

A Story of a Son getting Lost on His Journey

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[0 : 00] Today's scripture is found in Luke 15. Please follow along in your bulletin. Jesus continued, There was a man who had two sons.

The younger one said to his father, Father, give me my share of the estate. So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country, and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

While he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his field to feed pigs.

He longed to fill his stomach with the pots that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death.

I will set out and go back to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of the hired servants.

[1 : 21] So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him.

He ran to his sons, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. The son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

But the father said to his servants, Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it.

Let's have a great feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.

This is the reading of God's word. Good morning, Watermark. My name is Mike, and I work with the university students here at the church.

[2 : 20] And just in case that you're new, like Tobin already gave you a little snapshot of what we're talking about currently at Watermark. But let me just go back to that again. We're actually looking in the broader scale.

We're looking at the Gospel of Luke. Luke, and we've been on the journey through the Gospel of Luke for almost two years. And we'll probably have another year or so to go. But there are still a lot of exciting things to come.

The last few weeks, so we looked at lost things. We looked at the lost sheep especially last week.

We looked at how sheep are driven by the appetite and how they kind of start getting, wandering away, like they follow the food and they don't look around, so they just like wander off.

And we looked at how that's sometimes with us that we begin to follow our desires and our appetite. And then we just get lost on the journey of life. But we also looked at how in the story, we see how God pursues us and how he brings us back and how he carries us back to him.

In the message also, Tobin gave an example of how husbands sometimes lose their kids because they're not very attentive and just get sidetracked. And so now that led to a longer conversation with my wife after the sermon.

[3 : 36] So Katie and I got married about a year and a half ago and we're currently talking about, let's say, family expansion. But after last week's sermon, and Tobin talking about husbands losing their kids, so I had to kind of clarify a few things and I had to convince my wife that it's still a good idea to actually get kids, that I would try my best to be responsible, not lose any on the way.

And anyways, Katie is not here today. She is actually still on the retreat. We took 40 students over to Chengchao. Actually, if we could look like straight over to Chengchao Island to the beach, you'd actually see like 45 people they're worshipping on the beach right now.

So if you miss some of the students, then that's where they are. Anyway, so I told Katie in the preparation of the camp, so we have done a lot of camps and this one actually has 45 students. Isn't that a pretty good indicator? I haven't lost any student on any of the retreats that I would also be a responsible father. But she said, like, they're all grown up and they're responsible, so that wouldn't count.

And I said, yeah, they're all grown up, but with a responsible heart, like, I let everybody judge that for themselves. So I'm just talking out of experience of working with college students in the city for seven years.

[4 : 50] So the story that we just heard is about a father and a lost son. But it's not so much about a father losing a son, but it's more about a son getting lost on his way, on his life journey.

So let me tell you a little bit more about that student retreat that the students were on and are still on. Because it kind of ties in with what we are talking about today, the topic of the retreat is don't waste your life.

So for the last days, we had, like, group meetings and breakout sessions and talks on what it means to live a meaningful life, what it means to live a life in a way that one day when we come to the end and we look back, that we wouldn't say that we have wasted the one life we had.

What do you consider a wasted life? What are things in your life that one day you may look back and you say, I wish I would have done it, or I wouldn't have done it.

What does it mean for you to waste your life? In one of the videos that we watched on the retreat, it told a story of a couple in the end 50s.

[6 : 04] Now, the couple had finally come to the point where they could retire. They had achieved the things they wanted. They bought a beach house in Florida, and they actually had enough to even get a yacht, like a 30 feet yacht, and enjoying the area.

And then they had the time now being retired to take long walks on the beach and collect shells on the way. So at the end of the video, the question was posed, what it means to not waste our lives? And they painted the picture of this couple standing in front of Christ. And Christ asking them, so what have you done with your life? And they stand and saying, oh, the last few years, look at my shell collection.

