

# The Coming of the Suffering Servant

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 December 2020

Preacher: Chris Thornton

[ 0 : 00 ] Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind, so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

Who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteem him not. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

[ 1 : 32 ] God has been blessed by God and afflicted by God. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich man in his death.

[ 2 : 46 ] Although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days.

The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong. Because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

Yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. Amen.

[ 4 : 07 ] Amen. Thank you so much, Angeline, for bringing that to us. This is an amazing passage. I really feel this is a passage you just actually want to read, and then read, and then read, and you don't really need a sermon about it, because it's so powerful.

But let me just pray for us as we come into God's word. Father, this is the most remarkable passage, one of the most remarkable passages in the whole of Scripture.

And Lord, I know that words are not enough to describe what you have done for us. Words are not enough to describe and explain the depth of your love for us.

I pray, Lord, this morning, that you would just take even the simple, feeble words that I'll bring, and Lord, that you would speak. I pray that you would open our hearts, Lord. For those of us who find it difficult to really receive your love, I pray that you would break through that, and you would just show us your love.

For those of us who find it difficult to really hear your word, I pray that you'd open our ears to really hear it this morning. And I pray that you would get exalted and be honoured and glorified.

[ 5 : 19 ] In Jesus' name. Amen. Great. It's great to be speaking to you today. If you don't know me, my name's Chris.

I'm one of the leaders here at Watermark. And we've been going through this series in the book of Isaiah, looking at songs of the servant. And we're coming to the climax today.

You know, just this last week, my son Etienne was going into the forbidden zone of the kitchen, where we have told him he knows that he shouldn't go into there because it's dangerous.

And you see him kind of lingering by the sliding door, and temptation just gets too much for him. And then he jumped into the kitchen.

And so I had to take him into the corner, give him some discipline. And a few minutes later, when he'd come back out, I heard my helper saying to him, Etienne's a good boy, isn't he?

[ 6 : 22 ] You're a good boy, aren't you? And it struck me at that moment that actually that's what we desperately want to hear over our lives. We desperately want to hear this verdict that Chris is a good boy, that I'm an acceptable boy, that I'm worthy, I'm worthy of love, I'm worthy of respect, I'm worthy to belong somewhere.

And the problem is that we want that verdict from everyone around us, parents, peers, bosses, all those other things, all those other people.

But our lives often don't live up to that standard. We're like my son, who knows what we should do, but we don't do it. But we still crave to have a verdict over us of you're a good boy or a good girl.

And we have this nagging suspicion deep inside of us that that's not who we are. Because it's like outside of my house flat, there's some rubbish bags that pile up day after day after day.

And just like those, the evidence in our lives that we're not as good as we hope we are, we're not as good as we want to be, piles up daily. And none of us can bear the weight of our sin, of our shame, of our guilt by ourselves.

[ 7 : 47 ] Which is why we come to alternative strategies. We pretend it doesn't exist, we cover up, we get defensive, we deny it, we become workaholics or we develop savior complexes to try and help everybody else out and do good things so that we can kind of atone for our own sense of failings and hopefully move ourselves up the good rankings in our, at least in our own esteem.

It's why we are always finger pointing, why we always have to be right, why we always want to make our problem somebody else's fault because we desperately want somebody else to bear the weight of our shame and our sin.

It's why when someone criticizes you or me for a mistake or exposes something which makes us feel humiliated, humiliated, we automatically want to either defend ourselves or point out somebody else's previous rubbish in their life.

So someone goes, why did you do that? And you go, well, you did that last week. And we've got to deflect attention because deep inside we know we all haven't been the good boys and good girls that Santa says he's going to come for.

And if Santa's not, we're not enough for Santa, well, what about for God? And then on top of that we have false guilt and shame that is put on us by other people who reject us, who ignore us, who compare us, who neglect us.

[ 9 : 11 ] They say, why can't you be like your sister? Or can't you do anything right? And that rubbish pile on our backs just grows heavier and heavier and heavier and we live under this weight.

