

Start Over: Remember

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Preacher: Tobin Miller

[0 : 00] Okay. How you guys doing? I haven't done that in a while. No response whatsoever. How quickly people forget. I don't know what's going on here. How you guys doing?

Good, good, good, good. I want to welcome you. If this is your first time here to Watermark, I just want to welcome you. My name is Tobin. I'm one of the pastors here. And we are the Fertile Church, I think. This last two weeks, I think I've visited five or six newborn babies.

So people are coming here to produce or reproduce or I don't know what it is. I just tell them there's stuff we put into food afterwards, those little cakes and candy and things like that that are producing. I don't know. But it's just, it's amazing to see God working in our lives and to see Him multiplying this church. So we have been starting this sermon series. It's called Start Over or Do Over or Begin Again or however you want to say it. These last two weeks, and we're going to finish it off this third week. And our hope is that you would be encouraged. Our hope is that you'd be challenged. You know, it's okay to be challenged in church, right? I mean, sometimes we just want to come and just relax and not. But God's Word should be challenging to us. And so we should be challenged by that. So we hope that you've been encouraged and challenged and blessed by the sermons that you've heard as we look into this new year. Two weeks ago, we did a sermon on gratitude.

And we said as we go into this new year, that gratitude is going to be one of those things that we need to be aware of, that we're going to have this battle, this tension between being grumbling and being gracious and thankful for what God has done. We looked at the passage in Matthew 20 about the landowner who has all this land and he needs people to cultivate it. And so he goes out and he hires the people. And at the end of the day, we see that he is very gracious. He does these things at great personal cost to himself. He's very generous. He's not very efficient by Hong Kong standards whatsoever. And in the passage, we were challenged just by God's grace and His love for us.

And the question was, how do we respond to what God is doing in our life? Are we thankful for what He's done or are we grumbling? As we head into this new year, we talked about this focus of what is our focus towards God. Last week, we looked at, as Jeremy talked about, we looked at ASAP. He was one of the three worship leaders for King David. He led worship at the covenant where the tent of the meeting where the Ark of the Covenant was inside of it. And in Psalm 73, he has this struggle, struggle. And the struggle is things that he learned and knew about God and the things that he saw were very different. And it caused him to have doubts in his life. And we learned that each one of us has a different theology. We learned that some of us are cats and some of us are dogs.

[2 : 59] And I'm very thankful that no one dropped any kittens off at my door this week. So thank you so much. If you want to drop a chocolate lab at the door, you can do that. My wife and I will have a fight over that. But, you know, so we talked about it. And so a dog theology is this. You love me, you feed me, you take care of me, you pet me. You must be God. Whereas cats think, you love me, you feed me, you take care of me, you pet me. I must be God. So cats use terminology and pronouns that are me and mine and me. And dogs use terminology that is you and God and us. We learned that as he, ASAP brought these doubts before God, that it was okay to have doubts. I think we live in a church that no one wants to talk about doubts. No one wants to talk about fears. No one wants to be angry with God. And we see in the Psalms that it's okay to bring these things. And we saw that when ASAP came into the sanctuary of the Lord, that he laid out these things before God. And God met him and changed his heart. We learned that focus, the main focus of what we're supposed to be doing is worshiping God. We learned it in Hebrew that the idea of worship means to bow the knee before the

Lord. It means to give to God what he deserves because of who he is and what he's done. Worship means to bow before the Lord and give to him what he deserves because of who he is and what he's done. And we talked about that with our time and with our tithe and with our gifts and with our money. And we were challenged because we said that everybody worships something. So everybody in here is bowing their knee before something. Everybody in here is giving to something what they think it deserves for what it's done to them and what they've gotten out of it. And the question is, what are we doing and who are we worshiping? And we were challenged as Christians to say this new year, as we go into the new year, if we're worshiping before the Lord and no one's, you know, we don't know, but people are watching us. And it happens because people around you are watching you. And your people in your work are watching you. I mean, your kids are watching you. It's amazing how often our kids watch everything that we do and they learn from us. And so we were challenged if someone is watching us and they're watching us worship. They're watching us worship with our time and they're watching us worship with our words. They're watching us worship with our money and our gifts and our talents. If they're watching us do that, what would they think about our God? Would they think, oh, his God is awesome. He's huge.

