 35 ] In all these ways, we fear other things more than we fear God. But what would it look like if we did fear God in the use of our money and wealth?

Well, firstly, we cannot say to God, get your hands off my money. Don't tell me what to do with it.

First and foremost, it's just saying we cannot say those things if we fear God.

Instead, we begin to ask our question, God, from all that you have given me, whether a little or a lot, how can I use that to bless others and to show others the abundant grace of God?

Not how much can I spend or even how much can I save, but how much can I give? How can I be a place where the abundance of God that has come to me overflows to the abundance of God being experienced by those around us?

You know, it's remarkable in that passage we read earlier that Elizabeth read from 2 Corinthians, the Macedonian church begged earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints, giving not only what they could but beyond what they could because they so wanted to be a part of what God was doing and they so wanted to love God's people and they so wanted to fear God and honor Him with what they did that they sought out and begged for the opportunity to do this.

[ 25 : 17 ] and they did this because they had experienced the abundance of God's goodness and provision to them because when we know that all that we have has come from God then it frees us to count all things as lost for the sake of knowing Him and serving Him.

It means we don't have to live our lives grasping for those things but we can freely trust that He will give and in response we can be generous people to others. I'm not going to give you prescriptions on what this looks like.

There aren't numbers amounts even contexts because I think that it's the heart of the matter. And friends if the church really lived with this kind of generous spirit if we as individuals and we as a body lived with this kind of overflowing giving heart would we not be distinct and would the world around us not stop and wonder how it is that that could truly be what we do and how we do it. with our wealth. God shows us not only how to fear Him by confronting our selfish use but then in verses 14 through 19 He shows us how to fear Him with an example of selfless sacrificial giving of wealth for the good of others.

Interestingly in verse 14 Nehemiah begins to talk about his own experience and his own role verse 14 it talks about how he had been exalted to a position of governorship under the law the larger rulership of the Persian Empire he had been given control over this area and he shares about his own experience and it might be easy to think well he's kind of tooting his own horn isn't he?

[ 27 : 25 ] He's he's looking pretty good in this isn't he? and often when we read the Bible we look at examples the best way to read it is to think how am I like them in their fallenness and their sinfulness sometimes we like to read the Bible looking for heroes that we can emulate but I think it's often better to read the Bible thinking how does this reveal my own sin and my own fallenness but every once in a while we actually do see a very clear example of this is good this is a pattern to follow this is a life to emulate and that's what we see here in God's wisdom as he confronted the people and as he recorded this for us he says not only am I going to rebuke when you're not doing it right but I'm going to show you what it could look like and the pattern is basically this Nehemiah was at the top of the food chain he had power and wealth unrivaled in the area he had this position and with that position came perks the governors what do they call it the allowance of the governor and yet

Nehemiah chose not to take advantage of this perk why? well verse 15 says that former governors and notice that this could have been some of the Jewish governors it's not clear which ones he's talking about but clearly others in this position had used it and abused it they laid a heavy burden on the people and their servants acted arrogantly it's so easy isn't it when we have those positions for these perks and these you know this is the diva culture in Hollywood right I want my Perrier to be 37 and a half degrees and if it's not that then you know it's so easy for us in places of position and power to abuse it and become very accustomed to incredible perks in ways that are very selfish Nehemiah looked at that and he said no I can't do that because not only was it abused in the past but you see it both in verse 16 and in 18 that it was costly for the people that those perks didn't come from nowhere they didn't come from the treasury of Persia they came from the taxes that were levied on the people in Jerusalem and in Judea his people

God's people and he said I'm not going to do that and interestingly verse 16 it talks about how he didn't even take land and I think if you piece this together part of what he's saying is I had the ability because of my place of power to really build my empire even personally to gain more wealth by having land right I could build my real estate empire and not only that but then I would build my empire of having servants to take care of all these lands but Nehemiah said we didn't take advantage of those perks either and one of the benefits of that was my servants were free to build the wall along with everyone else I didn't allow my investments or my possible investments to distract from God's plan of rebuilding this city for his glory that's what verse 16 points to and instead of taking those perks