And we're just like Israel that Isaiah said in chapter 1 is laden down. They are burdened, bent double under the weight of their own sin, their shame, their guilt, adultery against God and others. And Israel are paying for it. They've paid for it. They're now the victim like an adulteress beaten black and blue by their triad lover, Assyria.

Their wounds are affected. They're in darkness. They're in exile. They're shamed. They're rejected. They feel victimized. But they're not innocent. But they're still craving to be told they're good.

Still craving that they would hear God's desire for blessing them and loving them and to be accepted. And Isaiah's great puzzle that he's going through is how can a God who loves his people so much but whose people refuse to come to him bridge this irreconcilable gap?

[ 10 : 25 ] How can rebellious people ever be freed from the weight of their sin and choices on their backs? Well, we've looked over the last few weeks at how Isaiah has like a TV drama gradually unfolded God's plan of redemption.

He said there's a servant who's going to come. He's going to be one who's going to bring justice but he's going to be tender. He said he's going to be like a prophet who's going to call people not just Israel but all the nations back to God.

And he said last week that he's going to be a faithful, obedient one who's going to suffer but he's going to be vindicated. And from chapter 50 to chapter 53 there's two chapters where you see this promise of good news.

And God says to the people get up! Wake up! There's liberation and freedom coming. He says get up! Put on your beautiful garments. He says I'm redeeming you.

He says get up! There's good news that's coming. How beautiful are the feet of him who brings good news. The people who are in shame he says there is hope. There is good news. And Isaiah and we as the readers still have no idea how this is going to take place and then we come to Isaiah chapter 53.

[11:38] And I'm going to look in three things. I'm going to look at oh my God oh his grace oh what joy. and that's where we're going to go today.

So let's just start off if you've got the passage in front of you please look through it's an incredible passage. And it starts off with great hope for this redemption plan.

It says behold my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. And that act wisely it's actually the word which means his mission is going to be accomplished.

he's going to do what he said he's going to do. He shall be high and lifted up. You see what is he doing here? He's taking from a passage that Isaiah previously said in chapter 6 where Isaiah had this vision of the awesomeness of God and he comes into his temple and he says I saw the Lord high and lifted up and the hem of his robe just the corner just a little bit of his robe was just kind of dangling in the temple but it filled the whole temple.

It filled it. And there were these crazy creatures who in the eyes and the side of the glory of God they shield their eyes and they just say holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

[12:58] And Isaiah doesn't go oh that's nice. He falls down on his knees at the awesome God in majesty and says in terror I'm ruined.

And Isaiah in chapter 53 is saying this servant is going to be like the holy one of God.

And we're going wow this is going to be awesome. This is like shock and awe coming. And then in verse 15 he says kings the most powerful people they're going to shut their mouths because of him. You know there's this British term called god smacked. This is your gob and it's like when you go like that. It's like OMG this is what they're going they're going I would never have seen this coming. This is incredible. You look through all the literature look through all advisors that you've ever had look through all the Netflix series and you have never heard never seen anything like this before.

[13:59] And you go wow I can't wait for this this is better than Marvel and all the superheroes. But then you realise what they've gobsmacked by. Verse 14 this servant his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance he is hideously ugly not even human.

Verse 2 like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground he had no form or majesty that we should look at him no beauty that we should desire him.

He's despised he's like one from whom men hide their faces we don't esteem him at all. He's so weak he's so fragile he's so feeble he's not the manly superhero that we expect.

And we know from what we see later on in scripture that this person they're talking about is Jesus. But he's not the kind of charismatic blue eyed Hollywood kind of Jesus that you see.

If you brought this boyfriend home to your parents they wouldn't even let him in the door. This is the street sleeper that you walk faster past so that you avoid contamination. It's the person you go I'm not inviting them into my home.

[15:20] This isn't awesome this is awful. You know we live in a city which is all about appearances. You've just got to dress the right way you've got to look the right way you've got to have the right job have the right car have the right flat go to the right schools and if you don't have that then everyone writes you off.