He's powerful. He's the most important thing. Or would they think, oh, his God is small. His God is insignificant. His God doesn't really mean much to him. And we were challenged by this idea that we often lose our focus. And God is always there to bring us back and to love us and to take care of us. And so I wanted to end this sermon series on one of my favorite passages. It's Deuteronomy 8. It's this passage of change. It's a passage of transition. It's this passage of looking back. And sometimes I don't think we look back as much as we should because we're always in Hong Kong looking forward.

We're planning the new year. We're looking at what things are going to be doing and what we need to do and what we want things to look like. But here you see Moses is talking to the people of God. And it's probably his last sermon that he's going to give to them. He's teaching them on the plains of Moab.

And they're about to look into this land. And he's calling them. He's calling us to remember. He's calling us to remember what God has done. Now remember God's people in Genesis, the end of Genesis, they come down to Egypt. There's this huge famine across the land. And we're told that they just multiply. And they multiply and they multiply. And the Egyptians get afraid of them. And so they put them into bondage. And they, for 400 years, are enslaved. And they're in bondage. And then God sends this man named Moses to come and he frees them. And through this series of like 10 miracles, they leave the bondage of Egypt. And they go out into the wilderness. And they go to Mount Sinai. And on Mount Sinai, they meet God. And God gives them the law. And they learn what God is like. And they learn more importantly, what he's not like. And what they should be like. And then they head off towards the promised land. And as they head off towards the promised land, what you see throughout scripture is that they just continually make mistakes. They just continually grumble. They just continually want something different. They just continually think that maybe it's better to go back into bondage than it is to follow God. And they get right to the border of the promised land.

[7 : 36] They get right to this land. I have some pictures of it. I think so. We have these two pictures here. So this is the wilderness. This is the desert. This is where they wandered. If you go next year when we go to Israel, you can join us. Dr. Hannah is coming next week for six weeks. And we're going to take a tour there next year. And it's barren. There's nothing there. Nothing can live there. What's another picture? So here's two of the pilgrims right there. So you can join us there next year and take a picture down in that. But this is the wilderness. But forget that one. Go to the last one. Next one. Good. And so this is where they go. And so they're in this wilderness. And they hit this river called the Jordan River. And when they look across the Jordan River, they see this amazing oasis, which is Jericho, the oldest city in the world. And so they said, okay, we're going to go in. We're going to take this promised land. And so they send out 12 spies. And these 12 spies go out for 40 days. And they look around. And they bring back amazing fruit and the plenty of the land. But when they come back and they say, hey, should we go in and take over the land?

Because God says we're going to go in there. It's ours. Let's do it. Ten of them say no. They say it's impossible. They say there's giants in the land. There's these huge, these sons of Anak. They're huge. And there's no way we're going to be able to do that. And what we see is that the people of God listen to the majority. I mean, they complain. And they tell God and Moses no way. They

actually grumble against God. Can you imagine they grumble against God who brought them out of captivity and he brings them into this amazing land.

And they grumble. And they actually said they want to go back to Egypt. They want to go back into bondage. They want to go back to where things were not that good. And so we're told in the passages that God disciplines them. And he says, okay, you don't want to go? Then you don't have to go. So we're going to discipline you. And he takes them on this journey. And for 40 years in this desert, they just wander around. I mean, they're just making these circles back and forth, back and forth. And the amazing thing is they could look over to their left and they could see the promised land. They could see where they should have been if they had trusted God and were obedient. Now, how hard would that be? And so they're wandering around for 40 years because God has something amazing to teach them. He has this deep spiritual problem in their heart that he wants to talk to them about. And then we get to this passage today and it's basically 40 years later, but they're back at the same place where they had the choice to obey God. They're looking over the river Jordan. And it's amazing because it's in this valley and you see Jericho and it's just all these palm trees. So in the middle of this desert, all of a sudden all these palm trees and it's this place called Jericho. And Moses calls them to remember. Now they're about to go do something amazing, something that's never been met in before. And Moses doesn't lay out this game plan. Okay, first do this, first do that, first do this, first do this. But he says, I want you to remember.

