Grace Alone

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Date: 15 November 2026

Preacher: Niels van de Kasteele

[0:00] Here are some words from Acts, from the Apostle Paul. Now, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace.

! Father, that is what we need. We need your grace. We need to know your kindness and love. And the only way we can do that is if you speak to us. So please, would you do that now? Would you not be silent, but speak to each of our hearts.
As I try to say a few things as we hear your word read, from Ephesians in a moment. And yeah, do a deep work in our hearts, no matter where we are with you at the moment.
In Jesus' name. Amen. Great. Well, Yeni is going to come and read from Ephesians. Good morning, Watermark.
Today's scripture reading is taken from the book of Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 1 to 10. Please follow along your Bible.
[1:07] If you don't have one, you can either grab it from the front of the stage or at the back of the table next to the door. So our passage is on page 917.

Hear then God's word to us today. Ephesians chapter 2. By grace through faith.
And you were deaf in the trespasses and the sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were deaf in our trespasses, make us alive together with Christ.
By grace you have been saved. And raise us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly place in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.
[2:46] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, and we should walk in them.
Let us believe in response to God's word. Great, thank you, Yidi.
Let's keep the passage open. Now, if you're visiting, we are not actually preaching a sermon series on Ephesians. Normally we do that, normally we preach sermon series, but we're doing a topical series, and this happened to be just such a wonderful message for today's topic.
What is the series we're doing? Well, you can see on the screen the five solas. Now, what is the five solas? About 500 years ago, you may have heard of the Reformation, that there was this big upheaval in Europe, started by this guy called Martin Luther, who rediscovered the gospel, and that together with the Bible, that was now being printed, that it led to a big revival in Europe with many new churches, with a breakaway from the Catholic Church.
[4:11] Yeah, God did amazing things back then, and the emphasis of the gospel, the things they emphasized, there's five slogans, basically, five alones, grace alone, scripture alone, the Latin word is sola, that's why we talk about the five solas, and this is number three.

Now, some of these are a bit separate, like scripture alone, how we started, it's how we know the gospel, but some of them are very related, right? So last week we had faith alone, and now grace alone, and next week Christ alone.
Of course, they're all connected, and so, yeah, it will feel a bit like little angles on the gospel, but they're wonderful angles, and, yeah, I mean, you can see them here in the passage, right?

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In 2 verse 8, by grace you have been saved through faith, and you could even add in Christ, right? They're all together, but today is grace, and now I don't know about you, but grace is one of those wonderful Christian words, right?
It's a popular girl's name, so many graces, or Hana in Hebrew, or Keres or Cheris in Greek, right? That's all grace, because Christians love grace.
[5:18] I know so many churches called Grace Church. Here in Hong Kong, we have Living Grace, and there's Grace Community Church. We love grace, because, you know, we believe grace is something unique.

There's so many religions in the world, and Christianity is the only one that's about grace. It's not about what we do, it's about God, right? Many religions, you have to work your way towards God, whether that's the eightfold path, or the five pillars, or the twelve steps, or those kind of things.
It's about what we do. And then Christians say, well, this is about grace. This is not about what we do, that we go up to God, but actually God came down to us in Jesus, and he died for us, and he took the initiative.
He did the work, and that is his kindness. That is his grace. Though I know all of us have been scammed sometimes, right? Sometimes there's some, you know, the one person who promises to be different, and they're not different, or the one product that promises to be different.
Is it really grace? Or is there actually something that we need to do? Or are we living as if we still need to do something, but actually we don't? And we want to understand better this idea of grace.
[6:31] And so that's what I hope will be the outcome of today. And I think the big word actually is not grace, it's alone. Right? This whole series is, yeah, the five alones.

Because, you know, 500 years ago, when Luther clashed with the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church, they really believed in grace. And they said, everything is by grace. What was the problem? Well, for them, grace worked very differently. So maybe you were here two weeks ago, and we met this monk called Tetzel, who was selling indulgences, right?
They were raising money for a new church building for the Pope. And so, you know, you can buy these pieces of paper, and that will give you merit. And then, you know, that will pay for your sins. Or it will pay for, you know, your loved one's sins, and they can go out of purgatory, and those kind of things.
Now, how did we get that? All by grace. Because God gave all this grace to the church, all this merit to the church. So, it's by grace. But, you still need to pay for it.
[7:32] Is that grace? Or, you know, you've sinned, you need forgiveness. Well, what do you do? Well, you have to go and take the Mass, right? Take, well, yeah, communion.

