

Finding Hope and Peace amidst darkness and distress

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Preacher: Maik Friedrich

[0 : 0 0] amen please be seated don't hear amen to that wait don't be seated yet can I hear amen to that yeah it's great to have you here my name is Tobin Miller I'm one of the pastors here at Watermark Community Church as we started this church two years ago we dreamed about people going on a journey together to be sharing each other's stories and part of sharing each other's stories is knowing each other and what God has done in our stories and so before you're seated we would like for you to turn around and greet somebody you have not met this morning at least two people and welcome them here to this day come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king

Jesus the savior is born for the Lord will reign over all the earth come let us worship the king let us worship the king Jesus the savior is born for the Lord is great and pray thee to be praised through all the earth and worship the king sing let us come let all nations sing the mountains bring up with an energetic grace the heavens rejoice the heavens rejoice for the earth receives our king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king

Jesus the savior is born for the Lord will reign over all the earth come let us worship the king come let us worship the king Jesus the savior is born for the Lord is great and pray thee to be praised through all the earth come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king Jesus the savior is born for the Lord will reign over all the earth come let us worship the king worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king come let us worship the king

Jesus the savior is born come let us worship the kingware is born Worship the King!

Hi, my name is Edmund and this morning I would like you to meet a few of the kids that we work with at ICM in the Nepalese community in Hong Kong. So... My name is Silas.

[4 : 0 5] My name is Kelly. My name is Anisha. My name is Rosanne. My name is Brasinta. My name is Sushmita. And today they will be leading you in the Advent Sharing today.

This is the third Sunday of Advent. Each week of Advent, we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth by lighting a candle and focusing on different themes of Christ's coming.

So far, we have lit the candles of hope and peace. This week we light the candle of joy. In the time of Jesus, shepherds were looked down upon by society at large.

They couldn't worship at the temple, give testimony in court, and were typically stereotyped as thieves by the general population. By many standards, their lives were lacking in joy.

And one day at night, in the fields surrounding Bethlehem, an angel appeared to a group of shepherds announcing good news of great joy. Not just for the shepherds, but for the entire world.

[5 : 1 0] In our day, joy can be incredibly fleeting. Demands of jobs, school, and family can seem overwhelming. The culture of change in Hong Kong can leave us so disoriented and confused that it is hard to fix our eyes on Christ and find our joy in Him.

Yet, Christ comes to us today to announce the same joy that was announced to the shepherds so long ago. This joy is not something based on our circumstances, but rather something that is rooted outside our circumstances.

In the very person of Christ, God Himself in the flesh. Please join us reading the scripture passage found in Luke 2, verse 8-12. The words are on the screen.

And in the same regions there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And angels of the Lord appeared to them, and the groll of the Lord saw around them, and they will fill with great fear.

And the angels said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is the born this day, the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

[6 : 29] And on this way we suffer you. You will find a baby wrapped in a swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Let's pray. Dear Father, thank you for sending Jesus, our good news and our only true joy, as a baby in a manger.

Thank you that He did not remain a baby in a manger, but that as He grew, He served you perfectly, ultimately giving His life in exchange for our sins.

Thank you that in Him we can have perfect joy by being restored to a proper relationship with you. Please let us walk in this joy as we go throughout our everyday lives.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Great job. Hey, I'm going to pray for the kids and dismiss them, but I want to pray just for all the things going on in our world today.

Just we had a lot of things happen in the States and there's things going on in the Middle East and just things that are hard to grasp, especially during this season. So I'm going to pray for us and just pray for the people of Newtown, Connecticut and the Middle East and just wherever these craziness is going on.

[7 : 38] Will you please join me in prayer? Father, we come before you today in sadness and deep sorrow as we reflect on the events that happened yesterday in Newtown, Connecticut.

We know that you were there and that you're there now amongst those people. We know that you weep as you see the fallenness of your creation. We know that your original plan for us, your children involved none of this brokenness.

We see so easily around us in our world as we walk through our day. We plead for your mercy, for your grace, for your forgiveness, for the selfishness, the pride, the arrogance and the brokenness that if we're honest, we see in our own hearts.

