

Love One Another

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Preacher: Greg Hendrickson

[0 : 00] Good morning.

Good morning, everyone. It's great to see you this morning, great to be together, to worship the Lord this morning. I'd like to welcome everyone that's joining us still on the live stream and, of course, everyone here this morning.

Just as a quick reminder, we're still in mask mode, so please, if you get up and move around, go ahead and keep your masks on. So let's turn our hearts towards the Lord together this morning with these words from the book of Hebrews.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain that is his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

And from Psalms chapter 9, So let's stand together and let's praise the Lord together.

[2 : 02] Praise the Lord.

His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new every morn.

Our sins, they are many. His mercy is more. What love could remember?

No wrongs we have done. Omnish and all-knowing, He counts not their sum. Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore.

Our sins, they are many. His mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

[3 : 22] Stronger than darkness, new every morn. Our sins, they are many.

His mercy is more. His mercy is more. What patience would wait as we constantly roam.

What Father so tender is calling us home. He welcomes the weak, new every morn. He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor.

Our sins, they are many. His mercy is more. Praise the Lord.

His mercy is more. His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new every morn.

[4 : 33] Our sins, they are many. His mercy is more. What riches of kindness he lavished on us His blood was the payment, his life was the cost We stood neath a debt we could never afford And our sins they are many, his mercy is more Praise the Lord, his mercy is more Stronger than darkness, new every morn

Our sins they are many, his mercy is more Praise the Lord, his mercy is more Stronger than darkness, new every morn Our sins they are many, his mercy is more Our sins they are many, his mercy is more Mercy is more You may be seated Morning Our scripture reading today is 1 John chapter 3 verses 11 through 18

Starting in verse 11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning That we should love one another We should not be like Cain, who is of the evil one and murdered his brother And why did he murder him?

Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers Whoever does not love abides in death Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him By this we know, love, that he laid down his life for us And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need Yet closes his heart against him How does God's love abide in him?

Little children, let us not love in word or talk But in deed and in truth Pray with me Father God We come to you this morning to worship you You are good You are perfect How can such a perfect God Love such imperfect people We rebelled against you Rejected you Yet in your mercy and grace You loved us You sought us You called us to love one another as you love us But we do not We find reasons to divide from one another And to create factions that breed resentment You've broken down the dividing wall of hostility But we erect new ones If a brother or sister disagrees with us on politics

[9 : 00] Or has a different background than us We do not seek to foster a loving relationship But devise justifications for hating them This is sin This is worldliness This is a rejection of your teaching And a slander on your name Have mercy on us Oh Lord Let's take a moment To confess our sins to God In our hearts Thank you Lord For the work of the cross For the example of Jesus Christ When we were his enemy He died for us To reconcile us to you Thank you that through his work We can be reconciled to each other Fill us with the Holy Spirit So that we can look into the face of one Who would be our enemy in the flesh

And love them As you love us Help us to see their flaws And love them all the more As we remember the flaws and evil You saw in us When you died for us Fill us with your transforming love Help us to lean On your mercy and grace We love you We pray this in Jesus' name Amen Would you stand with me And receive these words of assurance This is from the Gospel of John For God so loved the world So much That he gave his one and only son So that everyone who believes in him Will not perish

But have eternal life God sent his son into the world Not to judge the world But to save the world Through him There is no judgment Against anyone who believes in him Amen Please be seated Well welcome again to Trinity Baptist Church If you're new here We'd love to invite you to go to the website And maybe fill out the contact form So that we can reach out to you by email Also the email and website Is how we're keeping everyone in touch With things that are going on at the church Of which there are several So I'm going to try to bring them all To your attention now So Bridges of Hope is a ministry That we're deeply involved in And they're going to have a Playground cleanup day Coming up Saturday, May 1st So if you're interested in learning more about that Or signing up

You can visit the Bridges of Hope website Also we have a women's picnic Coming up in Worcester Park So that's May 8th And we would ask that you would RSVP Because there's going to be food involved So you can go to the website To do that Our website Thirdly we have a congregational meeting Coming up on May 12th Where we'll be considering New officers for the church So please Save the date for that And then lastly If you're leaving town If you're in a season Where your time at Trinity Is coming to an end We'd love to know that So if you'd let the church office know that That would be great So if you'll bow your heads with me Let's go to the Lord together In prayer Father

Thank you for making a way For us to draw near to you To come into your presence As clean, forgiven And fully restored Sons and daughters We praise you For your mighty works of salvation And redemption For intervening in human history That was headed for destruction For sending Jesus into the world For changing our hearts So that we may embrace Jesus as Savior And for giving us an unshakable hope For the future We pray for the world that we live in We pray that injustice We pray that injustice Tyranny Slavery Oppression And evil Would be suppressed And that a respect and care For the weak and vulnerable Would prevail We pray that the selfishness Greed And pride

[14 : 03] That cause Enmity and strife And strife And discord Would be put off And that peace Would prevail We pray that Hunger And poverty Homelessness And disease Would come to an end And a spirit of generosity And mercy Would grow Between all people And Father We pray for the hearts Of all people Everywhere That in the midst Of the confusion Of this world You would reveal yourself By your spirit And bring clarity We pray that the toxic path Of self-orientation Of the human heart Would be exposed And that you would bring Many to repentance And faith In Jesus Father Thank you for your common grace