You know, do penance, and those kind of things. Yet, there's grace. It's all grace. But, we need to come and get it. We need to do something, right? Or even, how are we saved in the end, right? We, we get to heaven. How will God accept us? Well, we always say, well, it's by grace, and not by good works. Except, well, how does it work?
Well, grace comes into your life, and grace helps you to do good works. But, you still need to do those good works then, right? That was kind of the thing. And, is that really grace?
I don't know what you think of that. Does that count as grace? Right? Because, I don't know, think of someone who is drowning in the water, and they need to be saved.
[8:28] And so, the Coast Guard comes, and they, you know, they have this rescue helicopter, and, you know, some of their rescue worker comes down, and, you know, they rescue them.

They say, hey, grab my hand, and I'll pull you out. And that's wonderful, of course, right? And this person could never be rescued without the helicopter. Right? It's purely the helicopter. They couldn't save themselves.
But at the same time, they need to grab the hand, right? Is that grace? Or, eh? I don't know, someone needs to take medicine every day, to stay alive.
I mean, they have some terrible disease, they need to take this medicine every day. Well, is that, you know, how are you alive? Well, it's only the medicine, right? Without the medicine, I would die. But you need to take it every day. And that is the question. Is this grace? How does grace work? What is it? Yeah? Yeah?
[9:22] Okay. All right. Okay, I'll, let's see if this is better. Okay, it's, yeah, there's another one coming. This is not the best one, but it seems to work.

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Okay, so, yeah, here's grace. So, do we need, do we still need to do something? Do we need to cooperate with God's grace? They are the questions that were in the air, and that was why, well, part of what so came out of the Reformation, that really changed things.
Because Luther, you know, he wrestled with this, right? He was a monk, he read scripture, he was a professor of theology, and he did not like it. He didn't like it at all.
That wasn't just after he became a Christian, actually years before that, he was already teaching through Romans and the Psalms, and he saw what it said about us, and, no, right?
If it's 100% God's gift, it's, we, we can't cooperate with this, we can't do anything for this. That's what he realized, and that's what he emphasized, and so that's what we're going to look at, and so we're going to look at scripture, and this passage of Ephesians is, I mean, it's a wonderful passage.
[10:36] You know, what is this passage about? Well, good question is always, what gets repeated, right? What is the thing that gets repeated in this passage? And, two times, Paul says, by grace you have been saved, verse five, and verse eight, for by grace you have been saved.

I mean, what is this passage clearly about? It's about grace, and so, let's dig into it, and see what, what Paul means when he says grace. Well, the first thing we see clearly in one to three, is our inability, right?
This is our inability, two, one to three, let me read them again. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived, in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and we're by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
So, that's all about us, and it is so depressing, right? We are dead in our sins. Dead sounds very final, right? Very definitive. You're not a little bit dead.
Dead is a binary thing, and we are dead. We are enslaved, enslaved, well, to the world, right? Following the prince of the power of the air, Satan, carrying out the desires of our flesh, our sinful nature, yeah, yeah, what kind of dead are we talking about?
[12:05] It's about trespasses and sins, our rebellion against God, our hostility to him, that is, yeah, and it's our nature, right? We were by nature, not just by choice, or something like that, by nature, we were in this condition.