Look at my house. Look at my yacht. Look at the things I have achieved in my life. Whether you are here today just in school, or whether you are kind of like in these last chapters that you are writing in your life, we will all come to the day one day where we will have to talk about that and where we have to look at what have we done with this life?

Have we wasted it? So after the talk that we had yesterday morning, I sat there at lunch and one of the students were deep in his thoughts. And I started to wonder what was going on and he was just thinking, so I asked him, what's on your mind?

[7 : 31] And he said, my dad. So I've had a couple of conversations with that student of the past year and walking alongside him as his father walked out of the family to pursue another relationship.

And he hadn't seen his dad in a month. So I kept talking and then he said, I wonder what my dad will one day say when he stands in front of Jesus.

I wonder whether he'll say I once had a family and kids and I once had integrity and I once had a life that was glorifying God, but I have recklessly wasted it on my journey.

Today I want to invite you to follow the younger son on his journey and specifically we'll look at like four different movements in the story and you may be surprised of how much the younger son lives in all of us, in me and in you.

Sometimes the story is referred to as the prodigal son and prodigal means wasteful and reckless. Which leads me to that first movement that I want to highlight about the younger son journey.

[8 : 46] It's the movement of the younger son basically going out of home, like leaving home, taking his life in his own hands, basically saying I want to have control over my life, I want to make my choices and I know better what to do with my life and in the process of walking his journey and taking life in his own hands, he recklessly and wastefully throws everything away.

The story actually only gives one verse to that movement in the story. In verse 13 it says, Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set up for a distant country and there he squandered his wealth in wild living.

But this one line over centuries and all around the globe has defined how people have referred to in this story as the prodigal son. The son who is wasteful and reckless in his life.

Now I'm prone to look at people around me and see them as being the prodigal. I don't know, how about you? But I see people living extravagant lifestyles and I see people recklessly living for their own pleasure and I see people not caring about God and walking away from the Father and I see people kind of being caught up in the selfish desires of their lives and treating people for their own benefit and I try to tell myself that I do not squander my life away in wild living.

But then when I'm honest to myself, when I think about the day that I stand in front of Jesus and I think of everything, everything that he has given me, the time on this planet, the resources he gave me, the relationships he put in my place and then he asked me how I used it all for his redemption and for his glory, then my wastefulness will catch up with me because I know where I've wasted it.

[10:56] But the comforting thing about the whole story is that this is by far not everything Jesus tells us. It's not a story that ends in a wasted life, it's not a story that ends in the guilt and shame of wasting it all and standing in front of Christ and that's it.

But before we kind of look at the conclusion of the story and where it actually leads, I want to suggest another movement, a movement that I think is often overlooked and not that obvious because it's not really mentioned in the story.

The second movement I actually think begins before even the story begins. So the story that we have, it begins with the younger son asking the father for his share of the inheritance and the father grants the wish and then shortly after that the younger son sets off on his wasteful journey.

So that's what we have here in the story but now I believe the real story starts in the heart of the younger son much earlier, long before he actually leaves the house and he takes a step.

Now let me tell you a little bit about my life and my journey and why I think that's true. So I grew up in Germany. Some of you know, some are here through my accent and I was the youngest of three sons and I sometimes say that I grew up under a German tiger dad.

[12:17] I mean, I kind of grew up with the burden of a Prussian father that had a lot of expectations where I always felt that I was not quite good enough, that I had to work harder.

My brother was one year older and it seemed to me at least that he did everything right and that he was my dad's favorite and that I could do whatever and I wouldn't be good enough.

So in all of that, somehow deep inside of me, deep down I hope that one day I would be able to break out of that, that I could do my own thing.

It didn't start with a step out but it started with this desire of one day leaving the expectations behind, leaving that life behind, to walk into the direction that I want. And in it all, I just thought that I would have freedom, I would be free to do what I should really be doing with my life.