Now in Hebrew, the word is very special. It actually means re-member. And you're thinking, well, of course. But it means re-member. It means to bring all the parts together.

It means to assemble the picture. It means to bring all the stories together and make them into one big story. It means to bring the truth together and complete it. It means to just make it whole. Now the opposite of remember is not forget. The opposite of remember is dismember, which is what we do sometimes. We make less of God. We make less of his faithfulness. We make less of who he is. Christmas has been an amazing time in our house. We have people come in and go, people come in and go. I think I'm losing my voice. My kids have gotten presents. And one of my kids, so this is, so when you came in, you signed this non-disclosure act, right? Everybody signed this non-disclosure act? Because I'm going to share stuff with you today that is non-disclosure. So you can share, but then we're going to have to kill you. So one of our kids is just really, Kip is really into puzzles, and he loves puzzles. And it's just, and you can see his mind working.

[11 : 35] So he's gotten all these puzzles, and he's been remembering the puzzles. He's been bringing the pieces together. It's what it means, remember. He's been remembering the puzzles. And we have puzzles remembered all over our house. I mean, we have like eight puzzles on the floors and everywhere else. I mean, they're just everywhere. Just two nights ago, I told him, hey, you have to dismember a couple of your puzzles, because I can't walk anywhere without stepping on puzzles. And he's just gotten so good with this idea of doing puzzles, and he's become kind of prideful. I mean, I can do anything. It doesn't matter to me. And so what I did, so you can't tell him this, but what I did is I got him this really cool puzzle. It's kind of hard. It's like 2,000 pieces.

And he opened it up, and he started working on it. And then when he left, I went in, and I grabbed two hands full of puzzle pieces, and I took them away. And I hit him. And he started working on his puzzle, and then he started losing interest. And he goes, oh, I want something that's even harder. And so I went out, and we bought this puzzle, which I'd never seen before, but it's just basically all one color. It's just silver. It's just a silver puzzle. And I took away the top, so he has no idea what the picture looks like.

And what I realized is that as he's doing this thing, that those two puzzles, those two puzzles, the silver puzzle and the puzzle that has the handful of pieces taken away, those puzzles have never been completed.

He gave up on them. I mean, they were just too hard. He couldn't see the full picture. He didn't know where he was going. He didn't know what he was going to do with these things. I mean, I went into his room last night, and they're still in boxes because he just gave up because he doesn't see a big picture.

[13 : 18] And I think that's what this passage is about today. This passage today is about that. It's about God sending us on this journey, and he wants us to see all these pieces of the puzzle, all these pieces of the picture.

And they're about to move forward. And Moses in Deuteronomy 8, he warns them of about three things, really about ten things, but I want to look at three things today. He warns them of three

things that they're going to have a tendency to dismember in their journey. They're going to have three pictures or pieces of the puzzle they're going to want to skip. They're not going to want to deal with. They're not going to want to fix it. And I think these things that Moses reminds them of are things that we need to be reminded of today. The things are that they're going to want to take away the picture of God in his hand in their journey. They're going to want to take away the picture and the pieces of this passage that talk about their heart and their need for mercy and grace. And they're going to want to take away these pictures in this journey, these pieces of this puzzle of just the big picture. So they're going to take away pictures of who God is and his sufficiency and taking care of them.

[14 : 26] They're going to take away the pieces that talk about who they really are and their heart and their need for mercy and grace. And they're going to take away these pieces of the big journey. Does that make sense? So that's kind of what we're going to go about.

So I want to look at this passage really briefly. And I want to challenge us as a church because it's been incredibly challenging to me. The first pieces of this puzzle that Moses warns us not to forget is this picture of God in his hand in our life.

You see it in the passages right in front of you. Verses 2 through 4. Remember, remember, remember. Verses 16 and verses 18. Moses is calling God's people to remember everything that God has done to bring them to this place.

He's warning them not to dismember God and his faithfulness. He reminds them that God brought them out of bondage. He reminds them that God broke the largest and most powerful nation in the world at that time to free his people, that he brought them out of bondage, and he brings them into this wilderness.