Father, we pray for your comfort to the families of those children and adults that were lost and were killed in such a tragic event. Father, we pray for your family, the church, that we would step up to comfort, listen and help to be a friend, but more importantly, to share our friend, Jesus, to them.

We pray in the weeks to come when so many questions are asked over and over, especially why and how, that people will say clearly that the problem is ultimately sin, that the problem is ultimately our separation from you, our creator, that until we understand this and deal with our own hearts, that nothing ever will truly change.

[9 : 04] We pray that you would use these events and others in the lives of those around us as we talk and ask questions and deal with these very difficult and hard events that we cannot truly explain.

We pray, Lord, that they would see the solution, the true solution, which is your son. And we pray during this season as we celebrate the birth of your son, we're reminded throughout history, even in Scripture, that we're told as Herod heard that he was tricked by the Magi, that he went out into the environments of Bethlehem and slew every child, male, two years and younger.

And historians tell us that 20 to 30 little boys were killed. Again, the reason why you came, to enter into the darkness and to the lostness and to bring sense and hope.

So, Lord, we come before you as your people, desperate for you. Lord, we come before you as your people, desperate for you. We need you and we love you.

We pray even now for these children up here and the children that are about to be released to their classes and for the teachers that will oversee them. And present your son, Jesus, to them. Lord, we pray that they would come to know you at an early age and they would fall in love with you.

[10 : 24] And that they would do mighty things. Mighty things for your kingdom. So, Lord, we come before you this morning and we plead. And we realize just how broken and lost we are.

And how much we need your son, Jesus. We pray all these things in his incredible, powerful, and wonderful name. Amen. Okay. Watermark kids, you are dismissed.

Youth are staying in here. And kiddos are dismissed. Come, O come, Emmanuel.

Come, O come, Emmanuel. And ransom, captives. Israel. And mourns in lonely exile here.

And ransom, Israel. And ransom, captive Israel. And mourns in lonely exile here.

[11 : 34] Until the Son of God appear. Cleaning, O come, O come, O come, O come, O day-spring.

Com' and cheer. O W ■■■rum analysts, home, O come, O day o'er. How spirits by thine land begin. His tears the gloomy clouds of night And then star shadows blue to fly Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel, rejoice Rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel, rejoice

Rejoice, rejoice Rejoice, rejoice Rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel, rejoice Rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel, rejoice Rejoice Rejoice

Rejoice, Emmanuel Rejoice

Rejoice Rejoice Rejoice And he will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

[16 : 53] Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. This is God's word. Before we go into the message, let me pray with us. Father, we just stand amazed in seeing you again this Christmas in just a new light and a new perspective.

And seeing how you are our peace and our love and our comfort. That you came as a baby. But that you are the mighty God, the wonderful counselor.

That you are the one that brings peace, the one that is our perfect Father. And let's pray that today we would see you more clearly and we would see something new about you.

And we pray all this in Christ's name. Good morning, Watermark. My name is Mike. I'm working with the university students here at the church.

And I think I forgot my red shirt this morning. Hang on. It's my privilege not only to share God's word with you this morning.

[18 : 01] It's also my honor to share the last sermon ever here at Watermark. Just in case you have missed it, it's December 16th. And we have five more days until December 21st.

And in case you still don't know what I'm talking about, there's some highly sophisticated research by the Mayan Native Americans. that the world as we know it will come to an end in just a few days.

Anyways, if you were not aware of this fact when coming here this morning, you'll be happy to hear that there will be a great lunch buffet outside the church. So there will be some great food and fellowship before everything goes down the drain.

With that said, and all the hype about the end of the world, the supposed end of the world, I actually went online and I did a little bit of research on Wikipedia. There's actually a list of predictions, major predictions throughout the history about the end of the world.

There are more than 200 listed. And some are actually kind of interesting or funny. For example, did you know that Christopher Columbus predicted the end of the world for 1658? It didn't happen.

[19 : 14] I'm glad that he was at least right that he would go to India sailing to the West. I also found another really interesting prediction of the Millerites. The followers of Pastor Miller.