Do you know Jesus would get written off in Hong Kong? Do you know it's ironic that we've made Christmas all about expensive presents and beautiful decorations when the Christmas story is actually all a story of rejection and tragedy.

You see it's the time of Herod and the Romans and there's unjust paranoid rulers who are control freaks who oppress the people and into this darkness comes an illegitimate child born to a teen mum in an animal food trough who's the subject of an assassination plot by Herod who grows up and becomes a refugee in Egypt and then grows up in Nazareth which is like the despised kind of shamshopo of Israel is kind of like in a band three school and this authentic Christmas isn't Jesus rocking around the Christmas tree in his nicely decorated manger it's about sheltering from cow poo and cold blooded murder the Christmas story is really more brutal than we realise and yet what it shows us is the high and lifted up one rolling up his sleeves and getting down into the dirt and the reality and the messiness of our lives of society he's there in the mess he's there in the brokenness he's there in the gutter of life and when we want to sanitise it with religious alcohol wipes what he does is he comes to us and says

I'm removing all of that if we want to know Jesus if we want to know Jesus in this church we've got to stop sanitising our lives and trying to make them look nice and as if we are good by ourselves God reaches down to outcasts by becoming an outcast himself he reaches down to the despised by becoming despised and it's right in the place where we want to hide it away in shame that actually Jesus comes to us today that's where you'll find the saviour coming to you coming to me coming to us as a community right in those places of brokenness God is totally upside down in the way he does things that's the first point oh my god second point oh his grace do you know it's completely possible for you to come to God today and he's seeking to bring you freedom and hope and life and it's possible for you to completely miss him did you know that because he doesn't look like what we'd expect him to look like and because he comes not to just booster your self esteem but he actually comes to wreck your self image which has been nicely crafted of yourself because we are nasters at covering over our own sin and shame we don't think we need him but do you know what verses 4 to 6 are they're actually the aftermath of a train wreck they're the eye opening confession that we don't get

God that God is way more gracious way more merciful than we could possibly imagine he says this all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way did you notice he said all he didn't say some of us he didn't say well there are some which are a little bit worse than others he said all and in case we didn't get it he also says everyone that means no one is excluded from this he says all without exception of us are straying sheep you know Hong Kong is not a great place for sheep but in the UK I have seen a sheep get through a hole in a fence and wander onto a main road a busy main road and then all the other sheep behind kind of go oh that looks like a good idea and they're all going through and wandering onto the main road together totally oblivious of the danger totally oblivious of what awaits and they all think it's great you know that's us that's us even if I know that there is a temptation coming which could get me into trouble

[ 20 : 25 ] I still go into it anyway anyone like me you know that song which goes prone to wander lord I feel it prone to leave the one I love that is true of you that is true of me that is true of all of us but what often happens is a car comes along and kind of narrowly misses us or clips us on the tail and we go God why did you allow that car to come we go don't you love me it's just not fair I can't believe I'm just out here on the road and that's what happens to me and God is going hey guys you guys wandered off I'm actually the offended party here but I've been seeking to love you and you rejected my love that's what he's been going to God's people that's what he says to us so often and you know in a kind of very polarized culture it's really interesting how every one of us feels like we're victims in different ways every one of us is offended by other people you know if your colleague is mean to you you feel that gives you license to be mean back to them right because they deserve it okay and you know we have this in culturally as well we have you know some really important issues of things like black nice matters and me too movement things which are there are real issues in society but often all of these get hidden under just a sea of blaming each other of hatred of angrily shaming others of excluding anyone who doesn't agree exactly with what you say because we think that if