That's what it says, we are, you know, spiritually dead in our sins, we are enslaved, we are hostile by nature, and the verses could be multiplied, I mean, one of Luther's favorite verses, from Genesis 6, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man, mankind, was great in the earth, and that every intention of the faults of his heart, was only evil continually.
I mean, we just think about that, right? How depressing, it's not just some of the intentions of your heart, no, every intention, and not just a mix of good and evil, only evil, and not just some of the time, continually, only evil, continually, that's what our hearts are like, according to the Bible, and yeah, or Romans 8, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, it doesn't submit to God's law, indeed, it cannot.
We can't obey God, we can't submit to what he wants from us, we're hostile to him, we're hostility, it's very strong words, right? This is our inability, you know, people who are like this, how much can we do?
Now, maybe you're here, you wouldn't call yourself Christian, and you'd say, well, these are terrible words, right? They're a bit offensive, right? How can the Bible say that? I mean, back in Luther's day, people struggled with this, and there was some big debates about this, I won't go into that.
[13:43] I think the question is, is it true? Sometimes it's good to be told the truth, right? I went to the doctor, because there was some clicking in my knees, and he says, well, your cartilage is very degraded, and you need to start doing some different exercises, right?

It's good for me to know that, rather than him just hiding it, and me ruining my knees, right? That's the idea. It's good to know the truth. And so, yeah, but that is the first stage.
Understanding grace means, well, knowing who we are. But then, at the same time, Paul emphasizes, well, God's power, right? God's rescue in power.
So, verses 4 to 7, but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.
By grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

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[14:50] Now, you hear all these words of God's character, right? Love, and mercy, and kindness, and riches, but who is the active person here, right? It's all God.

God's made us alive. God seated us. God raised us. God, you know, is going to show the immeasurable riches of his grace. There's nothing that we do. I mean, later in verse 8, it says, you've been saved by grace through faith.
So, I guess, in some ways, we have faith, but in 4 to 7, there's absolutely nothing that we do. He does everything, right? blessing us for all eternity, and just getting us from here to there.
It's all what he does. It's a very different idea of grace. Grace is here, it's God's character. It's his kindness. It's not a kind of substance that you go and get.
I need more grace. I need to go and get it. I need to, right? That's not grace. Grace is God's kindness. His kindness that rescues, right? That gave Jesus to save us.
[15:54] And so, the picture here is very much that we can do zero, and God does 100%. Right? It's, you know, the prevailing view was more like, okay, God does 99%, and you do the remaining 1% with God's help.

But no, Luther says, you know, look at this passage. Could we do 1%? We can't even do 1%, right? If we're like this. And why would God stop at 90%?
Or 99%, right? He does 100% here. And if you're a great, powerful savior, why not do more? I mean, think of that rescue helicopter. Why would they say, well, grab my hand?
I mean, surely a good rescuer, they would just grab the person and pull them out, right? If you can do that. If you want to rescue someone, you just do 100%. Why 99%, right? No.
The picture here is of God doing everything. And those, you know, us doing things and God doing things, it doesn't go together. The idea that we contribute, for Luther was just unthinkable.
[16:58] I mean, this is how he put it when he thought about grace. So he said, we cannot have it both ways. The grace of God cannot be both so cheap as to be obtainable anywhere and everywhere by any man's puny endeavor, right?

That we, we can do something and get. And at the same time, so clear as to be given to us, so, so dear as to be given us only in and through the grace of one man and so great a man, right?
For our rescue, for God's grace, the son of God had to come down and die. That is so big, right? How can that compare with, you know, some of the good things we do and some of the actions that we do?
That is, you know, if, if you can get grace like this, it didn't need Jesus. If it needed Jesus, it can't be so small that we can do it. Right? That was kind of his idea. Right?
And it's, maybe, I don't know what you think. Maybe you're here, you wouldn't call yourself a Christian. Here's the question, right? How can we get back to God? Well, if we think our efforts, it's, you know, many of us are good people, but we're not amazing, right?
[18:07] We're not amazing enough to compare to, you know, Jesus dying for us. The son of God coming down and doing all that. They just can't compare. So, Luther said, you know, the good news, it's 0% us, 100% God.

And as we saw last week, that was a great delight. Of course, the question, hey, last week we saw we're saved by faith, not by good works. How about our faith? But shouldn't we have faith, right? Shouldn't we trust in Jesus? Shouldn't we, you know, cry out to him and, you know, pray the prayer and ask him to be our personal savior? I don't know how we, how you want to put it. That was a debate and they, they hashed it out, but they emphasize that even faith itself is a gift.
Even faith is a gift. And it says here, that too, verse eight, save through faith, not from yourself. It is the gift of God. The gift of God, there refers, it doesn't refer to faith.
It refers to the whole package, but that includes faith. But think about the imagery here. Verse one, you were dead. Dead people don't have faith. Okay? Dead people, they don't do very much.
[19:14] They can't do anything. I mean, think of, and here's a great story from the Bible, right? The raising of Lazarus. That's when one of Jesus' friends died. He had been dead for four days.