So in the same way, I think in all of us, there are these desires that grow. It doesn't start with that first step but it starts in our heart when we start to wrestle with these things, these things that are building up in our hearts that we're not taking action yet but they are growing and one day we're just waiting for the moment to take a step and to develop the courage to take that step and maybe you've been growing discontent with kind of like the same thing.

[13:37] Maybe it's the expectations of your family or society. We often talk about bankers and lawyers here. We just want to make sure that I think there are a lot of people that join the route of being a banker and lawyer just because that's the passion of their heart and that's what they are supposed to do and that's how God wired them.

But then from my journey of working with university students I also see that there are a lot of people in the city that become bankers and lawyers not because it's the passion on their heart but it's because that's what provides a good job and that's just what's expected of them and they go on this journey and ultimately deep down there's this desire and I just want to be an artist and I just want to be a writer and all these jobs that nobody values so much in the city because you have to pay rent and you have to provide for your life and so somehow these desires grow deep inside of us and maybe you're sitting here and you have taken a path and you are now in some kind of position in your job but you say I wish when I was 20 I would have studied this subject I really wanted and taken that path that I would really be happy with and you never took that step that the younger son took to actually walk out of what these desires were that were growing but maybe you're discontent with something very different maybe you are discontent with God like you haven't taken a step away and leave the church or leave

Christ but deep down you may have just grown up in all the do's and don'ts of religion and somehow it's that motion of going to church and maybe going to community group and serving here and there but your heart is just not there anymore and if you could just like take that step out and you could just walk your way you would just sleep in and be at the beach or do whatever and maybe you're actually just discontent with your relationships and the dreams of your life that you always wanted to live differently in a different place and not in Hong Kong a different job a different family and these dreams are deep down breeding but we just don't do something about it yet and this is what I think where the story of the prodigal starts and when I look at the father's response I'm intrigued by how he goes about his son coming up and confronting him with his desire give me my inheritance and let me go and because here's no surprise the father doesn't say what why did you want to leave or he doesn't argue and say but you have it so good here and what is it that where does it suddenly come from like what flaws do you have in your mind nothing of that he simply divides the property and gives the son what he asked for and I would would assume the reason is because the father knows the son very well this is not the first time that he has seen these things growing up in the son and he knows he cannot hold him back and that the son has made up his mind I think God knows our heart and we can't fool him he knows what's building up inside of us and we need to address it and ultimately if we don't it will take hold of our heart and one day we will take the step so we have looked at this this movement of how the discontent builds up and then how ultimately the prodigal son takes that step out and then he begins the journey away from the father's house in reckless and wasteful living so let's look at and there's the next part of the storyline when the son reaches the end of himself not just once have I heard people say just yeah Christianity is just for weak people religion is just for people that just yeah can't handle with life can't handle life on their own they just need to hold on to something actually he thought the same things before I became a

Christian when I was 23 and I think it's actually somewhat true most people find God when they realize that they can't run life by themselves when they finally come to the end of their own strengths realizing they can hold it all together and that the journey that we want to run in our own strength and our own selfishness ultimately leads to destruction let me look again at the scripture passage starting verse 14 and here I think this is very interesting because there's a longer passage that addresses this so after the son had spent everything there was a severe famine in that whole country and he began to be in need so he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs he longed to fill his stomach with the pots that the pigs were eating but no one gave him anything when he came to his senses he said how many of my father's hired servants have food to spare and here I am starving to death I'll set out and go back to my father and say to him father I've sinned against heaven and against you I'm no longer worthy to be called your son make me like one of your lower servants so he got up and went to his father it took one verse for him to set out on his journey and lose it all but this whole paragraph for him to finally overcome his pride to return to the father I mean like how deep do we have to get into the troubles of life to realize how limited we are in really having any control of our lives and that we need a return to the father I shared with you how I longed for for the day that that I could walk my path that I could walk my journey in my life and how this desire just built up inside of me that I wanted to live my my own dreams and not just live for the expectations of others now that day for me came in a pretty unexpected way my my father suddenly died when I was 18 and I found myself in the place where I could move in my life wherever I wanted where I had to there was this freedom and the responsibility that I wanted but then followed five years of me being a prodigal and I found my hope and my security my identity in in the success of my banking career as I tried to just really get into investment banking I invested into high tech stocks and pretty soon I made a small fortune for myself and it was not the story of the prodigal but it led to the same outcome I traveled I partied I had different relationships but even with all these steps that I took at one point I just found this immense emptiness that I tried to take control of a life that didn't lead anywhere and that's when I met God it's when I first learned about about Jesus and that God himself that he had become a human being to seek me out and where I was and that he died for me and that was just something that I could not accept looking at my life like why would