I've been a victim then it gives me a right to victimize other people you know we say hurt people hurt people and it's true why is it true because someone's always got to pay for sin someone's always got to pay for sin and we generally want to make other people pay that's why we go you owe me an that's what we say but we're all bankrupt in our accounts we're all bankrupt and so that cycle of oppression and sin and guilt where we're just dumping guilt and shame on each other carries on sometimes we say maybe I am a sheep but I'm a light grey sheep I'm not a black sheep like them

over there but we see everyone else's sin but our own how in our divided world can we get free of all of the madness that there is it's only if someone steps in from the outside someone who is totally innocent not tainted by sin and shame at all someone who sees our issues more clearly than we see them someone who has no debt to pay at all who owes no one anything and that is Jesus and here's what he says surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken by God and afflicted but he was crushed he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his stripes we are healed you see the word grief sorrow stricken they're all words for suffering for sickness or being struck down with a contagious disease like leprosy or covid Israel was in isolation lonely wounded in exile rejected because of their sin and in their suffering they saw themselves as a victim but God stepped in and said for everything that you have done for everyone that everyone else has done to you I'm going to pay for it

I'm going to absorb the cost it's the man who steps in front of the convicted criminal facing the firing squad and takes the bullet for them it's the language of the day of atonement a yearly festival where the high priest would take two goats and he'd kill one of them as payment for the sins of the people showing that our debt is so great that only death can remove it and the other one is the scapegoat and what he'd do he'd lay his hands onto the goat's head and he would confess the sins of the people over it and then he'd let the goat go and it would be released and wander into the wilderness excluded from the rest of the people so where all the weight of their shame and guilt was placed on that goat it was gone and it walked away and so they were free they were free they didn't have to bear it any longer that's why he's saying payment has been made not by you not by anybody else but by

Jesus Jesus on the cross became our sin bearer our shame bearer our guilt bearer he's the only truly white sheep the only truly innocent one he had every right to be offended at the way we spat on him at the way we blamed him for our problems the way we looked at him and saw him as the one rejected rather than us but the only one who had every right to condemn us was led like a lamb to the slaughter beaten without recognition nails hammered in by taunting soldiers blood and flesh stripped off his back the blood flowing down from his whole body we shouted crucify him crucify him and he responded without any accusation without a word except forgiveness except grace you see he was cancelled so that we wouldn't have to be he was rejected so we could be accepted he was wounded so our wounds could be healed you see peace is now possible between us and

[ 26 : 45 ] God and us and each other because the weight of what we keep throwing on each other and taking on ourselves and the sin that we cannot bear by ourselves he's paid it he's paid it it's incredible isn't it and as we looked at that and every day this week we have done the same thing we've been adding to the pile we saw what Jesus has done for us and we went isn't that totally unfair you shouldn't have to take it it's our bullet to take not yours to take no we didn't we didn't do that at all because like in all of our conflicts we fail to we thought God operated on the same way that we do but praise God he doesn't praise God he doesn't Jesus has taken on the cross the weight of having to be right all the time the weight of fearing the humiliation of being exposed that you're not all that you should be the weight of the false shame that has been laid on your back that you don't need to carry it any longer or put it anybody else's back that shame that comes to you and keeps telling you about your past that shame that keeps coming to you with all your mistakes and keeps reminding you of all that you've done that you're not good enough all those things

Jesus says because I have taken it you can take that bag of rubbish and you put it on to him because he's already taken it for you there's a place for you to put all of those things which actually barriers in all of our relationships with God and with everybody else there's a place we can put it now and it's on him isn't that amazing that's freedom you see in most of my pastoral ministry I think the number one thing that actually stops us really enjoying our relationship with Jesus and really gets in the way of our own relationships with each other is our inability to see all the rubbish that we're carrying to see our sin to see our shame to see our guilt we see everybody else's but we don't see ours and we don't see our need for Jesus and it doesn't matter whether you've been a Christian one day or you're not a Christian or you've been a Christian for 30 years let me tell you I think it's the same thing for us every day you know