He was in a tomb. He was starting to rot and smell. And then Jesus came and he said, Lazarus, come out. And he, he was raised from the dead. Now that was all Jesus, right?
It's not that Jesus was standing there and he heard a little voice. Jesus, I'm dead. Please help me. Doesn't work like that, right? He was dead. And he didn't cooperate with Jesus.
That, you know, Jesus said, Lazarus, come out. And Lazarus thought, okay, shall I do that? Shall I, should I stay dead or shall I come back to life? Right? Lazarus, he, you know, he had no choice.

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He rose from the dead because he was dead. That's the idea here, right? The idea of dead and alive means it's only one person doing it and it's God. Other verses are similar.
[20:14] So, two Corinthians talked about us about how we become Christians. For God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

us seeing Jesus, getting it, that is, it's compared to creation, light, when God said, let there be light. And again, the light didn't have a choice.
It's not, and God said, let there be light, and the light said, sure, and there was light. Now, right? God does it all. That's the idea. faith is God's gift because we were dead.
Now, from our perspective, of course, we believe. From our perspective, it looks like we believe in Jesus. And then you look back afterwards, and no, no, actually, that was a gift from God that he gave me. Because I couldn't do anything myself because I was dead spiritually.
And that's the idea. It's a gift. It's 100% God, including your faith. Now, there's a theological word for that that you may sometimes hear. I think it's a great word.
[21:20] Monarchism. Now, the opposite is synergism. From synergy, we know synergy, right? You know, two things working together. Well, monarchy is the opposite. Yeah, you know, monogamy, monarch, only one.

There's only one person doing the work, and that's God. It's not us. That's grace. Grace alone means it's 100% God, 100% his kindness. Basically, it's just one package, right?
It's Jesus. It's salvation, and not, you know, something more or less. It's Jesus, and so it's 100%, not just 99%. And that is wonderful news.
And without that, that's not grace. And we're going to think a bit about that. So, what does this mean? I mean, there's lots of applications. One, of course, is about God's glory, but that's in two weeks' time, as we talk about glory to God alone.
Let me give two big applications, if it's grace alone, and not what we do. So, the first one, obviously, is humility. Humility. And I did nothing.
[22:25] The Bible says, it's 100% God, 100% his gift, because I couldn't even do 1%. God does it all. That is humbling. If you haven't done anything, and it's all without you, that is humbling.

I have that sometimes, right, that something happens completely without me, to my shame. You know, sometimes I meet someone on Sunday, after the service, and they share this problem, and they say, can you pray for me?
And then the next week, they come to me, oh, this, you know, God's answered my, you know, it's great, it's all solved, thank you for praying. And then I remember, actually, I didn't write it down, I completely forgot.
I didn't, I'm really sorry if that happened to you. The wonderful thing is, God still was gracious, right, and he answered your prayer. But it's very clear, it had nothing to do with me. Right?
I had no part in this, because I, yeah, I was distracted, I forgot to pray. And that is humbling, but, that's the idea. I have nothing to be proud of, right?
[23:25] There's nothing I can do. But it's the same with salvation. There's nothing I contribute, nothing I do. It's 100% a gift. And of course, it has to be a gift, because otherwise, I can be proud, right?

Otherwise, I have something to, on the language here, boast about, right? Not a result of works, verse 9, so that no one may boast. I mean, if I'm involved, if even my, if my faith is my own, if it's not a gift, then, I can boast.
So, you know, simple example. So, imagine you invite two friends, to come to Alpha. Right? That's a great thing. Harry and Sally. So, here are Harry and Sally, and maybe you know the movie. Yeah. It's hard to find, I think there's a Sally here. I mean, not meaning anything, but, okay. But, okay, so they come to Alpha. Now, we want them to be saved.
What do they have? Well, of course, Jesus lived a perfect life, and died on the cross for sins, right? That's, that's the wonderful truth. Jesus, life and death. That's wonderful. But then, Harry, he hears that, and he doesn't respond.
[24:34] He just stays as he is. Sally, on the other hand, she sees her sin, and she believes, right? And she trusts in Jesus. Now, what's the outcome? We believe, right? I mean, Harry, Harry isn't saved.