And he predicted the end of the world for 1843. It obviously didn't happen either. And when the world didn't end, it became known as the Great Disappointment. As a disclaimer, to my knowledge, Pastor Miller had nothing to do with any Millers you may know.

I actually felt kind of relieved. This week I got a calendar in my mail. And it was for my bank. It's a calendar for 2013. And if you know how much the banks tried to cut costs, they would not send out a calendar for the next year if the world would really come to an end.

So that was good to know. So I think all this stuff about the end of the world is kind of getting a little crazy lately, like tsunamis and wars and the breakdown of the financial system.

We are talking about all this. And there's even this TV show that came out, and I don't know whether you've seen it. It's on the National Geographic. It's called Domsday Preppers. It tells the story of people that are so convinced that some kind of global disaster will hit that they spent all their money building bunkers and storing food and buying weapons.

[20 : 32] Their whole life literally starts to revolve around being prepared for some kind of nuclear attack or global pandemic or even the polar shift. I don't know how you feel about all this this morning.

And it may not be the fear of the end of the world, but what are the fears that you've been dealing with lately? What are the worries that you carry with you these weeks and these months and this past year?

Maybe instead of the end of the world, it's just the end of your job or passing an exam just now and maybe your finances or keeping your scholarship.

Maybe it's a fear of relationships breaking apart in your family or in your marriage. And then maybe these worries that just carry on through your life and maybe it's your health.

Wherever you are this morning, what is it that you wrestle with, that you carry with you? And how are you preparing to face? How are you prepping for this darkness?

[21 : 33] And when this darkness hits in your life, who do you turn to? What or who is your savior when you face the darkness? Today we're actually looking at a passage that talks about people that are facing darkness and they're facing despair.

And the passage also talks about how they are dealing with that, where they're turning to to find hope and peace amidst all these troubles that they are facing. The passage is from Isaiah and you've heard it read just now.

And it's set in the southern kingdom of Judah in the 8th century before Christ came. It was a time of darkness and despair for the people. And Eric shared a little bit about the whole journey of the Israelites last week.

If you haven't been here, let me just briefly look into that. Isaiah experienced the northern kingdom of Israel being attacked and conquered and invaded by the Assyrians.

The Assyrians were the superpower of that time. And they left devastation and destruction wherever they went. What do you do when you're facing destruction?

[22 : 39] You try to save yourself. And that's exactly what they're trying to do. They try to respond to that. When we are facing our worries and our fears, we're looking for something or someone who will come and save us.

So King Ahaz of Judah decided not to help the Israelites and actually sided with the Assyrians. They're a strong force. So we want to avoid our own destruction.

So politics became the way to get out of it. But now in this passage, some years later, politics weren't working anymore. The Assyrians were again at the doorstep of Judah.

They were at the brink of destruction. The new king, Hezekiah, he was now wrestling with what to do because politics had failed and these Assyrians were right there. So something this passage teaches us is that we always look for a savior.

We put our hope in that savior. That this savior will come and help us overcome our problems and our worries. I think the structure is always kind of like the same.

[23 : 49] It's kind of the story that repeats itself. So some kind of problem occurs. Some kind of worry arises in our lives and then this problem grows bigger. It builds up in anxiousness and then we are suddenly realizing that we are getting to the point of despair and we rewrite the story.

We are trying to invite this savior to come into our lives and then we hope that the savior will somehow help us solve the problem. So we start to live in that illusion that this savior will work.

We desperately want it to work. But at one point, our little savior will fail us. It will fall apart. When facing the Syrian superpower and seeing the destruction and devastation they would bring, King Ahas turned to politics.

Politics worked for a while and it gave the illusion that they could arrange with their wisdom and their smart ways bring peace. But now, after a while, it all falls apart and so it is with us.

So it is with us that we come and look at the darkness and the lies and we look for something that can save us. There's a story of a savior I heard this week that I found pretty interesting.

[25 : 06] His name is Arrigo. He's an Italian and he's an Italian soccer fan. He's a fan of the soccer club, the Serie A, the first league club, Udine.