In restraining This virus We pray that you would give us Wisdom as we navigate Another season Of rapidly changing Circumstances And we pray for A continued spirit Of unity in Christ Among your people Here at Trinity We pray for those Among us Who are facing Difficult trials That are threatening To overwhelm And even Our faith And hope Father Be our refuge And strength And ever present Help In our time Of trouble Help us To cast All our anxieties And fears On you Knowing that you Care for us So much That you gave us Jesus And we pray For Pastor Greg As he brings us Your word This morning Open the eyes Of our hearts And give us ears To hear So that we may be able To receive What you have

For us We thank you For hearing our prayers For Jesus' sake Amen This is the time When we would Normally collect The offering But I think As we all know By now You can go to The website To give And also There are boxes In the back That you can Make your offering Please stand As we continue To worship God Together in song What gift of grace Is Jesus Is Jesus My redeemer There is no more

For heaven Now to give He is my joy My righteousness And freedom My steadfast love My deep and boundless peace To this I hold My hope is only Jesus For my life Is wholly bound to His Oh how strange and divine I can sing All is mine Yet not I But through Christ in me The night is dark But I am not forsaken

For by my side The Savior He will stay I labor on In weakness And rejoicing For in my need His power is displayed To this I hold My shepherd will defend me Through the deepest valley He will lead He will lead Oh the night Has been won And I shall overcome Yet not I But through Christ In me No fate I dread

[19 : 08] I know I am forgiven The future sure The price it has been paid For Jesus bled And suffered And suffered for my pardon And He was raised To overthrow the grave To this I hold My sin has been defeated Jesus now And never is my plea Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free Yet not I But through Christ In me With every breath

I long to follow Jesus For He hath said That He will bring me home And day by day I know He will renew me Until I stand with joy Before the throne To this I hold My hope is only Jesus All the glory evermore to Him When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I But through Christ in me When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I

But through Christ in me Yet not I But through Christ in me You may be seated Well good morning church If you have a Bible Turn with me to John Chapter 13 Beginning at verse 21 We will also put the words up on the screen For those of you who are here As you're doing that Just a brief sort of update About where we're going with our worship service As you know the governor has announced Some changes to the Connecticut COVID restrictions That will phase in over the course of the next month And so over the next few weeks We'll be making a few adjustments Throughout the pandemic One of our guiding principles has been To follow the requirements And consider the recommendations Of local and state authorities

But not to impose additional precautions If those authorities indicate That they are no longer needed So here are a couple of changes That you can expect in the coming weeks Next Sunday, May 2nd There will be some changes At our outdoor service Which happens on Sunday afternoons So at our outdoor service Starting next Sunday Masks will no longer be required And we won't paint circles on the field You'll be free to sit wherever you like There's still plenty of space So there's plenty of space To have distance from one another If that would be helpful for you as well But on May 19th The guidelines for indoor gatherings will change And we're going to We're still discussing exactly How that's going to work in here But we'll explain more specifically How that will work How that will affect our indoor services When the time gets closer So in general We want to say As we look ahead To enjoying more freedom In upcoming weeks We know that some of you are thinking This is long overdue And others of you are thinking This is happening way too quickly

Regardless of your perspective Let's be intentional to Pursue love and unity in the church By honoring and forbearing with one another Now Paul says in Galatians Use your freedom as an opportunity To serve one another So just, you know, practically Maybe you are ready to give and receive hugs That's okay And you know what?

[23 : 37] By this point we won't stop you Maybe you're not ready to give and receive hugs Maybe you don't want anyone to touch you at all That's fine too Okay? And some of you Didn't want to get a hug Regardless of COVID So here's a simple guideline That we can all put into practice If you're not sure What someone else might be comfortable with Just ask And don't assume Okay?

Don't put somebody else in an awkward position As the guidelines change Let's look forward to enjoying more freedom But let's use our freedom To serve one another in love Amen? All right Let's read this passage Which actually is about Loving one another John 13 Beginning at verse 21 After saying these things Jesus was troubled in his spirit And testified Truly, truly I say to you One of you Will betray me The disciples looked at one another Uncertain of whom he spoke One of his disciples Whom Jesus loved Was reclining a table At Jesus' side So Simon Peter Motioned to him To ask Jesus Of whom he was speaking So that disciple Leaning back against Jesus Said to him Lord Who is it?

Jesus answered It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread When I have dipped it So when he had dipped the morsel He gave it to Judas The son of Simon Iscariot Then after he had taken the morsel Satan entered into him Jesus said to him What you are going to do Do quickly Now no one at the table knew Why he said this to him Some thought that Because Judas had the money bag Jesus was telling him Buy what we need for the feast Or that he should give something To the poor So after receiving the morsel of bread He immediately went out And it was night When he had gone out Jesus said Now is the son of man glorified And God is glorified in him If God is glorified in him God will also glorify him in himself And glorify him at once Little children Yet a little while I am with you You will seek me And just as I said to the Jews Now also I say to you Where I am going You cannot come A new commandment I give to you That you love one another Just as I have loved you