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And Sally, yes, she is saved. Now, here's the question. What made the difference between Harry and Sally? What was the deciding factor? It wasn't Jesus, right?
It was Sally. Sally had faith. Sally responded. Right? Christ, in a way, he couldn't save Harry, because, you know, he lived and died, but Harry didn't believe.
Right? So, doesn't Sally have something to boast about? Can't she just say, well, I'm better than Harry? Harry, actually, I've contributed to this, because without my belief, I wouldn't be saved.
And because Harry didn't believe, he is not saved. Right? That's the thing. We say, okay, we're saved by faith, and not by works, but we can change faith into a work, into something we do.
[25:38] Right? That's why Lever said, no, it's grace. Right? Faith is a gift. It's grace alone. It's not grace, plus your cooperation. That can't be, because then, you can boast.

No, it's 100% God, and 100% means 100%. I think that's an interesting test, right? So, you know, we always talk about, okay, if yesterday, you got hit by a bus, and you arrive in heaven, and there's the pearly gates, and stuff, and God asks, okay, why should I let you into heaven?
Yeah? What would you say? That's always the question, and maybe you're here, and you would say, well, I've been a good person, and I've been really nice, and I've been to church, and I've never killed anyone, and those kind of things.
I hope we know that that's not the answer, right? Because the people we are, we can't be good enough. But how about the person who says, well, you should let me in, because I've repented of my sins, and I've trusted in you.
I've trusted in you, my whole life. In some ways, that's better, right? Because the Bible says, repent and believe, and yet, the only, the subject of all those verses is, I.
[26:49] Is that the right answer, right? It still feels like the focus is on me. I mean, what I planned to say on that day, well, why should you let me in? Because Jesus died for me. I'm the object, me.

I'm not the subject. Jesus is the subject, right? Jesus died for me, that's why, you should let me in. And that's the idea. Everything is a gift.
Nothing that I have done. And it's not even my faith, that's a gift. And God gave it to me, not because I was so great, and God thought, I just need to have him. No. Nothing.
It's absolutely nothing. And that's humbling. If we have something to do, it won't humble us. Again, here's Luther. For as long as man is persuaded that he himself can do even the least thing towards his salvation, he retains some self-confidence and does not altogether despair of himself, and therefore he is not humbled before God.
As long as we think we have something to do, no matter how small, we won't be humbled. Let me say again, yeah, if you're here, and this is new to you, yeah, there's nothing you can do.
[28:00] You need Jesus, right? He is the only one who can save you. And when you have discovered that, it makes you so grateful because you did nothing to deserve this, right? I can't even say that, well, I responded in faith.

It's pure, amazing, undeserved kindness. I mean, that's one side of us not doing anything. But the other side, wonderful side, is assurance. Assurance.
This is the most wonderful thing about grace and the most wonderful thing they discovered in the Reformation. We can have assurance. Because, you know, if you think about the Catholic system, you were never sure.
They say it's all about grace, but you need to get it, right? You need to take the Mass and you need to do penance and you need to do the good deeds by God's grace and those kind of things, right?
And so, yeah, I mean, like the guy taking his medicine every day to stay alive. He's very anxious that he takes it every day, right? That he doesn't forget. He has no peace. And so, in a way, in the Middle Ages, if you were a Catholic, you wouldn't have peace because you need to do all these things.
[29:08] Now, you know the saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, right? We know that expression. It doesn't matter how strong all the other chain links are.

If there's one weak link, well, the chain will break. Well, if our faith, if our efforts are a link, then the result is that you are never sure because it depends on you.
And I know many Christians struggle with that, right? Okay, we just trust in Jesus, but do I have enough faith? They wonder. do I have real faith? What if I have doubts?
What if I lose my faith? Christians have these questions. Yeah. And in some way, if you think God does 99% and I only do 1%, and I only do 1%, then you should feel like that.