God be interested in my life when we look at our lives often it's the guilt and the shame of how we have recklessly wasted our lives that holds us back and we think that it's not redeemable but I look at the story of the prodigal son and it's amazing to me how far he had to go to finally go back but when he goes back what he really sees about the father so after overcoming the guilt and the

shame and there's this whole passage of the the son wrestling with his shame and him wasting everything so he starts to then make up his mind about how he would return when he goes back he that's what he's thinking I'll set out and go back to my father and say to him father I've sinned against heaven and against you I'm no longer worthy to be called your son make my lie make me like one of your hired servants so he got up and he went to his father so broken in his pride he starts to kind of take this journey with his big burden of all his guilt and shame wondering like okay I'll just be a servant and I'll be humiliated and

[22 : 11] I'll pay for all the things that I have done wrong but I know that I can run this life on my own we we've all messed up on our journey and sometimes when we look at these reckless and wasteful moments of our life they feel like that heavy burden that put that guilt and shame on our shoulders and we just don't want to walk any further but what we see in the response of the father is to me incredible so it says but while he was still a long way off his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him and he ran to his son he threw his arms around him and kissed him the son said to him father I have sinned against heaven and again against you I'm no longer worthy to be called you but the father said to his servants quick bring the best robe and put it on him put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet bring the fattened calf and kill it let's have a feast and celebrate for the son of mine was dead and is alive again he was lost and is found so they began to celebrate and that picture of the son walking back and us walking with our guilt and shame expecting to pay for what we have done wrong for the rest of our lives that picture is shattered as the father stands at the doorstep and he comes running and he kisses the son and the speech of apology that the son had prepared he can't even finish it and then they begin and rejoice and they celebrate and to me there's not much to add to that picture if we really take in what the scripture says here about who God is like every explanation interpretation I think will just ultimately fall short of the the grace and the love and the mercy that we see in God here we have looked at four movements in that story we have we have looked at how these desires grow in us and that we need to address and that we cannot ignore them because one day they'll take we'll take that step and and walk out and walk on our own journey but we need to realize that this journey will ultimately lead to a reckless disaster but when we come to the end of ourselves that's not the end of the story but there's hope because that hope isn't that we are not stuck in our shame and guilt but as we return to the father he is there waiting for us and that picture of God the true freedom that is found in who he is and and if we begin to understand what that freedom looks like in returning to the father and understanding his love and his mercy and his grace then we should be called into running back to his arms now we can continue looking at these stories but um these stories are written all over this congregation all of you have walked your journey as a prodigal and you may be here and you may just have dreams and desires building up and up inside of you and you wonder what to do with the desires and you may be on that reckless journey and saying I'm just living my life I'm in control I'm doing whatever I want or you may have found that I can't do this on my own I need to go to the father but my shame and my guilt about my journey I just feel unredeemable so my hope is that there we will see who God is and how he desires for us to return how he loves us and two of the stories we want to want to hear now I asked