You also are to love one another By this all people will know That you are my disciples If you have love For one another Simon Peter said to him Lord where are you going Jesus answered him Where I am going You cannot follow me now But you will follow afterward Peter said to him Lord Why can't I follow you now I will lay down my life for you Jesus answered Will you lay down your life for me Truly Truly I say to you The rooster will not crow Till you have denied me Three Times One of the distinguishing marks Of true followers of Jesus Is Love At the heart of the section We just read We heard those words of Jesus To his disciples Love One Another By this all people will know That you are my disciples If you have love For one another Now on the surface That command

To love one another May sound nice And pleasant Relatively uncontroversial Universally appealing It sounds like something That a kindergarten teacher Would say To a group of young children Or perhaps even The carefree topic Of a Beatles song All you need is love And love is all you need Some people say That as long as you have love Rather vaguely defined It's okay to ignore More specific biblical commands But when we look carefully At what Jesus says here None of that is actually true A new commandment I give you Jesus says Just as I have loved you You also are To love one another Now you might ask How is that command new?

[27 : 39] Isn't the command To love your neighbor As yourself Found throughout the Old Testament And even in other religions? Yes it is But what is new Is this phrase Just as I have loved you Jesus' followers Are to embody And express The kind of deep Patient And enduring Love That we have received From Jesus himself You see in this passage Jesus doesn't just tell us To love one another He shows us How to love one another In this passage We see Jesus' love Is deep Patient And enduring We see first Jesus' deep love For a loyal disciple Second We'll see Jesus' Patient love For a treacherous disciple And third We'll see Jesus' Enduring love For a hot-headed disciple So first In verse 23 to 25 We see Jesus' deep love For a loyal disciple

Verse 23 says One of his disciples Whom Jesus loved Was reclining At table At Jesus' side And verse 25 says So that disciple Leaning back Against Jesus Said to him Lord who is it?

Now you might wonder Who is this unnamed Disciple whom Jesus loved? He appears at key moments In the gospel of John This is actually The first time He appears explicitly Then he appears In chapter 19 At the cross Along with a small group Of women Who followed Jesus To the end He's also a witness To the empty tomb In chapter 20 Along with Peter And then in chapter 21 He appears Again along with Peter On the shore Of the Sea of Galilee When Jesus cooks breakfast For the disciples And in the next To last verse Of the gospel Chapter 21 Verse 24 of John This disciple Who Jesus loved Identifies himself He says This is the disciple Who is bearing witness About these things And who has written These things You see He's identifying himself As the author Of the book He's sort of saying You've seen me In the story Now I want you to know I'm the one Who wrote these things down

So even though This disciple Is never named Ever since the early church He's been identified With John The gospel writer Now John was a common name In the early church So a few scholars Have suggested That John was a close Associate of Jesus Though not one of the twelve And there's some evidence That could support that theory But most traditional Biblical scholars Have concluded That the gospel writer Was one of the twelve None other than John the son of Zebedee Who's mentioned By name In all the other gospels But is not mentioned By name In John's gospel So the other gospels Identify Peter James and John As sort of the inner core Of Jesus' twelve disciples Now some people Have wondered Why does John Identify himself As the disciple Whom Jesus loved Rather than referring To himself by name Or in some other way D.A. Carson Made a helpful statement About this He says This is not a statement Of arrogance Or superiority As if he was boasting

I'm loved more Than the others But rather of wonder And humility How amazing it is That I have been loved By the Savior himself And so here In this passage We see a picture Of Jesus' deep love His brotherly affection For his loyal friend John was reclining At table At Jesus' side Literally That It says In the bosom Of Jesus Leaning on Jesus' chest It's the same phrase That was used Back in chapter 1 Verse 18 To talk about Jesus' relationship With God the Father Chapter 1 Verse 18 Says Jesus was At the Father's side Or in the bosom Of the Father From all eternity It's an image Of God the Father And God the Son In deep fellowship And joyful communion With one another From all eternity And John Has found himself Being drawn Into that same Deep fellowship And joyful communion

[31 : 56] With Jesus Now at special meals Like the Passover People back then Would recline On couches Around a low table And so here we see John reclining Next to Jesus Sort of comfortably Leaning on him Quietly asking him A question He's completely At peace In the presence Of Jesus Now to some of us The image of John Who was by the way A fisherman Right Think muscular Blue collar worker With calloused hands Leaning on Jesus At the dinner table Might seem A little strange So let me put this In context In the Jewish culture Of Jesus' time Romantic or sexual intimacy Between two people Of the same sex Was absolutely forbidden It was clearly understood By everyone As being completely Out of bounds But because of that Very clear boundary There was lots of space

In that culture For demonstrations Of physical affection Or emotional closeness Between men Or between women So in both The Old and New Testaments You can find Grown men Soldiers Warriors Embracing each other Crying on each other's Shoulders Sitting close To one another Poetically recounting Their friendship And even here Leaning back On another's chest While reclining On a couch None of that Had any romantic Overtones None of it Would have felt Awkward Or weird None of it Would have been judged As unmanly It was all genuine And sincere Brotherly love Now by contrast Our modern secular culture Celebrates all kinds Of romantic And sexual relationships Regardless of the genders Of people involved But one of the sad And rarely acknowledged