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Because it sounds great, right? God does 99%. But that's only great if the pass mark is like 80%. Then it's great. The problem is, the pass mark is still 100%.
[30:09] And that 1%, you are 100% responsible for that 1%, right? You need to get 100% on the 1% to make a total 100% because God only does 99%.

And which means the chain has a very weak link. Despite all the unbreakable grace, there's your efforts, your faith. And I don't know if some of you here feel like that and resonate with that.
And how would you feel if something so important rested on you and your faith? No, there is really good news. The good news, well, one good news is that we have, we don't need to have any uncertainty about can we do this?
Can we do the 1%? We don't need to have any uncertainty because the Bible is so clear we will mess it up. We can't do the 1%. We can't, even if it was 0.0001% me, I would still mess it up.
I know myself. I hope we're honest enough to admit that. That's the bad news, right? The people we are, the people of Ephesians 2, 1 to 3, we would mess everything up.
[31:15] But that should drive us to Christ. That's good news because it drives us, well, if we know for sure we can't do it, we need Jesus and then we find salvation is a gift. It's 100% a gift.

It's not doing it, God is not doing it through you. He's done it all. And so you can have assurance. You can be sure. Right? You know, maybe now life is easy and it's easy to trust Jesus.
What if it gets hard to trust Jesus? I would really worry about that if it depended on me. But if I know it's God, faith is his gift, it doesn't depend on me, well, I can rest.
I mean, Luther, he faced big trials, right? He was kind of, okay, he had the whole Catholic Church against him. How could he do that? And he said, I can only do that because of God's gift, right? He said, you know, I should be unable to stand firm and keep hold of it amid so many adversities and perils and so many assaults of demons. I would be unable to do this.
[32:14] But why was he not unable? Because, well, this is God's gift and so I'll just keep going. And so he trusted God and he kept going. Right? He still actively trusted.

It's not like God bypassed him. He, you know, he worked in Luther to have such faith but it was still his gift. And from Luther's perspective, he kept trusting but it was God's gift.
And that's so wonderful, right? I mean, Hong Kong is all about performance. It's all about achievements, right? You need to get into the right, you need to get the right job and so you need to write uni and so you need to write secondary school and you need to write primary school and you need to write kindergarten.
I don't know, it goes, what? Kindergarten interviews. For me, that's hard to believe as a European. But yeah, but it's all about performance, right? And there's all these anxious parents and, you know, anxious young grads trying to get a job and maybe dating, right?
You need to perform well otherwise you're not going to get married and, right? Everything is about achievements. Isn't it so wonderful that salvation, it doesn't depend on your performance, doesn't depend on your achievements.
[33:25] It can't fail. The thing is, God won't let it fail. It's too important for him. I mean, why does God not let us be part of it? It's too important. I mean, I'm a parent and my kids, I get them to do some things but there are some things that I will do myself.

I'm going to do them. Why? I don't want to run the risk that I mess it up. Right? I want to make sure it happens and so I do it. And it's the same with God. He doesn't want us to mess up our salvation. So He takes us out of it in His love. He does everything and it should give us rest, give us peace, give us hope because it's not something that we need to reach for.
It's a gift. And that's, yeah, the most wonderful personal gift, the most wonderful truth available for everyone. That's the idea of grace alone.
Let's, yeah, let's rejoice in that. Let's praise God for that. Let's thank God for that and let's live with this joy and hope that we can have because it's grace alone.
[34:26] Why don't I pray? Our Father, we thank You for Your grace.

We thank You that it's 100% Your gift because You know us, You know our hearts, You know how sinful we are, You know we couldn't do anything to make it work and so You did it all.
When Jesus died on the cross, You gave us everything. Lord, help us to know what it means, Lord, for any of us here who are still struggling, who are worried about our faith, worried about, yeah, things we need to do.

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Help us to remember that if we, it's just Jesus, it's one package. We have Jesus, we have everything and it's Your gift. Would we know that and would we enable us to live in the light of that? Lord, as we live in this city, maybe now it's easy but it might get harder, would we have the assurance that everything's under control because it's Your 100%, it's Your gift.
[35:28] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Great. Well, we're now going to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. And in a way, it's very fitting today.