And even when they disobey, God continues to provide for them. God provides for them this thing called manna. It actually in Hebrew means, what is it? You can see an abbot and costello thing, you know, that it falls on the ground every morning.

[15 : 45] And you go out and you kind of scrape it up and you put it into a ball. And they're talking and the guy goes, what is it? He goes, yes. No, what is it? Right. That's what it means. It means manna.

What is it? And this is how they ate. And it was this food. It's kind of this wafer. God provided water. Water came out of rocks, out of nowhere in these places in this desert. And he just fed them. God gave them clothes. Now, guys, you're going to love this. Guys, women will hate this. But they gave him clothes that never wore out. I mean, for 40 years, you get to wear the same clothes. You get to wear the same underwear, socks. It's like a guy's dream, right? Hey, look at these. I've been wearing them for 30 years. They're like as best as they've ever been, right? I mean, that's what he did.

And there's amazing miracles in here. I know women, it's a woman's worst nightmare. Clothes that never wear out. But for guys, it's like, wow, it's your best pair of socks and shoes. And they're with you for 40 years.

[16 : 43] And God reminds them, Moses reminds them that he's doing all these miracles. He gives them everything they need in probably the most hostile environment in the world.

I mean, if you tried to live there today, no one lives there today. Because if you live there today, you die. And the passage says that God gives and he gives and he gives. And the people continue to complain.

They continue to complain. They want other things. They want other things that were back in Egypt. They want things that they feel like are going to satisfy them better. They wanted to go back into slavery.

They wanted to go back into bondage. They would rather just take those pieces out of their puzzle and throw them aside. Because they didn't think it was important that God had brought them there and made these big pictures.

They wanted to do it on their own. They wanted to do it their way. Then we want other things that didn't do it for us. They wanted to do it, right? But what about us? How about us? Amen.

[17 : 42] When we think about God working in our life. And we think about God providing for us. When we think about God taking care of us.

And we think about God promising to do all these things. the scripture says that he promises to take care of our food and our clothing and our jobs and our relationships. He promises to take care of everything in our life. You know, when you read the New Testament, the New Testament, especially in Hebrew, says that this story right here is our story today. And just like the people of God went through the wilderness, if you're a Christian in here right now, you're in a wilderness because this world is not made for you.

This world has been corrupted. This world is hard. This world is a spiritually hostile and desolate place, just like the wilderness and the desert was for God's people. And you and I are walking through this desert spiritually every day. And God promises to provide for us and to take care of us. And the question is, do we accept his care? Or do we complain? Do we grumble? Do we want to manage our own lives? And Moses reminds them and he encourages them and he says, be careful because on this journey, you're going to want to take these pieces of God's faithfulness out of the way. You're going to forget these things. The minute something really hard happens in your life, you're going to forget where God has brought you from and how he's brought you there and how he takes care of you every moment. And you're just going to focus on the here and the now, and you're going to lose those pieces of your puzzle. I love the passage. I stuck it up there in the beginning of your bulletin. It's the Ecclesiastes passage. It was spoken from the wisest man in the world, Solomon. And it says this idea that God has put eternity in our hearts. It means that you and I were made for another world. And that we're going to feel this struggle, and we're going to feel this tension, and we're going to feel this battle. And if we don't forget this, especially when we go into the hostile times and into the deserts, the passage says we're not going to survive. It says we're going to fail. That every one of us is going to be tempted today and tomorrow and this year.

[20 : 19] We're going to be tempted to forget God's faithfulness and his goodness in our life. The next thing that Moses warns the people of God about and that he warns us about is that we're going to take these pieces that are called Tobin and my heart and my need for God's grace, and we're not going to want to put those in this puzzle. Because those pieces are difficult sometimes. Those pieces are hard sometimes. And the passage says here in verses 2 and in verses 5 and in verses 16 that when we're on this journey, God's taken us to these places, these difficult places, because he wants to show us our hearts.

He wants to show us our need for him. He's going to take us into these incredibly difficult places because he knows that if he doesn't do that, he knows that if he doesn't do that and he just gives us everything we want, the passage says that our hearts become prideful. Our hearts become self-sufficient. Our hearts become forgetful.