Consequences of this Is that it has become Much less safe For people of the same gender And especially for men To express deep affection Or deep emotion To one another Without fear Of being misunderstood I can think of Multiple occasions Where men have told me That for years Or even decades They have greatly feared Expressing affection And emotion And vulnerability In front of other men Because their intentions Were severely misunderstood At some point In the past Fifty years ago The sexual revolution Promised free love It has never delivered On that promise It has only made us As a society More emotionally withdrawn More relationally isolated More confused And anxious More broken And addicted Now our secular culture Is continuing Along that road But the Christian church Has an opportunity To be beautifully Countercultural

Not only in our Increasingly distinctive teaching About Christian marriage But also in our practice Of Christian friendship See as a church It's important for us To hold fast To what the Bible Has always taught That God's design Is that followers Of Jesus Must only pursue Sexual intimacy Within the context Of male-female marriage Because only that relationship Reflects the steadfast Covenant love of Christ For one who is Fundamentally different Than himself Namely us The church But as we hold fast To that biblical view Of marriage We as the church Also have the opportunity To cultivate a community Where friendships Among brothers And among sisters Characterized by openness And honesty Affection And vulnerability Respect And care Can flourish Now that won't happen Automatically But it will happen As we experience

And receive That deep fellowship And joyful communion That Jesus Has enjoyed With the Father From all eternity And that he now Invites us into Through his Holy Spirit Living in us When we experience that We can build That same deep fellowship And joyful communion And brotherly And sisterly affection With one another In Christ Now the specific ways That people express emotion Or communicate affection Will vary from one culture To another My Italian relatives Tend to communicate emotion And express affection In a different way Than my Swedish And German relatives We won't all do this Exactly the same way That's fine But earlier this week I experienced This brotherly affection As I met with the other pastors In Bridges of Hope After our business meeting We spent an hour and a half Eating, sharing, And praying with each other Now because of COVID Most of us hadn't seen Each other in person Since the fall But immediately There was openness

[36 : 59] And vulnerability And lamenting And joy The fruit of seven years Of serving together As brothers Crying, laughing, sharing, praying Almost yelling Not angrily But just excitedly Hugging or In some cases Fist bumping It was a beautiful thing You see as we receive Jesus' love for us We're free to pursue Deep and affectionate And Christ-honoring friendships With one another In the body of Christ And that can be An attractive picture For a world That longs For relational connection So that's the first picture Of Jesus' love That we see Jesus' deep love For a loyal friend But we not only see that We also see Jesus' patient love For a treacherous disciple For a traitor Judas We see this in verses 21 through 30 Last week Pastor Nick pointed out That Judas was there All along At the last supper And when Jesus was washing His disciples' feet He appears in verse 2 Verse 11 Verse 18

And now here Jesus says Truly, truly I say to you One of you Will betray me The other disciples Didn't know who it was But Jesus did From the very beginning Jesus was aware That Judas Would hand him over To his enemies In the end But what we see here Is that Jesus Demonstrated kindness And offered friendship To Judas All the way to the end He washed all the disciples' feet Including Judas The other Gospels Tell us that Judas Was present When Jesus Broke the bread And said This is my body And shared the cup And said This is my blood Of the new covenant Now Judas even Would have received that And in fact It seems from John's account That Judas was sitting Right next to Jesus Because otherwise It would have been hard For Jesus To hand him that piece Of bread directly After he had dipped it Into the dish In the ancient world

It was a sign of honor And friendship For the host of a meal In this case Jesus To take a piece of bread And dip it into the dish Which would have been Some kind of a dip And hand it to a guest At a meal So Jesus is offering His friendship to Judas All the way to the end Even though he knew That Judas would Ultimately reject it And in the end We see that Judas Walks out into the night He walks out Into literal And spiritual darkness Never again to return To the table With Jesus' disciples Now it's also important For us to notice What Jesus did not do Towards Judas Jesus did not negotiate A compromise Between his mission Which he had received From the Father And Judas' idea Of how things should be done Now the Bible Never explicitly tells us What Judas objected to About Jesus That motivated him To betray Jesus Probably the best guess

Out there Is that Judas Was sympathetic To the zealot movement That wanted to start An uprising And drive out The hated Roman government And Judas was disappointed When it became clear That Jesus was refusing To use violence John 12 also tells us That Judas was a greedy thief In John 12 verse 6 Too easily motivated By the prospect Of financial gain But whatever the differences Were They were significant enough And Judas And Jesus Did not Do Jesus did not seek To keep Judas On his team At all costs He did not Compromise Who he was And what he stood for Also After Judas Left Jesus doesn't Run out into the night Chasing after Judas And saying Please please please Come back And don't leave No actually In verse 27 Jesus basically says Okay Get it over with now

Do what you're gonna do Don't delay When it was time For Judas to go Jesus let him go Even though He had patiently Loved him And showed kindness And extended friendship To him For a long Long time Now what does it look like In this case To follow Jesus' command Love one another As I have loved you What is perhaps You can think of people Whom you considered Brothers or sisters In Christ Who have walked out Of the fellowship Of believers Into spiritual darkness And have not returned Or maybe you've been On a personal level Backstabbed Or slandered Or attacked Or abandoned By someone who you Thought was on your side What does it look like To love patiently And wisely In the face of betrayal Well four practical things That the scriptures Teach us First Don't be surprised By betrayal Matthew 24 verse 10 Jesus told his disciples Many will fall away