Henrika and Michael to share a little bit about their story and their testimony of how they relate to to the story of the prodigal actually Henrika is somewhat of a prodigal for us at Watermark she has been with us for the past year and then actually went back to the Netherlands and because she loves us so much she came back for a few weeks and we just wanted wanted her to share a little bit of like what what got it in her life and Michael is a second year architecture student and he also has had this amazing journey of like how God has been been at work in his life since coming to Hong Kong he's originally from the US but actually grew up in China and so Henrika if you would just share a little bit about your story with us okay well first of all hello Watermark well we just got back from a retreat university retreat that Mike was already mentioning and when I was writing the story about my testimony I was thinking about the former retreat which was I think half a year ago and I can remember the first night we were there and there was this song we sung it's called Center and there was this sentence in it and it said you hold everything together and when I heard that I got so annoyed because I really didn't feel like that so when I was 10 my parents get got a divorce and my dad was a pastor at the time and yeah it wasn't really well received in church in the church community there for me there was this huge feeling that I have to live up to a certain role as a pastor's daughter had to be good but I didn't really feel the love and the honesty in that church when

my parents got a divorce so it was really hard for me to to really see people how people reacted to that because I didn't feel any love and then I was thinking if I don't feel the love from the people in the community how can Jesus be love how why did my parents got a divorce but why didn't Jesus hold everything together so then I was about 12 got to my teenage years and as a true pastor's daughter I began to rebel so it started with having a bad attitude I didn't go to church that often when I was going because my dad demanded me to it most of the time it resulted me in like wearing something that he would not really approve of so I still try to rebel a bit against that I went to high school got kicked out of class a couple of times so yeah there weren't there wasn't like the most proud moment of my life but in that I was still mad and but I still wanted to have answers of God and I still there was this I felt a separation but I really needed God still but then after a while I just noticed all the struggles in my family and saw how two siblings of me that weren't Christian anymore they just walked away from faith and that gave so many arguments in our family and so much struggle that I decided that I didn't want to have any part of that anymore so I decided that I didn't want to go to church anymore I didn't want to be part of that I didn't want to have the these arguments again but then you have this point in life that you can't escape anymore it's when you when you're dealing with life questions it's becoming too hard to just escape and live this kind of life what Mike was just sharing about that you can't you know that you can't do it on your own anymore like I tried but I failed miserably so that's when I got here to Hong Kong and I came to Watermark and this community and the university students and then I really realized that the brokenness I saw before wasn't really from Jesus it was from people and that we actually need

Jesus to not be that broken anymore so I saw that I finally had to separate those two things from each other that it's not the experience you have but it's more in Jesus itself and so although I felt like a prodigal daughter before and you know like sinned bad I think that finally I just saw that it didn't stop there there was still hope and for me that was I don't know pretty amazing so yeah like Mike said I'm Michael and I've been at Watermark for almost a year I'm studying architecture at HKU and I think despite growing up in a Christian family and having a relationship with Christ my first semester at university I think I really lived as the younger brother in full force and almost everything I did building upon like past insecurities and painful memories during my childhood my growing up years were characterized by this outwardly normal and healthy life that disguised the brokenness I really felt on the inside I trained myself to shut down to fake it I turned to a facade of perfection to avoid myself and in my heart I had already run away from

God I was living in the life that I wanted to providing for myself because I didn't really believe that God loved me could provide for me or even could take me back I think starting university really introduced a whole spectrum of ways that I could live out this pretense without the need to fit my family's expectations I began to live the prodigal life the center of my life was myself and I followed the things that I believed could ensure security and happiness for me academics social status comfort I genuinely thought that you know this was the right place for me I believe that you know this was a place that could provide approval happiness and contentment in my life that I could provide that for myself architecture quickly became an outlet for me to express this need for self-sufficient living I invested my time and effort in creating flawless pieces of work to impress both my professors and classmates I believed in my own strength and I was working for my own gain a typical prodigal son at HKU I tried to provide myself in terms of friendship school reputation to avoid what I really thought about myself that I really didn't have friends that I wasn't that smart and you know I had these huge character flaws at the end of the first semester I began to realize that these things were coming up in my life more and more and it seemed more and more difficult to you know keep keep putting up this facade of um perfection uh it was harder to be this consistently high achieving student and even harder to be this popular figure among my friends at HKU um whenever I realized this that I could no longer keep up this this facade or this pretense and that I really needed God I started to give up this way of life however just like the younger brother um I projected the same mentality on