Nehemiah said I took the cost myself verse 18 sounds like quite a feast and when you multiply that out by days and weeks and 12 years you realize Nehemiah was a very wealthy man it's a lot of oxen and yet he chose to spend his wealth to bless his people as the governor he had a responsibility for the household for the government for these 150 who were a part of the government he had a responsibility to provide for them he did it himself as he was welcoming foreign dignitaries who came and visited he paid for them in the hospitality himself he said I will not do this at the cost of my own people who are already suffering but I will take the cost on myself so that

I might please God interestingly did you notice how he said it in where is it I forgot to write it down I did this because I feared God such a strong example he confronted the leaders in the first half because they were not fearing God here he reveals his own heart I did this because I feared God I knew that my life was accountable to him I knew that this was his people and that I had a position to love them and to bless them with what he had given me and I chose to use it so what does this mean for us how do we tie this in to us today you know one of the things that's important to notice is that it could be very easy to think this passage is all for those of us who may have more and to give but notice that at the very beginning the context of this was that the poor

[ 33 : 15 ] Jews had committed Nick preached on this last week had committed and they left their fields to come into Jerusalem to build the wall and to do God's work and though they didn't have great wealth at cost to themselves they gave what they could which is their time and their labor and then most of this passage then confronts others who had more and how they could use it to bless God to fear God is to use our wealth to be a blessing to God's people out of reverence to God you know it's so striking the book of Acts this is one of those passages that we in our capitalistic west don't always know what to do with Acts chapter four the end of it

I'm going to read it just so you can hear what the early church looked like now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and one soul and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own but they had everything in common and with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the great grace was upon them all there was not a needy person among them for as many as were owners of lands and houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles feet and it was distributed to each as any had need thus Joseph who is also called by the apostles Barnabas which means son of encouragement a Levite a native of Cyprus sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet because Jesus was raised from the dead because this great grace of the forgiveness of their sins of the possibility of new life of a restoration of a relationship with God of an eternity as God's people because of Jesus they had all of those riches and therefore what they had they made available to be used by God to bless his people so that no one was in need they flourished in serving God as they

sacrificially gave to one another and again there's some nuance to this if you go back and read that 2 Corinthians 8 passage recognize that that the call is not to give what you don't have but to give what you do have and to have a ready heart not a full bank account God isn't asking you to do what you can't do but he's asking you are you willing to do what you can do to help others what might this look like let me end by giving you some examples first of all

I just want to say because this passage in Nehemiah talks about leadership and because Billy Graham in many ways was such an example when Billy Graham was starting out his ministry and he saw the potential for it to grow and for it to be a big organization and for there to be a lot of money flowing through it he set up a board of directors he set himself a salary that he was not in control of and then everything else was not to him but was given to the ministry to be used for the ongoing work of proclaiming Jesus in the 20th century around the world many many counter examples could be given in the last 50 years of American evangelicalism but praise God for this one good example and may we continue to seek leaders who do such things may we who are leaders in this church continue to follow that example what about those of us who aren't leading things how about our everyday lives what does it look like friends

I just want you to think broadly about what kind of wealth do you have it's very easy to think about that in terms of money what's in my pocket what's in my bank account but I want you to think of the wealth of God has given you some of the ways that I have seen this church bless other people in the family of God inviting an individual in need to come and live for a day for a week for a month for a year sometimes not just an individual sometimes a family with kids squeezing them into the basement throwing them up on the in the extra bedrooms in your empty nest I've seen this happen and it's been an incredible testimony I think about those of us who have cars and vehicles would you consider thinking about who you can give your car to rather than getting the measly \$800 the dealership will give to you in a trade-in would you consider giving it to someone who couldn't afford it otherwise