[42 : 03] And betray one another And hate one another Many false prophets Will arise And lead many astray The love of many Will grow cold The book of 1 John Which we read from earlier Was written to a church That had just seen Some of their own members Walk out And embrace a false teaching And then begin slandering Those who remained In the church It was a very confusing And disorienting experience Betrayal is always Feels very confusing And disorienting Now unlike Jesus We cannot know In advance For certain Who will betray us But when it does happen Jesus says We shouldn't be surprised Second When we have been betrayed The scriptures invite us To bring our pain To Jesus Because Jesus knows That pain Very well Verse 18 Jesus quoted From Psalm 41 9

Which says Even my close friend In whom I trusted Who ate my bread Has lifted up his heel Against me It's a cry of Shock and pain And anguish My friend Has walked out on me He's taken advantage Of me Most of us Expect opposition From Sort of the world Out there People who don't know Us very well May not be sympathetic To us But it's far more painful When a close friend Or a spouse Or a fellow church member Turns on us Or takes advantage Of us Or leaves us in the dust Or simply walks away And never comes back But in the face Of betrayal Jesus invites us To bring our pain And anguish Before him Read Psalm 41 Or Psalm 55 Both of those psalms Written by people Who had experienced Betrayal And both of these psalms

Express the anguish Of betrayal And the longing For justice To be done But they ultimately Lead us to cast Our burdens On the Lord And to trust him Step by step So don't be surprised By betrayal Bring your pain To Jesus Third Love with Patience Jesus patiently Extended Kindness And offered Friendship to Judas And sometimes In order to follow Jesus We must do The same thing For an extended Period of time To people Who will ultimately Turn on us And desert us Romans 12 says If your enemy Is hungry Feed him If he is thirsty Give him something To drink For by so doing You will heap Burning coals On his head Do not be overcome By evil But overcome evil With good You see we can't Calculate in advance Whether or not Somebody Will ever appreciate Our efforts Or be reconciled With us Or be reconciled Or turned back

To Jesus Long ago Augustine put it This way He wrote Do not think That the wicked Are in the world For no purpose Or that God Makes no good use Of them Every wicked Person lives Either that he May be corrected Or that through him The righteous May be tried And tested Would that those Who now test us Were converted And tried with us Yet though they Continue to try us Let us not hate them For we do not know Whether any of them Will persist To the end Of their evil ways See the Lord Calls us to love With patience But finally He also calls us To love with wisdom There are times When like Judas Someone persists In rejecting Every last token Of kindness Every last offer Of friendship Every last call To repentance Judas walked out Into the night And Jesus let him go

Jesus had done All that God Had given him To do for Judas And Judas Had only become More hardened In his unbelief There was nothing More that needed To be done And there are times When we have all Done all that The Lord has Commanded us to do For someone else And still they show No remorse No repentance No openness To change Perhaps they keep On hurling accusations At us Or perhaps they demand That we abandon Our Christian principles In order to stay With them And in those circumstances The wise and righteous Thing to do Is to simply Let that person go And hold on To Jesus Not to take vengeance Into our own hands God reminds us Vengeance is mine Says the Lord But simply to release That person Into God's hands And recognize That there is There seems to be Nothing more At this point That we can do So we've seen

[47 : 07] Jesus deep love For a loyal disciple We've seen Jesus patient love For a traitor And finally We see Jesus Enduring love For a hot headed Disciple Verse 36 to 38 We see Jesus This conversation With Peter Simon Peter Said to him Lord where are you going Jesus answered him Where I'm going You can't follow me now But you will follow afterward Peter said to him Lord Why can't I follow you now I will lay down My life for you Jesus answered Will you Lay down your life For me Truly truly I say to you The rooster will not crow Till you have denied me Three times Peter had good intentions here He had just finished A good meal He was sitting In a comfortable room With people he knew He was zealous For Jesus He was also Naturally confident In himself And in his own capabilities And unafraid To speak his mind And so he promised Unwavering loyalty To Jesus Even to the point

Of giving his own life For Jesus He told Jesus I'm ready now But Jesus knew Peter Far better than Peter knew himself Jesus knew that He was about to Lay down his life For Peter And not the other Way around Jesus knew that Peter had to be Humbled By his upcoming Failure Before he could Be raised up To be a shepherd Of Jesus' flock Consider Jesus Enduring love For hot-headed Peter Notice Jesus didn't Dismiss Peter's Misguided Overzealous Enthusiasm Jesus didn't Write Peter Off He didn't Say you're Never You're someone Who will Never learn You're someone Who I can Never trust No he said You're not Ready now But you will Follow later And when Peter Said why Not now Jesus said

Truly truly I say to you The rooster Will not crow Until you deny Me three times Do you notice That same Solemn phrase Truly truly I say to you Appears at the Beginning of this Passage In verse 21 When Jesus is Talking about Judas who will Betray him And at the end When he's talking About Peter Who will deny Him Truly truly I say to you You see What's the Difference between Peter And Judas It's not That Peter Was a good Guy And Judas Was a bad Guy It's not That Peter Had a Squeaky clean Straight A Record of Following Jesus And therefore Got promoted To leadership In the church And Judas Was an F On the same Night Both of them Shamefully Abandoned Their savior The difference Is that Peter Eventually Repented And was Restored But Judas