Indian civil rights activist Gandhi he had a son called Manilal who was actually a wild kid and at one point he had an affair with a married woman and it brought shame on all the family and all the relatives wanted to punish him for it but Gandhi did two things he wrote a letter and at the end he

signed it blessings from a father in agony and then he started a fast for his son and the son Manil saw the pain and the sacrifice that his father was willing to go through and it broke him and he confessed and as he confessed and admitted his wrong towards actually even a father that he didn't have a close relationship with there was beginnings of forgiveness and restoration and peace could be restored between them and the family if that's what can happen when we see just on a human level and a level of love and a sacrifice how much more when

Jesus has done everything for us when you see the love of a father because you see this passage the author has finally seen it he's finally come with confession why he's finally gone this was us that includes me why does he do that because he's finally seen the depth of the love that Christ has done and that's broken him to see man I'm way more in need of grace than I realized you know I try and make it my practice every day to spend a minute or two actually just thinking about the cross it's something as Christians we can be so familiar with but until you see his wounds until you see him kneel at the foot of the cross again you'll never see how serious your sin is not just in the past but even right now this last week you'll never see your own need for forgiveness you'll never see how much it cost

God to forgive you and you'll never see the extent of his love for you right now and you will not see that and that will impact your relationships you'll struggle to forgive others their sin and to absorb the cost that it is to forgive and you may miss God coming to you today so lay down right now the weight of all that holds you and find healing at the cross find healing there that's all grace what a God my God oh what grace oh his grace oh what joy this is the final thing the passage goes on in verse 10 and it says it was the will of the Lord to crush him do you know that word will actually means the delight the joy of

[ 32 : 41 ] God to crush Jesus and you think is God just a sadistic kind of child abuser in this killing his own son and no that's not what's going on here because Jesus is the holy one of God the high and lifted up one come to us it was the joy of God for God himself to pay everything necessary to lift our guilt and shame but it doesn't end there in Jesus what was he wanting to do and to accomplish he tells us he shall see his offspring and he shall prolong his days and by his knowledge shall many be accounted righteous he shall bear their iniquities do you see what he's doing he's saying Jesus died and rose again his days will prolong even though he's cut off not just to create a few individuals who come and feel a bit of forgiveness for themselves but to create a new family offspring a new community who experience in a real way that verdict which is better than just good boy or good girl it's a verdict of declared righteous declared in the right accepted loved forgiven healed by

Christ and you belong in a world which is filled with divisions where forgiveness is so costly to us that we can never feel like we can really offer that to others because we have nothing in our tank to give to people like you and me who often just keep dumping stuff on other people judging other people all those other things there is a place that we can come there is a community of people who are in confession forgiveness and grace look to Jesus and there is the resources through which we can then become the people who look like the righteous one the servant because when you are righteous you are declared righteous with a verdict over us but then that enables us to live righteously with one another and it's the exiled outcast people who then get to be included in the family you know

I I spoke to somebody who said I know Jesus accepts me but I don't really want to open up I don't really want to be real because I don't want to be rejected by others you see what Christ is doing and what Christmas is about Christmas is about Easter do you know that Christmas is the launch pad of what God was doing through Easter to create a people for himself you know the angels sang in the town of Bethlehem that good news of great joy a saviour has been born there is peace on earth for us it's come and outcast shepherds who probably had a well earned reputation of being thieves came and then pagan non-Jewish excluded from the community wise men come and they worship and bow down at the animal feeding trough in which this little pooing messy baby is held they fall down and they worship him you see what's happening there's the beginning of offspring the beginning of people who never normally would come together can come together because of Christ because of his grace and it's their grace that grace that then enables us as we look to the cross to extend that to others that we would normally exclude you know chapter 54 tells us it starts off in the light of what Jesus has done it says sing sing and then it says fear not and those two go together because joy is often stolen by our fear but actually the joy of the Lord he says fear not for you will not be ashamed in my people this is not a place of shame for your maker is your husband