We start to boast. We start to complain. And Moses is reminding them of these pieces to the puzzle like he's reminding us. And what God does when that happens is the passage says in verses 2 and 3 and 5 and 16 that God brings discipline into our life. God disciplines his children. Did you know that?

I mean, I think it's one of these things that we don't like to talk about a lot in a church because often when we think of discipline, we think of punishment. Okay, stick your hands out. Cane me. Whap, whap, whap. I mean, or we think if we go through the test to get into school and we just think there's this massive test and they're going to basically test me on pass or fail. I'm going to weed out. But that's not what the Bible talks about. The Bible says that he loves us so much, his children, that God disciplines us. And this discipline is about correcting our hearts.

[22 : 22] It's about correcting our attitudes. It's about correcting our vision for who God is. Now, punishment is always about past deeds. Punishment is always retribution. Punishment always involves fear.

Punishment always involves separation. It's kind of like many of us grew up in our homes with our parents. You know, I walked out of my house. I didn't really know much about parenting.

But one thing I did know, I don't want to be as that hard on my kids. Punishment is you fail. You're unworthy. Get out of here. I don't want to see you.

You're unworthy of me. You're unworthy of this family. You're unworthy of this name. You're unworthy of Harvard. But the passage says that God disciplines us because he wants to change us. The passage says that God's doing it. He's with us all the time. I read this passage over and over again, and I'm so, so thankful that God doesn't treat me like I treat my kids.

[23 : 49] I can remember in China after exams and I'd walk out onto the street and there'd be 10 or 15 little kids on the street with big boards around their neck talking about how they failed their test and how they were a failure and a disgrace to their family.

And the Bible says that God never treats his children like that. That he never punishes us. He never says, I'm done with you. Get out of here. But he changes us. And he takes us to places that you and I can see our hearts and that we can be changed. I mean, I think this is a very intense thing.

I think it's important. We don't like to talk about it, but the passage says that God's going to take us to places that are difficult because he wants to do something amazing in our hearts.

God's going to take you to a desert this year probably because he loves you. Because the passage says he takes all of his children to these places. And what he does in these places is he opens up our hearts and he shows us things that we love more than him.

[25 : 06] And what he usually does is he takes those things away. And when he takes those things away, our job, our health, our finances, our reputation, we have a choice. We have a choice. What are we going to fill that hole up with?

In the passage, it says that God is always there. He's always providing and he wants us to fill that emptiness. With him. With a deeper relationship with him.

I can remember the day God opened my eyes and I came to Christ. You know, I don't remember much about my childhood. I remember that my childhood was filled with a lot of fear and a lot of shame and a lot of doubt.

And when I look back at how my parents were raised, I'm like, wow, God was really gracious to me because my parents actually did really good with what they had. And when I came to Christ and allowed, I invited Christ into my life and Christ came into my heart and he changed me, I wish I could say that all these fears disappeared.

I wish I could say that I got a handle on being a control freak and handling on to things and making sure that I did things perfectly right. That they all disappeared, but they didn't.

[26 : 38] And the passage says that we deceive ourselves when we think that. And what we see is that God takes you and me into places because he wants this deep, passionate, love relationship with you.

And there's nothing else that he wants you to love. He just wants you to love him. And we struggle with loving other things and caring for other things.

And he just gently opens our hearts and he allows things to come in like sickness, and loss, and divorce, and failure, and separation, and loneliness.

And in these desert times when we're walking with the Lord, he's there and he shows those things and those things take away a part of what we clung to more than him. And we're just sitting there going, okay God, what are you gonna do now?

now all I have is you. And God says, great. Because I'm enough.

[27 : 54] I'm enough. The passage says that as we go through life this year and throughout our whole lives, you and I are gonna want to take away the pieces to deal with who we really are.

The idols in our life. Because we don't want people to see those things. We just want them to see, well I'm Tobin, I have my life together. Huh. But Moses says, God loves us so much, he's gonna take us into places where we can take those things out.

Does that make sense? I mean in some ways that's scary. I mean if you're like me, I just feared my people I loved saying get out of here.