God I tried to do the right thing I tried to rid myself of the symptoms but I could never get free from this disease I believe that I still needed to help myself the younger brother inside of me made me feel like that I had to proactively regain the love of the father the shame and guilt that I felt um that I had about my life caused me to believe that I need to needed to provide for myself I needed to prove myself and I needed to redeem the past life that I had um the process of going back to God um was not painless I still had layers of presuppositions about who God was and I needed to work those away I kept asking myself you know how can I be a better person for God how can I stop from

sinning how can I be the good son um but not until I completely surrendered my ability was it then that I was able to see it wasn't about what I could do but what he had already done for me um through the community that surrounded me I started I started to see bit by bit how God runs after me and how he finds me I think through surrendering even the things um the ways that I thought I could um the things that I could offer God or the things that I could do for God I began to see that coming back to the father um wasn't about healing myself or trying to ensure that I was free free from sin but I think it was more about identifying my helplessness and allowing him to come in and heal me yeah thank you Henrik and Michael um

[34 : 37] I also want to take your time to pray for for them and um yeah just as you hear their story like maybe something resonates with you and where you are and how God pursues you uh just join me in prayer for them father I just uh thank you for Henrika and Michael and the journey that you have taken them on um the way that yeah you just uh gave them freedom to walk their own way and coming to the end finding you and that you and your love breakthrough through the shame and guilt that they had and uh you just set them free uh to to live a life that would not be wasted at the end where they would stand at the end of lives in front of Christ and and look back and see all the glory they have brought to you and how they have have participated in redeeming the world and the people around them and so just pray um just over Henrika and Michael as they continue their journey and that they would continuously be um you know sought out by you and that they would keep running back to you wherever they fall and stumble on the way and that their lives would be an amazing testimony of your love and how you pursue us and how you uh find lost things and lost people just in Christ's name amen so as you may may see in their stories uh we all are somewhat on the journey of the of the younger son or the younger daughter sometimes we wander away and do our own thing and we can get wasteful and reckless on our journey but God he waits on the doorstep and he seeks in his love seeks out through our shame and and guilt uh final thought that i want to close with um is just another little movement that the story doesn't really mention it's the question of what do you think happens after the story when the son has returned he's back home the celebration is over his life has been restored what do you think happens when the famine is gone the things are back to normal and the memories of the past begin to fade do you think the sun will ever take off again and do you think that when he takes off again that the father will stand at the doorstep again it sounds outrageous but jesus actually gives a pretty clear indication about who god is and who the father is in that story so the story of the lost son uh how toba mentioned is only one of three stories we already looked at the story of the the sheep and the coin and now the lost son three things lost they all three talk about god's unending love and and how he never gives up and how he continues to pursue us that the only thing about god that is wasteful and reckless is his love and grace now the people at the time that heard jesus talk about these three things they knew exactly what he was saying for the jewish listeners a three-time repetition was something of completeness wholeness three-time repetition meant wholeness so for example when when they referred to god in the hebrew culture they would not say like god was like totally awesome or super duper holy or something like that like there is no like word like that so when they wanted to talk about this completeness this amazing complete holiness they would say holy holy holy is the lord god almighty they would repeat it three times to show that it's such a perfect way in his holiness and when they heard these three stories over the meals