So, you may have noticed we haven't done the catechism question yet. You know, the New City Catechism which we do every week where we, yeah, reflect on the truth and today it is about the Lord's Supper.
So, if we can have question 47, does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work? Yeah, don't give it out yet, okay? Guys, don't give it out yet.
Does the Lord's Supper add anything? Because this was the big question in the Reformation. Do we, does it add something? Because, you know, that's what people believe. I, you know, I've sinned.
I need to get forgiven. I need to take the Lord's Supper. I need the Mass. I need, I need this, right? I need more of Christ's atoning work. And so, the answer, well, let's read the answer together.
[36:26] So, sorry, let me ask the question and then we read it together. Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work? No. Christ died once for all.

The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal celebrating Christ's atoning work as it is also a means of strengthening our faith as we look to him and a foretaste of the future feast.
But those who take part with unrepentant hearts eat and drink judgment on themselves. The Catechism says, you know, the Lord's Supper doesn't add anything.
Christ died once for all. All the forgiveness, all, everything, it was all there when Jesus died. And if you have Jesus, you don't need anything else. The Lord's Supper, well, it's just a meal celebrating. It's a symbol, right? It's a, it's a foretaste of the future, but it doesn't do anything. I think, I sometimes see Christians who, you know, they seem so anxious that we, that they need the Lord's Supper.
[37:27] I mean, I sometimes see people, they, they take one for now, but they take a few maybe for home during the week. Or people who are very desperate for their young kids to have it. The kid has no understanding what's going on, but please take this.

Almost as if it's, well, like vitamin C tablets. But the, the, the thing is, isn't that a bit of a Catholic understanding that, you know, the grace and forgiveness is here in this cup.
And, you know, I need this. I need to take this and I need to take this during the week and my child needs this now. No. Everything is in Jesus. You have Jesus, you have everything. This is just a memorial.
It's a powerful memorial. It's a wonderful thing to celebrate, but it doesn't add anything. Right? You don't have to feel anxious about taking it. You don't have to, you know, because it's grace alone. It's not us doing it. It's not us having to get it. We, God has done it all and we can just celebrate. That's the Lord's Supper. So that's what we're going to do in a moment.
[38:28] I think it's in a way nice that we just sit here and the basket comes to us. It kind of symbolizes that we do nothing. Right? We don't even have to come and get it. It just, it's given to us. So if you're here and you are, well, it's a covenant meal.

If you're in covenant relationship with Jesus, if you've trusted in Jesus, please take it. If you're here visiting from another church, but you're here today, please take it with us. Right?
Because we're all brothers and sisters in Christ. Of course, if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, well, first of all, you don't need to take it. Right? I see sometimes people take this because, oh, now I can get some blessing from God or I get some forgiveness.
It's not in here. It's in Jesus. What you need to do, you need to trust in Jesus. If you want forgiveness, if you want to have God's blessing, come to him. Trust in him.
This won't do anything. Well, actually, it will do something. Look at that last sentence. But those who take part with unrepentant hearts eat and drink judgment on themselves. It's a symbol, but it's an important symbol that God takes very serious.
[39:33] And so, he wants us to honor it. And so, you know, if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, that's totally fine. Please just let the basket pass along, but reflect, hey, what I need, it's in Jesus.

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And come to him. And please come and talk to me later. I'd love to help you, you know, start that journey of faith. But why don't I pray? And then after that, the stewards can hand it out.
Father, thank you for this gift of the Lord's Supper. Thank you that, yeah, we have this reminder, this foretaste of the future, this reminder of your grace that is here to strengthen our faith, to just remind us of what Jesus did, how he died, how his body was broken.
And that's what he told us, that on the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. And he said, this is my body, broken for you. And after supper, he took the cup, and he said, this is the cup of the new covenant, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
We thank you for Jesus. Please help us as we take this to reflect. And would you speak to us? Would you strengthen our faith? Would you remind us that it's all from you? It's all from Jesus. And that's, yeah, we don't need to do anything.
[40:51] Lord, make this a special experience for us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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