I don't want you around me anymore. So a lot of times we walked in fear and when I came to know the Lord, I walked in fear. That's why these passages are so powerful to me.

Because they show us that God is not a God of fear. And that he's a God of love and compassion and grace. But he does discipline us because he wants to do something amazing in our lives.

[29 : 06] He loves you so much that he doesn't want you to cling to your MPF or your job or your title or the people in your life that fill your life more up than he does. Because he knows those things are gonna eventually fail us.

And if we cling to him our whole life, at the end of our life, we're gonna end up empty and disappointed and lost. And he knows that the only thing that's not gonna fail us, the only thing that's not gonna leave us empty, the only thing that's not gonna disappoint us, the only thing that's not gonna make us lost forever is Jesus.

And so he keeps putting that into our life and we go on this journey in this desert and he shares these things with us and we go, yeah, you know, I don't know, I don't like that, I think I'd rather have this instead.

And God says, that's okay. I have a desert I wanna take you to. You don't wanna give up control, you don't wanna give up fear, that's okay. What if you have a heart attack?

Now you're four weeks in a bed with no control. What are you gonna do with that? The passage says on this journey as we produce and make this puzzle of our lives that there are gonna be certain things we're not gonna wanna look at because we're afraid of them, we don't wanna look at them, we don't want other people to see them, but Moses says, remember.

[30 : 33] Because in those most difficult times, God is with you. In those most difficult times, God is with you.

The last thing the passage says to me, and it's this whole story, but it's usually just found in verse 16, and he says this, in the wilderness he fed you, he fed you manna, what is it?

That your fathers did not know, that he might humble you, you, that he might test you, that he might do it for your good to the end. And in Hebrew, it means that when God builds the picture of our life, when God is putting the puzzles together, his puzzles and his pictures are not just about here and now, but his puzzle and his picture of our life is about eternity.

And I think there's so many of us in here, we're building our lives and we're putting these pieces together and we're holding on to four pieces of this puzzle and we say, this is me, this is my life. And God says, no, your life is where I brought you from, what I've done, what I've done to bring you here, your troubles, your darkness, these things I'm healing in your life, what you're doing now in eternity.

[31 : 53] And the passage says that if we forget that, if we forget what God has done, if we forget his hand in our life, if we forget his provision, if we forget where he's brought us, if we forget all these things and we live our life just like these four pieces of 50 or 60 or 70 years, if we live our life like this is all of our life, the passage says we're lost.

Because a life without God and the pieces of his life in your life and doing things in your life and a life without what you've known and your sin and your brokenness and your need to come to him and the need for grace to fill up in our lives, if those pieces aren't in the puzzle, then the picture says that we perish.

That we perish. So this year, we're going to go on a journey and Moses says, before you enter into this journey, I want you to do three things.

I want you to look back and to realize that God has been with you the whole time. God's been feeding you. He's been taking care of you. He's brought you through all these things. You think your ability and your intellect and all these things got you to where you're at.

You know, who gave you the intellect? Who gave you the health? Who allowed you to be born in Hong Kong this year? Why weren't you born in India 500 years later or earlier?

[33 : 17] When you go on this journey, realize that God has brought you. God is in control. He's taking care of you. When you go on this journey, realize that he's going to take you to places that are going to show you your need for him in deep, hard, and painful ways.

He's going to break you. He's going to take you to deserts. And in the midst of these deserts, he's always going to be there. He's always going to be beside you. He's never going to reject you. And the goal is that you would fall more in love with him because he's the only thing that will take you through to the end.

And when you build this puzzle of your life, remember that it's to the end. It's to eternity. I mean, think about it. Most of us build our lives and our lives consist of 10,000-piece puzzle and eternity is like two pieces.

If we included it at all. But the way God builds our lives is that here and now is like four or five pieces. And what he did before and what he did to bring us to his place and what he's going to do with us in eternity is massive.

When you came in, you got a red band. Some people were very suspicious. Amy Farrell, man, she looked at me. I guess it's, I don't know what it is about the Brits.

[34 : 43] It's, you know, they're asking me, is this rubbish? You know, and they were very suspicious. And, you know, I said, well, you know, what it means is that you're an honorary Texan now.