Now, Udine is facing some darkness. I'm trying to ease in with an example that is not as heavy loaded. So, if you like soccer, so Udine has been doing pretty well the last 10 years and after 14 games into the season they were pretty close to relegation.

And people got a little worried and the fans were pretty upset. But Arrigo is a pretty big fan. And so he made his way 400 kilometers to the away game against direct opponents.

It's a pretty big game and he goes and so there's a stadium and they expect about 30,000 people. And so Arrigo comes in and so in the soccer stadium they block off like one section for the fans of the guests.

You know, like all this craziness in Europe with soccer fans. And so they block off this whole section that only the guest fans will be there. So for several thousand people they block off this section for the Udine fans and Arrigo shows up.

[26 : 15] It's 10 minutes before the game and then he walks in and then he sees like 30,000 people and he walks into the guest block and he notices it's only him. And it's the real story.

So he goes there and he goes down and it's just until 10 minutes until the game starts. There will be some people show up. So he goes down to the fence and puts his Udine flag up there and waits and the teams come out and the ref comes out and the game starts.

And he is still utterly alone in this whole section for thousands of people. It's the first time in history of any of the major leagues in the whole of Europe that only one fan showed up of the whole team.

Now Arrigo wasn't intimidated. Even the 30,000 were cheering against him and he would just cheer back by himself at one point people started bringing him coffee because they had pity with him.

But the amazing thing was his team won the game 2-0. And he was in all the newspapers with a big picture with his one flag in this huge stand and it says the savior of Udine.

[27 : 28] Now he worked for a while. I'm not sure whether he will work for a long time. We have this saying in Europe that the spectators are the 12th men.

So for the Americans we have 11 people playing soccer but when the spectators cheering their team on they are like the 12th men.

Arrigo is now celebrated as the 12th man of his team bringing them to success. Now in two weeks they would probably play another game. I don't know whether it's a winter break at that point but the next time they play away I wonder whether he will be a savior that will again bring them to victory or whether he will fail them.

But the newspapers were all about him and being the savior of the club. And in Hong Kong we have our own saviors that we rely on. When we face the darkness of losing jobs or when we worry about providing for our needs maybe it's the savior of good grades.

The good grades there are so many students right now in the midst of exams maybe when I get my GPA up then that will give me a good job and that will be my savior because it will give me the money that I need to secure my life.

[28 : 45] But again what happens when that savior fails when that good job that you have suddenly leads you into depression? or when the long work hours destroy your family?

What if the stress of life just makes you sick and the saviors of Hong Kong suddenly stop working? In my life my family lived a story with a lot of saviors as well a lot of false saviors.

So my parents grew up in Germany after the Second World War and when the war came to an end they had to both flee from where they lived. My mom lived in a small German settlement close to the Black Sea and they had to pack everything up and leave.

And my dad actually lived in what nowadays is western Poland and when the Russian occupying forces came they packed their stuff and they made their way west. but under the occupying forces his dad actually got shot when he was 14.

So they had seen enough pain in their lives and they hoped that they could just give us a different a happier world a different story.

[30 : 01] They wanted for us to kind of live in a world of peace and the saviors they turned to is their own hard work that they could provide a better future and that they could keep that story together and just avoid the pain for us that they had experienced.

And there's one story that lately came up to me and I was 15 years I played in a handball club actually that's my sport. So we had this tournament so being 15 we played this game and afterwards I started talking with a caretaker and the caretaker had known my family for a while and as I'm talking with him he says how is your mom's sister doing?

And I said oh you mean her brother? No her sister. I said no my mom only has a brother. No I mean Erica her sister. And we kind of ended the conversation I went home and I told my mom I had this strange conversation with this caretaker today who talked about you having the sister Erica and my mom got quiet and she said I actually do have a sister and her name is Erica.

But when she was six years old she had a brain bleeding and it left her disabled and she cannot talk and she can barely move so we put her in a home but we didn't want you guys to worry about it.