Never did You see Jesus doesn't Choose people Who have Squeaky clean Straight A Spiritual records And who will Never have Any shameful Failures Jesus takes People who Have shamefully Failed And Who are Willing to Face up To that Failure And he Calls them To repentance And he Gives them A meaningful Future Now If you Read John 21 There's also An uncomfortable Conversation That Jesus Has with Peter On the Shore of The sea Of galilee Jesus Doesn't Just sweep It all Under the Rug And pretend It never Happened No What Jesus Does there Is he Actually Brings Peter Face To face With His Moment Of Greatest Failure And yet In that Place He Calls Him To follow Him And to Be Restored It was Painful But it Was Restorative

If you Read that Conversation Brothers Brothers and Sisters Consider Jesus Enduring Love For People Like Us Jesus Loves Us In Full Knowledge Of Who We Are And you Know As we Continue To walk With Jesus Jesus Shares Some Of That Knowledge With Us Sometimes Jesus Encourages Us And Challenges Us And Shows Us That By His Grace We Can Do Something That We Never Expected To Be Able To Do He Gives Us New Confidence And Hope That By The Holy Spirit Working In Us That He Can Work Through Us But Sometimes He Also Shows Us Our Own Dark Side That We Don't Want To Face Up To When Was The Last Time That Jesus Shown His Spotlight Into A Corner Of Your Life That You Previously Thought Was A-OK

[52:11] When Was The Last Time That You Thought You Were Ready To Handle A Spiritual Test And If You're Honest You Sort Of Flopped Jesus Is Not Afraid Of Wounding Our Pride But Remember He Loves Us In Full Knowledge Of Who We Are Jesus Is Not Surprised When Our Shameful Failures Come To Light And When We Recognize Them For What They Are He Loves Us Already In Anyway And So Even When He Brings Us To Face Our Shameful Failures He Wants Us To See More Clearly His Enduring Love For Us He He He He He Won't Give Up On Us What Does It Look Like To Love One Another As Jesus Loved Peter Sometimes It Looks Like Enduring In Love With Fellow Christians Who Might Seem

Or Might Be Impulsive Hot Headed Insecure Annoying Overconfident In Their Own Abilities And Talk Too Much Peter Was All Of Those Things He Would Speak Before He Would Think But Jesus Chose Him And Endured In Love For Him So That One Day He Would Become A Rock Which Is What Peter's Name Means You Know His Name That He Was Born With Simon And Jesus Said I'm Going To Call You Peter Right The Most Volatile Of Jesus Disciples And Jesus Says I'm Going To Make You Into A Rock I'm Going To Make You Something That You Were Not All On Your Own That You Could Not Have Become On Your Own But In Fellowship With Me By

Walking On The Journey With Me I'm Going To Make You Into What I've Already Called You Later On Peter Would Write This Love One Another Earnestly From A Pure Heart Since You've Been Born Again Through The Living And Abiding Word Of God He Would Write Have Unity Of Mind Sympathy Brotherly Love A Tender Heart And A Humble Mind And Above All Keep Loving One Another Earnestly Three Times He Comes Back To That Refrain To Love One Another In His You see Peter Had Received That Enduring Love Of Jesus For Him And So He Could Call His People To Express That To One Another Consider The Glory Of Jesus Love How Deep It Is How Patient And Wise It Is How Enduring And Gracious It Is Let's

Pray Lord Jesus We Thank You That You Did Not Just Give Us A Command To Love One Another As We Think Best We Thank You That You Did Not Just Tell Us How You Wanted Us To Love One Another But You Showed Us We Thank You For How We Have Experienced That Same Love That You Extended To John And Even To Judas And Even To Peter Your Deep And Patient And Enduring Love Lord We Pray That We Would Receive Your Love That We Would See The Way That Your Love Has Been At Work In Our Lives That We Would Be Amazed That We Like John Would Find Our Deepest Identity In Being Your Beloved And Lord We Pray That By Your Spirit You Would Help Us To Love

One Another As You Have Loved Us So That The World Might See That We Belong To You So The World Might See Who You Are Our Loving And Merciful Savior We Pray This In Jesus Name Amen So This Morning We Have Three People Who Are Being Baptized And Coming Into Membership At Trinity Being Baptized As A Christian Is An Acknowledgement Of Jesus Authority Jesus Commanded His Followers To Be Baptized And Doing So Is Taking A Public Promise Of Allegiance To Jesus Being Baptized Is Also An Expression Not Only Of Commitment To Jesus But Also Trust In Him Trust In His Love It's All These People Who Are Being Baptized Today Have Already Put Their Faith And Trust In Jesus And Today By Being Baptized They're Publicly Declaring What God Has Already Done In

[57 : 15] Their Hearts So If You've Already Been Baptized Consider This To Be A Reminder Of Your Baptism Of God's Promises To You And Of Yours To Him If You Haven't Been Baptized Consider This An Invitation First To Him As Savior And Lord And Second To Be Baptized As An Expression Of Your Faith And Trust In Him So Tyson And Michelle And Spontent If You Would Come To The Front At This Time Each Of These Has Met With The Elders And We've Walked With Them Through A Process Of Preparing For This Day For People Who Are Being Baptized We Give Them An Opportunity To Public Give Thanks To God In Their Own Words Either By Writing Out A Testimony Or By Presenting One Verbally So You Can Come Right Up Here And Just Take A seat In One Of These Seats So Tyson And Michelle Have Written Out Their Testimonies Those Will Be Sent Out To The Church Email List But I'm Just Going To Read A Couple Excerpts From Each Of Their Testimonies