[ 39 : 01 ] I know I've seen that happen in this church I've seen it happen where you've given your vans to Eli and to a bunch of youth group leaders to drive to New Hampshire in the snow and usually they've come back in one piece and sometimes they haven't right and yet you welcomed that cost and said yes I can share what I have for the good of others many of you open your homes week in week out to host small groups to invite God's people in to study his word and to have fellowship together many of you set aside in your budget extra what can I cut out this month so that I just have money to give where there's a need that might arise it's a beautiful thing I pray and hope that our church will continue to excel still more in these ways and if you're someone who isn't sure what the needs are maybe you're newer to the church

I want to let you know we have something called a have need list Michelle in the office moderates it you can let the church office know and they'd be glad to put your email address onto it and it just means when someone has something they don't need they can put it on the have need list say hey I have a washing machine does anyone need it and similarly if there's a need I need a ride to the airport or I need a bed or whatever and we've seen over and over and over again God take care of one another in this church through these things now what we've talked about so far is all material things but there are other kinds of wealth as well some of you are great cooks and have blessed one another with meals when a new baby has come when you've come home from a hospital even just in the midst of a crisis you have blessed one another with meals again if you're not in on that let Michelle know we can put you on the list so that you can do that some of you have a great knowledge of the city of New Haven and our church is full of people who come in and don't know much about the city don't know how it works some of you have great knowledge to share about how to find social services about how to buy a house about where there might be shelters or need places for people in need you have knowledge to share which is a great wealth seek to use it some of you are professionals and when appropriate and legal I'll put those little caveats on there when appropriate and legal consider making your professional help available and I know that gets tricky sometimes but press on find a way to do it in a way that's okay it doesn't mean you all get free health care by finding the doctors in the church but consider that these people might be able to consult with you might be able to help you think through hard problems whether you're a doctor a lawyer a social worker whatever and you know friends in our modern world one of the greatest wealth that we have is time it's very precious to us and we're loath to share it with others maybe you don't have a lot of wealth maybe you don't have a lot of professional degrees but maybe you have

time time to share with others time to help to visit the homebound time to come alongside those who may be struggling one of the things that I want to say is that in all of these examples and in all of these opportunities there's cost and we need to be prepared for that when we give to other people it will be inconvenient and sometimes we will really lose things and we need to be prepared that this isn't a quid pro quo kind of world it's an abundance that springs up from the goodness and the wellspring of God's love for us who then provides for us who then cascades to those around us and we don't look for it to be given back to us by those that we give to but we look to God to give to us so that we might give to others God calls us to something greater than simply hoarding what we have he calls us to give it and friends as we finish and as we close one of the things I want to point out is that these problems came not before God's kingdom advanced not before they began the building of the work but it happened in the context of it and as we continue here at Trinity to want to build our church to the glory of God as we do this work of wanting to be a place where Jesus Christ is lifted up and his grace overflows to our neighbors to our friends to our family to our city and to our world we need to be prepared that these challenges will come and our hearts will be tested are you willing to give when it hurts we need to be ready for our sin to be exposed for the places where we have just assumed that the world works in a right way and that gets exposed and we see it for what it is a heart that doesn't fear God we need to be prepared for our selfishness to be tried and for God's call on us to have a cost in new ways as we continue to pursue God's God friends this is a big task and of course we cannot do it on our own if we sought to be more generous people simply on our own power we would at best become very proud about how wonderfully gracious and giving we are and how terrible that would be but the way that we do this is that we look at our Savior we look at Jesus that though he was rich though he sat at the right hand of God for all eternity though he is the second person of the triune eternal God by whom all things were created and for whom all things were created though he was rich and all of that wealth of position and power and though everything he has belongs to him he became poor for us he humbled himself and took on flesh and blood and he for for for for for the prerogatives of that position so that he might come and be a servant and not only a servant but a slave and not only a slave but a sacrifice he went to the cross to die for us to redeem us from our selfish hearts and our love of everything but

[ 46 : 49 ] God in the world to redeem for himself a people who would fear him and show it and how they use all that they have because of the great abundance that he has shown us in Christ and this leads us then to the table as we continue our service we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper and what we do here this is the table of God's abundance this is the table of God's great provision for us that he has given us the life of his very own son so that the grace that we receive in him by when you you into the