the holy one of Israel is your redeemer so what that means is for those of us who are afraid of being honest and afraid of being real come to Jesus this morning and come into a community where all of us need to begin to be honest and we can only do that as we see that we have a husband that we have a redeemer who welcomes and accepts us some of us have real wounds we have real guilt real shame and stuff from other people that they've dumped on us over our years and we feel weighed down by the pressure by the expectations by everything that we should be we feel like it's not fair there's criticism that's come to us maybe we've been angry at other people and Jesus says come don't try and make others pay for it don't try and pay for it yourself with self condemnation lay it down at my feet fear not because here you'll find healing for your soul and you can keep putting that on me because every day you're going to get different things happen every day is going to come different accusations there's going to be different relational tensions different times where we're tempted to just take all that on ourselves put it on other people judge other people exclude other people and as a community we've got to keep coming back to see it was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished his dying breath has brought me life

I know that it is finished see this if this is the kind of community that we're all doing then that's the kind of community that's open for people who are wounded and broken to come into it's open for those who are outcasts in our society to feel accepted and welcomed for us to open people we even disagree with because when we come we come not as people who've got a whole load of baggage to throw on others but as people who are free we're going to come to communion and do you know what communion is communion is a meal for sheep communion is a meal for shame guilty born weighed down by life weighed down by our own struggles our own sin our own shame and everything else it's a place to come and to see

[ 39 : 44 ] Jesus again I want you to gaze on Jesus imagine yourself at the foot of the cross and see yourself before him and see him taking everything for you and I want you as you see that to open your hands and say God let it break you let it open you up let it open places of your wounds bring your wounds to him bring your guilt to him don't come away without a sense that you actually need Jesus so what we're going to do is in a minute I'm just going to give you a moment to reflect and then I'm going to come back and we'll take some of the elements together so if you don't have your community let's feel free to just grab them right now but come before him and see what he's done for you let's just spend a minute in confession let his love for you break you and let it remold you and heal you so let's just pray and I just just

I want you to think how have you been looking at Jesus have you seen him have you seen him in the midst of all the COVID struggles and all the other things that have been wrapping you up have you seen him I miss the arguments you've been having or the sense of downcastness or weariness or tiredness have you seen him have you seen him have you seen his love for you have you seen his grace poured out upon you have you seen him you see on on the night that Jesus was betrayed he took a meal you see a meal is a place of acceptance and welcome it was a place where broken people can feel safe to be themselves to feel safe not because of anything we've done but because of Jesus and at that meal he took a loaf of bread and he went and broke it and he said this bread is my body which you are going to despise at this moment you're not going to get what

I'm doing for you you're going to reject me but I'm not going to throw it back in your face I'm going to absorb it all for you I'm going to absorb it all for you that you might know the joy of forgiveness and freedom and that we might you might be a community that is filled with this joy and freedom the body of Christ and then he took a cup and he took a cup because it symbolised blood like the blood of goats like the blood of bulls like the blood of lambs it symbolised this is going to cost me everything and he took it and out of incredible joy and anguish he said this is my blood which is shed for you so that you may be forgiven but also so that you may be someone who out of the forgiveness and love you receive can forgive others and show grace to others because this is what I'm doing the blood of Christ father let's just pray father forgive us where we actually think we know the cross well forgive us where we just kind of glance at it as good Christians and we don't we don't we don't we hold on to resentment and grudges towards other people we carry the guilt and shame on ourselves and we say I can deal with it I can handle it but father we can't and we cause devastation around us but you came to bring us peace you came to bring us healing you came to bring a great news of great joy lord I pray that today we would experience that great news of great joy afresh that today there is a savior for us who is born there's this community of watermark we are a community which are saved we're a community which don't have to prove ourselves anymore

we're a community which even when we wrestle even when we struggle we can come back again and again to the foot of the cross and we can know that even though we're a complete mess you're the one who takes messes and you restore us you're the one who takes broken outcast people and you make us a family and I pray that this Christmas that would not be a theoretical abstract concept in our minds but I pray that you'd help that to become deeper more real more rich more full and let us extend that to the people around us let us know the depth of your love for us I pray break us heal us let us know the joy of your salvation in Jesus mighty name Amen