And Then I'll Invite Spontent Who Will Share His Testimony Verbally So Michelle Here's A Little Bit Of What Michelle Wrote Michelle Says I Was Born In Bristol Connecticut I First Heard About God And Jesus Through My Great Grandma Selina Who Brought Me To Church With Her When I Was A Teenager I Began Drinking And It Got The Better Of Me One Particular Day I Was Just Hiding At Home Curled Up On The Couch But Then I Realized That I Was A Sinner And Needed God's Help I Was Admitted To The Hospital And Finally Transitioned To Columbus House In New Haven Two Women From Trinity Baptist Church Regularly Visited Columbus House And I Started Going To Church With Them I Began To Understand That Jesus Died On The Cross For My Sins I Knew To As Mans

Tusen Wrights I Was Born In Lee Massachusetts I First Went To Golden Jesus Through Boy Scouts When I Was Eight Years Old But As I Turned 10 I Was In Prison The People I Met There Talked About How They Were Innocent And Were In Jail Unjustly, But I Knew I Had Messed Up. I Went To The Church Services, But Kept My Distance From The Christians Who Sponsored Them, And After I Got Out Of Prison, I Lived At Columbus House, Where I Met Michelle, And We Decided To Get Married. I Came To Trinity Baptist, And It Solidified The Truth That I Could Be Forgiveness Of My Sins Through Jesus. I've Seen Answers To Prayer And Seen God At Work In My Life.

Michelle and I have our own apartment now. Jesus has given me life, and each of their favorite Bible verses is John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Amen. Now let me invite Spandan to come and read your testimony. Thank you, Pastor Greg. Hi, I am Spandan. Some of you know me as Dan.

I come from Calcutta, the same city as Mother Teresa, about whom Pastor Matt spoke a few weeks back. I was born in a Hindu family, not a Christian, but God had other plans. A bit about myself.

[60 : 46] I have been a consultant. I have sold my startup. I've worked in private equity, one of the most difficult fields of finance. I've got two MBAs, first from the Harvard of India and second from Yale, and they may have been featured on the Indian equivalent of Forbes 30 under 30. But this is not a tale of who I am. This is a tale of who Jesus is and how he saved me. I came from India about two and a half years back for the School of Management. It was a scorching summer noon. Unfortunately, my flight was delayed, and after 20 hours of not having had a single drop of water, I was dehydrated and jet lagged.

By the time I had reached Prospect Hill, I would have collapsed of thirst. There was not a single shop in sight where I can get water, nor was there anyone else. I was about to faint. Suddenly, out of nowhere, came a landscaper. He did not give me water. No. Instead, he gave me iced tea.

And he spoke of Jesus. I did not realize the calling that day. So I tried to teach him about my Hindu studies. He smiled and left. But Jesus did not give up on me. I graduated from SOM in May 2019, near the top of my class, and absolutely jobless. We, as international students, have only one year of OPT, and most people don't want to give us jobs for that one year. What's going to happen after that?

May got into June, June to July. I did find something to survive, but it was really, really bad. I asked my mom to pray for me, desperately. Pray for me, pray for me, pray for me, and she started going to temples. Nothing happened. One day, on a train in India, thousands of kilometers from the U.S., she heard about Jesus. The same week, by coincidence, or by divine prophecy, I met an Uber driver on my way back from Elm City Market. He happened to be a pastor who had a small church in Bridgeport. He told me about Christ and asked me to embrace him. I started reading the Bible, but I did not understand what Christ truly meant. I did not believe in him. I was yet to know what Christ can do. You know, there's a difference between knowing God and surrendering everything to him. My heart was not ready.

My story was not over there. In the next few months, everything would go dark. I started a business. It failed. I applied to thousands of jobs. Got rejected because I didn't have a visa.

[63 : 57] Had no money left. Most of my friends left, so I had no one to talk to. It was solitary confinement. I forgot to laugh. I cried every day. My morning started with despair, and my nights ended in depression.

And then, COVID started. In hindsight, I did two things wrong. First, I was praying both to my Hindu deities and Jesus at the same time. Doesn't work that way. And the second, I used to wear an amulet of precious stones. It had gold, diamond, a lot of things. It was meant to appease my Hindu deities, and it was actually preventing Jesus from coming to me. So finally, last May 2020, after one year, and when the last date of visa application was over, I finally got rejected from a big firm, not even in the U.S.

I would have gladly left. And that rejection was the last hit that I could take. How many rejections can a man take any day? So that day, I took off my amulet, and I prayed to God and to Jesus, and I said, today I have nothing. If you can, save me. If not, this is the end. And so I prayed for my own death.