And I was very upset that all this was kept from me but it was their way of dealing with pain and writing this different story that the savior had become to hide things and to just write this different story that is happy and last week I got a phone call from my mom and she said oh Erica just died age 68 so for 60 years her savior of hiding away to keep the happy family was kind of working but deep down it was all fake and that savior just wasn't true.

[31 : 57] Now this is my story of what I've seen what fake saviors do and I could probably go on with countless examples and you probably as you look at your lives you have countless ways of how you could see these fake saviors being alive in your lives it may be that you feel worthless and your savior has become your hard work if I just work hard and I can build up respect and I can achieve something and I can build up my own worth but at one point you'll realize that that that savior won't work and it still leaves you empty maybe the darkness you are facing is loneliness and the savior becomes people maybe you're putting that hope in that one person that one day will come to fulfill you and make you complete or if I'm just surrounding myself with enough people then the loneliness will disappear but if we put our hope in people as our savior we will at one point be left disappointed so what will you say is your darkness today and this year what are the saviors that you have put your trust in the people of

Judah had put their hopes in false saviors now here it was politics and the savior wasn't working anymore and now in the midst of their shattered hopes Isaiah is speaking about a different savior a different kind of hope in verse 2 it says the people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned so in the midst of their despair Isaiah is pointing the people to a bright future to the hope of a new savior one that can truly save them from their darkness that can truly bring light into their darkness and then he continues with the prophecy and if you have been there for Michael Ramson's talk yesterday he talked about a prophet being like a reverse historian not someone that looks ahead in history but looks back at history to write but he actually looks ahead and gives a prophecy a promise about what's still to come and this is what we're seeing here about

Isaiah for us for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father prince of peace of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end what Isaiah is pointing the people to and what he's pointing us to is is that great story about that true savior that real savior he's pointing us to Jesus and he's telling his people that one day a child will be born and that child will bring salvation if you have been around churches before it's over Christmas time then you probably have heard this passage before it's read a lot through Christmas when we anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth and you may have heard messages about the savior being full of wisdom and mighty and that he is the perfect father and that he brings true peace but today

I want to focus on what follows in that passage it actually says in verse 7 and of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end the savior that is coming as a child that Jesus whose birth we are about to celebrate of his greatness of his government and peace there will be no end it's not a temporary savior like so many saviors we turn to that work for a while but there will be no end the hope and peace we find him is eternal I think this is this amazing story this is what Isaiah is inviting us into and it's that story of that eternal kingdom that is still to come that eternal hope that he gives us that glimpse of that future that this creator of everything who has always been and who always will be is the savior to put our trust in now this child being born will also one day die on the cross but to show the world that he is eternal and that there is no end to his power he conquers death and he rises from the dead to show us that in his power we can put our hope and find peace that is not limited even in this life he is the one that speaks into our worries and our fears into our sickness and he even speaks into our fear of even our own death and gives us a perspective on life that is bigger than anything that we could think of in this world now this is the part where we could stop and just look at this future promise that story that culminates in that kingdom that is still to come but then

I'm realizing that when I first explored Christianity I sometimes viewed that as kind of like a little fluffy religious concept it's like there's this future hope like I know that you are suffering right now and there are pains right now in this world but if you just have hope that one day it will all be better then that's all you need and what is amazing I think about this passage is that it's not just a future hope that is being offered here but there is a present reality to the Savior that is presented here for Isaiah and his people there is a prophecy about this child that will one day in several hundred years come and they don't even know about it but what happens when you read the accounts of Kings and the Chronicles you'll see that actually God shows up to them when the temporary Savior of politics failed and the people turned to the true Savior God shows up and he defeats the Assyrians the superpower of the time 180,000 strong army is defeated

[38 : 17] Assyria is scrambled it will never rise to be a world power again and this is the way that God shows up to the Assyrians at that time now when Christ is born when this little baby comes and we see God in flesh coming we also don't see him only talk about this future kingdom but he says there is a kingdom that is to come but it's also here that as he comes the kingdom comes and he begins to heal and restore lives as he walks around Galilee and Israel and so we see that hope for the future but we see him acting and intervening in the lives right where he is and when this Jesus rises from the dead and is about to ascend to heaven he says I will always be with my people he will always be with us so this hope is not just about one that is about that kingdom that is to come but it is a hope that the Savior is here speaking into our lives and I want to close with one of the passages in the book of