that we talked about before the the lost things they represented all the things that t that jesus taught about over the meals and now we are the three stories of god seeking the lost so his listeners would know what jesus was saying here that god would never give up seeking the lost that there was completeness about his grace and what a comfort that is that god does not stand at the doorstep once waiting on us to return but wherever you are wherever you have been and wherever you will be god will stand at the doorstep running to you receiving you in his perfect perfect love again and again and again let's pray father what an amazing picture of your love knowing that you would stand at the doorstep again and again waiting on us and that even now today you're waiting at the doorstep for us to return to you i still know where everyone is on their journey here but god you know and you know the the dreams and desires that are building us and us to just be the prodigal and and just pray that you would heal and restore that you would align our desires with yours that you would bring people in our lives to have this honest and open conversation about the discontentment in our marriages and our jobs and our lives and that you want to speak hope into that father and um just you know the people that are on their journey that is wasteless and reckless

wasting resources and wasting our time wasting our relationships that you um you know was breaks break through that and point us to a life that is honoring you and and for those who are stuck in shame and guilt not knowing how to return father i pray that your unbelievable love would break through that that we would know that returning to you is the best we can ever do experiencing your unending love and mercy be robed by you and a celebration being prepared for us and rejoicing for our return and that that's who you are pray this in christ's name amen where are you on your journey some of us are in home with the father some of us are gathering our staff getting ready because we've been so frustrated we're ready to head out some of us are eating with the pigs and we're just realizing that and some of us are turning around and going back to him no matter where we are in that journey scripture says that god is there waiting for you you need someone to pray with you at the end of this time there'll be some people with the prayer teams up here they'd love for you to pray and just they're trained and the elders are up here i'll be up here we'd love to pray for you about where you're at in your journey and what god's teaching you and maybe even talking about what the next step is for us at watermark the next step is to be in a community group because this is where we believe that we journey together so if you're not in a community group there's a table right out here and we we want everybody to be in a smaller group than this where we walk through life together we do things together we learn together we serve together so right out there join up in a community group if you're not in one one because you need to be one on the journey because the journey is too hard to do it by yourself

one thing i just wanted to share up here uh we have a special treat uh one of the guys who's really helped me on the journey through my whole life is going to come visit us this week and his name is dr hannah he's uh one of the top two or three church historians in the world and so he's going to talk to us about israel we're going to do israel together but on thursday night we have a date night now some of the guys have come to me incredibly nervous because they see this picture and the question is well i have to dance with my wife okay so let me put this the date night is for people who are single and dating they're for married or dating so bring a date or bring your wife don't bring both okay this is hong kong uh but bring one of them and thursday night's just a time to have fun it's going to be a it's going to be a very entertaining relaxing encouraging time uh you don't have to dance with your wife unless you want to i don't even think we're going to have dancing there but it is one of those money back guarantees it's at the cricket club and i encourage i i promise if you don't do it uh you're going to be disappointed because it's it's just a it's gonna be a time of blessing and encouragement as a family as we go on this journey together okay so guys uh you don't have to dance with your wife here but you do need to dance with your wife sometime okay that's just that's what my wife she would kill me if i didn't say that okay uh so how you guys doing you okay this is amazing when you look at god's word and how he he loves us isn't it yeah father we thank you for this day we thank you for your goodness and your mercy we thank you that the only thing that you are reckless and wasteful on is your love and your grace and so we come before you at different stages of the journey knowing that wherever we're at that you're always looking at us looking for us that your face is always turned towards us because at one time you turned your face away from your son as he hung on the cross because of that moment when he took everything upon him we know as your children that your face is always turned towards us because you turned it away from him because of our sin so we come before you we worship you we love you we need you desperately we pray for this community our families we pray for the place you've placed us we pray for our workplace we pray for our homes we pray for what we go to eat right now realizing that everyone is on a journey there everyone is seeking for something to fill their bellies and we know that the only thing that will truly satisfy them is your son jesus help us to walk in courage and to share that message with all those you bring in contact with us father we love you and we pray these things in your son jesus name amen god bless you have a great week see you thursday and we'll see you back here back here same place next sunday