So anybody who has a band on, you're honorary Texan, you're in heaven. Now, what it means is this. Today, this week, as you go on your journey, you're going to have doubts. You're going to wonder if God is for you. You're going to wonder if God is in your life. You're going to wonder if God cares about your tests and your professors and your scores and what you're going to do next and your bonus. You're going to worry about all these things. And I want you to look at this red band and to realize that God is with you. He brought you from the past. He's been taking care of you all this time. He's been feeding you. He's been clothing you. He's there. He's good. He's there. This year, you're going to walk through life and something is going to happen. [35 : 47] I had a good friend and they were just fired this week. And they wondered what's going to come of these things. Some of us are going to get sick. Some of us are going to lose people we love. Some of us are going to have things we don't even want to talk about.

And we're going to wonder is God with us? Is he using these things? Why are these things happening here? And I want you to look at this band and to realize that he cares. And he's doing something in your life and in your heart that is amazing. And the question is are you going to let him? Or do you want to go back to Egypt and get trapped up by those things that have been grabbing you and closing you and capturing your heart and your affections?

As you go on this journey this year you're going to be thinking about just here and now. I got to get this week done. I got to get these things going on. I don't have time to think about these other things. This is just a special time. These are all I'm going to worry about. And every time in Hong Kong what I've learned is every time is a special time and we don't ever think about what's next I want you to look at the band because the passage says that God thinks about what's next.

[36 : 58] And he loves you. And he's pursuing you. And he's going to take care of you. Now you don't have to wear it all week. You don't have to wear it all month.

You realize I like to give out visual things because they help me remember. But I'd like to give you just to wear it today. And after today you can take it off just put it someplace that you can see. Because if you're like me sometime in the next week next month this year something's going to happen in your life.

And you're going to wonder is God real? Does he care? Is he there? And the passage says that God does all of those things and so much more.

And the question is will you trust him? Will you trust him? Father we thank you for this day. We thank you for your goodness and your faithfulness in our life.

[38 : 07] We thank you for this passage in Deuteronomy. as Moses who doesn't enter into the promised land because he was disobedient. And I know we don't like to talk about obedience and disobedience because it's a scary thing.

Especially Christians in the church today we don't like to talk about it we just want to talk about grace. But your word says that obedience is important. And that you've called us to obey because as we trust you we experience your goodness and your fullness in our life.

And if we don't trust you we're lost. Father I pray for some of us in here right now who are building our own puzzles of our life.

We're trying to put together the pieces of just here and now and me and mine. And we don't include God. We don't include a future. We don't include this struggle that we have inside of us.

we don't realize that God is pursuing us. My prayer for them here today Lord is that you would open their eyes to your son Jesus because that's the only way it's going to happen.

[39 : 19] It's not going to happen because they're good enough. It's not going to happen because they were righteous enough. It's not going to happen because they didn't do bad things. It's going to happen because you loved them. You allowed your son to die for them.

Father I pray that they would realize that. they would ask the people who brought them what this means and they would come into your family this week. Father if I pray for the rest of us who are on this journey and if they're like me they fail probably often.

They don't want to look at the past. They don't want to look at your fullness and your grace and your mercy. They don't. We don't want to look at our brokenness. But all along you're there and you're working and you're dealing you sent your son through the wilderness and he came out successful

where we often fail and you pointed us to him and you said now you can trust him. Will you trust him? Will you allow him to give you the strength? Lord I pray for us those of us who are on this journey as your children. That we would allow you once again to capture our hearts. That we would allow you once again to be our God. Father I pray for this church as we build this puzzle what it means to be in Watermark. Help us never to leave those components out of God's faithfulness in his goodness in his provision in his mercy in his grace.

[40 : 58] Help us never to expect people to be so perfect when they come through the doors and not broken and not hurting and not doubting and not fearing. Help us to realize that's part of your plan and that's how you work.

You meet almost all of us in the desert and you change almost all of us significantly in desert times. May we be a church church that greets people in the desert and helps them to see your son and to walk through it with them together.

So Lord we come to you today and we just worship you. As we enter into this new year we trust you we need you. We pray all these things in your son Jesus Christ holy name.

Amen.