Acts so when I see Christ speaking to the people at his time and they have seen the miracles and they have seen the Savior not just talking about this kingdom but as he begins to shape lives and show them that he wants to restore lives right there they begin to form communities and so in Acts 2:44 we have a picture of a community that understood what he was talking about let me read that to you in the bulletin as well in Acts 2:44 it actually says all the believers now don't just read over that all the believers every single one of the believers who had put their hope in Jesus as the one true Savior all the believers were together and they had everything in common they sold their property possessions they gave to anyone who had need and every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts they broke bread in their homes and they ate together with glad and sincere hearts praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people and the

Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved I don't know about you but I look at this passage and I'm incredibly challenged but I'm incredibly encouraged that this community that saw Christ actively intervening in their lives what I see them do is that they begin to bury all their little saviors now when we think about what that would mean for us they are burying their savior of personal space they actually invite everybody into their lives they're burying their savior of material possession they say everything I have I give it to the I share it with the community I invite the community to participate in that they bury their savior of putting their work and their lives and their interests and their goals first but instead they center everything around coming together daily and worshipping the one savior now I look at this picture and I wonder what does it mean for us what does it take for us to be a community that lives in a way that people see at the

Christian community and knowing that we are worshipping one savior that people would be daily added and attracted to that way of life that there's this hope in the savior that is bigger than all the other saviors and as I look at my life I see I have so many little saviors in my life that keep me from living this so I think this Christmas the challenge that I want to take on myself and that I want to put out there for us as a community is what does it take for us what are the steps that we want to take in living with Christ as the only savior what does it mean for your life personally whether it's your studies your work your family where have you built up savior that stop you from lifting up the one true savior the savior is the one who is a wonderful counselor he's the one that all our wisdom comes from he's the mighty God he has the power to change our life's serving service he is the everlasting father the perfect father and he is the one that brings true peace and his kingdom will have no end so I want to pray with us and just as we go into this

Christmas season to reflect on on this savior and looking at examining our own hearts and where we are wrestling with allowing him to be the one true savior in our lives let me pray with us father I just want to confess first that I have a lot of small saviors in my life that I put my hope in and in an increasing rental market and there are the worries that come up and we are clinging to our own security and we want to be in control of our own lives and I see that in my life all over again and everywhere so father as we just go into this Christmas season may you be the prince of peace the one that isn't just a small little savior but that we would turn to the one true king who brings peace who points us to this eternal kingdom that is still to come in which everything will be restored but may we also see that that you are the one who longs to be our savior now that you would reach into the worries and despair and the darkness of every single person here you know where we all are father so I just pray that that you would touch people just where they are and soften hearts to invite you into being the one true savior and I know that so many times even when we have walked with you for years and years we begin to rely on ourselves again so much and so I just pray that this Christmas time we would again see the miracle of you stepping into history to be our savior I pray this in Christ's name amen happy birthday to you happy birthday to you happy birthday dear Jesus happy birthday to you happy birthday Jesus happy birthday Jesus

[45 : 21] I'm so glad it's Christmas happy birthdaying happy birthday dear teachers happy birthday Jesus happy birthday Jesus happy birthday euro happy birthday Jesus happy birthdayertos All the carols and bells In the hall that they swell And all above you Happy birthday, Jesus Jesus, I love you Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas

All the tinsel and lights And the presents are nice But the real gift is you Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas All the carols and bells In the hall that they swell And it's all about you Happy birthday, Jesus Jesus, I love you Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas All the tinsel and lights

And the presents are nice But the real gift is you Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas Happy birthday, Jesus All the carols and bells In the hall that they swell And it's all about you Happy birthday, Jesus Jesus, I love you Jesus, I love you Happy birthday, Jesus I love you Happy birthday, Jesus I love you Happy birthday, Jesus Great, that was great

Can I hear, that's amazing I mean, I shouldn't even come up You can't follow kids, right? You guys, amazing Very good What a blessing Hey, I'm going to keep this After that I just need to keep it short And sweet Remember, you can't go out That door where you locked We electrified that door So don't go out that door We want everybody to exit This way There's food We'd love for you to stay With us and hang out We do meals as families And so that's what we do In community So please head out That way afterwards I want to just One thing I want us To pray for as a community We believe that God Has put us here As a church To reach out to people Who aren't in church today Right?