Nothing is impossible with prayer and fasting. And I'm not proud of what I did. But the very next afternoon, Jesus came and visited me in my dream. There were two dreams. In the first dream, there was a huge battle on earth. There were giant monsters who were trying to kill men, and they were swatting them like flies. I still volunteered, too cocky or too brave. But when I tried to fight him, I did not know what happened to the monster, but I fell. And I saw myself dying there in a ditch, covered with mud and blood and grime, and I slowly sank into it. I thought, one more bad dream. Okay, fine.

In the next one, Christ visited me. It was a place on earth where the souls of the dead leave. There was a huge canopy, and on top of that, this brilliant white light. I have never seen something that bright ever in my life. And below them, there were the souls of the dead. There was a trap door at the end of it, and there was a ball of light who operated it. It went up and down with the soul when they got onto it. I could not walk anymore because I did not have a body, so I just moved with the others. I floated there, and then I saw him, the Lord of Light. He was helping the souls get into that divine white light. When my time came, I got onto that trap door, and I said, Jesus, take me with you. He just smiled. He just smiled. He did not take me with him. He sent me back, gave me a new body, and I realized one thing. My time on this earth was not over. He resurrected me.

[67 : 30] So I lost everything, everything that I had, but instead, I found Christ. In those days, only my mom was my only support. I had doubts for God. I had doubts for Christ, but she said one thing. Do not say a single negative thing about Christ, about my Christ. I do not know where she got her strength from, but I thank the Holy Spirit for it. Today, I work in venture capital. One of the hardest industries to break into, even if you are an American or you have an MBA, not as an associate, but as a manager.

But the greatest blessing that I have received is knowing Christ. I am not special. I am not special at all. Christ comes for everyone. He is the Son of God. He loves us the most. All we have to do is just love him back. Sometimes, everything might seem lost, but Jesus always finds a way. And when he lifts you, it's not a small step up. You will rise. It's a liftoff. So here I am, walking in his path, in his light. And today, I jump onto his arms. And when my time is up, I will meet him again.

And this time, I will go through that trapdoor again, into the brilliant light with Jesus. In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

No, no, stay here. So let me ask, thank you for sharing. Let me ask Spondin and Michelle and Tyson three questions that we ask everyone who is being baptized and joining the Church of Trinity.

Tyson and Michelle and Spondin, do you affirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your and the only Lord and Savior? And do you commit to serve Christ and the fellowship of his Church for the rest of your life? And do you commit yourself to Trinity Baptist Church to be members and to give and receive love and service? For those of us who are members, do we as members commit to love and serve Tyson, Michelle, and Spondin, even as we receive their love and service among us? If so, say, we will.

[70 : 01] All right, let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for reaching out in your love to Tyson, Michelle, and Spondin.

We thank you for sending your Son to be their Savior. We thank you for sending your Spirit to dwell in them as their comforter and advocate. We pray for each of them as they are baptized today.

Assure them of your fatherly love for them. Remind them that in Christ they are a new creation. Fill them with your Spirit that they might become more and more like Christ and be equipped to do the good works that you have prepared for them to do. We pray that they may always remember this day as a sign and a seal of your saving grace in their lives. Preserve them through every temptation and trial that they will face in the future so that they may always remain in fellowship with you for the rest of their life and for all eternity. In Jesus' name, amen. We're going to stand and sing as they go to get changed and as we prepare for the baptism. So please stand as we sing.

Amen. ...

... .. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

[71 : 51] And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Lose all their guilty stains. Lose all their guilty stains.

And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day.

And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away.

[73 : 02] Wash all my sins away. Wash all my sins away.

And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away.

Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power.

Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

Be safe to sin no more. Be safe to sin no more.

[74 : 18] Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

And there since by faith I saw the stream. My flowing wounds survive.

Redeeming love has been my theme. And shall be till I die.

And shall be till I die. And shall be till I die.

Amen. Be safe to sin no more.

[75 : 29] And shall be till I die. guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo

Grace to thee we cling From the law Has set us free Once and for all On Calvary's hill
Love and justice Shall agree So praise the Lord The price is paid The curse defeated By
the Lamb We who once Were slaves By birth Sons and daughters Now we stand Okay,
you may be seated I baptize Spondin upon your profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

I baptize you in the name of the Father And of the Son And of the Holy Spirit. Thank you.
Thank you. Applause Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[79 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Michelle, upon your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Glory be to God. Hallelujah. And hallelujah, Christ is
King, Christ is King, alive and alive and alive and living on the throne.

[82 : 29] Our tongues employ, our tongues employ with hymn of praise. Glory be to God alone.
Glory be to God alone. Glory be to God alone.

Glory be to God alone. Amen. Amen. Amen. We've come to the end of the day.

If you are up, who are you on the life of God alone. Amen. I'm live Buy from the new yogaj
wilbur. I'm alive and alive only below. I'm blind, oh yeah. saying in? I need to signal one
way or the other. Daniel, Elise, can you just check out there and then give me a thumbs
up or a thumbs down? So we will either stay inside. Well, let me give instructions once we
figure out what we're doing. Outside? Okay, it's not raining. Okay, so it's not raining. So as
usual, the ushers will dismiss you and you can feel free to fellowship with one another
outdoors, out in the back for as long as you like. If for some reason it does start raining,
then you can come back in the building and just use your own wisdom and discretion and
love one another. All right, go with this word. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. And all God's people
said, Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[84 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[86 : 52] Thank you.