And so we sent out 20,007 of these flyers To the households In this area It talks about the outreach In December 21st At Cyberport We're going to be doing it For a week as a church Over here All the community groups Are involved And then we talk about December 25th The Christmas outreach service Here So we want you guys As a church To pray about this To take some of these And invite your friends Personally to come join us And be a part of this And that people Would be able to sing Happy birthday Jesus Again for the first time As a family Okay?

[49 : 46] So will you commit To do that? Also one of the sad things About I just don't know If I can trust you guys Behind me, huh? One of the sad things About our Fun But sad things About being in this community Is that people come and go And so we are saying goodbye To two people Who have been amazing Servants in the church And you're going to see How amazing they have been When they stand up And so the first one Is Jeremiah So Jeremiah is leaving You want to stand up?

So Jeremiah is kind of like From my hometown In Austin, Texas I knew his pastor there He came He raised his support To be here To serve the church We had no idea What we were doing We were still trying To work out this idea Of interns Church planners And staff And so he was One of our guinea pigs And so he has been here For six months And so he is heading out This week to go back And continue his education And studies And so you'll see We're missing a drummer now So Mark You're going to come up here And start drumming, right?

And then Yuma Yuma, will you stand up? Okay Yuma's story is amazing Yuma is from Japan And Yuma came to know the Lord Two weeks before he came to Watermark He was in Japan And someone led him to Christ He came to Hong Kong He wanted to get plugged into a church And he has been serving us For seven months now Just tirelessly And just amazing And he's been growing In his walk with the Lord And God has put upon his heart A burden to go back To Tokyo And to be with his people And to share the gospel with them Osaka That's right Tokyo got destroyed by Godzilla In Osaka That's right And so So we are going to really miss Both of you guys And so I want to I want to pray for you guys And just We will stay in touch To hear how God Uses both of you

Back in Texas And in Osaka And I know that he's going to do Amazing things And so let me pray for us And you are dismissed To go eat some amazing Great Christmas food I would have been instructed To say Christmas food Father we just thank you For this day We thank you for How you bring our lives together How you We are like these threads That you grab And you change And you interweave us To make this amazing picture Of the body of Christ And as we think about What you've done With these children up here As they sing songs And they've been taken Off the streets We just We thank you For what you've done Lord We thank you for You brought people like Melissa And Charles to lead the choir And have the patience And for Edmund And Lincoln And Steph And all the other volunteers Who come and love on these kids In their place Where they're not loved And for all the parts You brought together To make today happen So that we would We'd worship you We'd sing your praises

And your glory And we'd fall more in love with you And so Lord In the midst of that As we have this Bittersweet experience We pray for Jeremiah And we pray for Our brother Yuma As they go back To their hometowns And they continue To walk with you Lord We pray that you Would go before them We pray that They would find Your mercy and grace Abundant Every moment We pray that you Would open doors Of favor As they walk And as they share The most important thing In their life Your son Lord We pray that you Would do amazing things To them That you would Surround them Immediately Into a community That loves you And goes on that Journey with them And so we thank you For this very short time You've given us To be with them And we look forward To getting together In heaven For eternity And just talking About your wonder And your mercy And how you weave Us together In the incredible Things you do In this world So Lord We wish you Happy birthday We love you We need you

[53 : 56] We pray for this food And this fellowship That we're about to partake That it would honor you That we would have fun That we'd realize That we're a family And that we walk Together In this We pray all these things In your son Jesus name Amen God bless you We'll see you back here Next week But not before We see you at the dinner table Take care Bye