

# Prayer... In the desolate place

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[ 0 : 00 ]     The scripture reading today comes from the book of Exodus, chapters 2 and 3. Please follow along in your bulletin. Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out.

And their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. And he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

So Moses said, I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight. Why the bush is not burnt up? When the Lord saw that, he turned aside to look.

[ 1 : 14 ]     God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am. Then he said, Do not come near here.

Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. He said also, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Then Joseph hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Pezite and the Hevite and the Jebusite.

Now behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to me. Furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.

[ 2 : 31 ]     But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?

And he said, Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.

Then Moses said to God, Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you. And now they may say to me, What is his name?

What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

This is the reading of God's word. Wow, do I hear amen to that? You can say amen, we're in church, that's okay. That's amazing.

[ 3 : 35 ] Thanks guys. Guys, We are finishing up a series on prayer.

We've had Mike do an amazing sermon on the kingdom. What do we wait for? We had Wehan, did a great job on just praise and worshiping him.

And what does that look like? I don't know if you were here last Sunday. If you weren't, I don't often say this, but I think you need to go online and listen to the sermon because we talked a lot about where we feel like God has a church.

We handed out these, we ran out of these. Actually, we'll have some more next week. If you didn't get one of these, you need to get one of these and look at where we've been and where we are now and where we're praying that God will take us as a church.

It's an amazing, exciting time to be on this journey with him. We talk a lot about in this church that we're on a journey. And in this journey, we all have stories that are being told.

[ 4 : 47 ] Our hope is that your story is being interwoven with God's story, that God is touching you and he's meeting you and he's changing you. We've said a couple times and you've seen this illustration that our hope is that as we're on this journey as a church and as a community that we're reaching out, that somewhere in this life that God comes into your life and he touches you.

We have a PowerPoint hopefully for this and here it is. So you're on this journey and we have this conversion event that happens. Somewhere God opens your eyes to his son Jesus Christ. You fall in love with him and he changes you.

And as you go on this journey, we grow in two dimensions. We grow in this dimension of that we're growing awareness of God's holiness. And as we do that, hopefully we're growing in the dimension that we're aware of our brokenness, our neediness, our sinfulness, our flesh.

And these two things we hope should be, we want them to be, growing at the same time. And if you don't grow both of these at the same time, we kind of become lopsided.

And as they grow at the same time, we see that the cross gets bigger and bigger. We start to understand even more what grace means. We start to understand even more and more what holiness means. We start to understand even more what God sacrificed and what it cost Christ to bring you into his family.

[ 6 : 12 ] I think sometimes we forget that. We forget what it costs God to bring us back to the family of God. And sometimes on this journey, as we grow, we enter into this dimension and we're going to talk about it today.

And it's hard as a pastor because I wish I could be in every one of your stories. I wish I could know what is going on in your life. And I don't. I can only share what's been going on in my life. And I know that we're all about the same on this journey.

But as we enter into this lifestyle, sometimes we have these things happen. And as we go along in time, we basically see, you can just keep pushing them out there, that we have this time, we have hope, and we have reality.

That we're on this journey and we understand how we want to live our lives. We understand what our lives want to look like. But something is happening there. That our reality and what we hope to happen aren't matching up.

That we hope that we would get this job by this time or we hope that we would be married by this time or we hope that our kids would act right by this time or we hope that something would happen by this time and the reality just doesn't match it.

[ 7 : 21 ] And what happens is we enter into this period of tension and despair and hurt and anguish and angst and sometimes we deal with it by just denial.

We just say, hey, I know you've felt like this. Sometimes I have. You know, it's like this. There's a 500-pound gorilla in our room right now. My wife and I need to talk about that, but we don't want to talk about that because we just think if we ignore it, it'll go away.

And we do that in our relationships and in the church and when things are hurting and when somebody offends us. We just do that and we live in this realm of unreality trying to cover up all that tension.

Sometimes on our journey, we try to just basically work harder. We figure, okay, here's what my reality is. This is what I want. If I just work harder, everything is going to be okay.

I mean, maybe I haven't been praying enough. Maybe I haven't been reading my Bible enough. Maybe I haven't done these other things enough and if I do these and I work really hard or maybe I study really hard, if I do all these things then God's going to go, that's great.

[ 8 : 22 ] You did it. Here, here's the golden ticket. Great job. And so we become determined and we just work and we work and we work. And the Bible says that we enter into religion. That's what religion is.

Religion is, I do these things so that I earn God's favor. If I do these things, then God owes me. Sometimes we enter into just despair.

I think despair is sometimes the easiest thing to do, especially in certain cultures. You just give up. Well, you realize that my reality will never match what I hope. And instead of walking around frustrated, all the time and in anguish and in despair and just frustrated, I just give up.

And I say, well, whatever. I don't know if you've ever felt those things in your life, but the passage today is full of those things.

And it's something I think that we as a church need to deal with and talk about instead of hiding. We're looking at this passage in Exodus which I think is one of my favorite passages. And I'm just sharing my story with you guys.

[ 9 : 31 ] It's something that I continue to come back to over and over and over again as I get despaired. In Exodus, in the Old Testament, we often look at narrative. The stories are narrative.

They're telling a story. Now, it's much different than the New Testament. The New Testament, you come to it and this gives you this action point. Christ died for you. He shed his blood on the cross.

You need to repent and turn back to him and that point is very, very clear. But sometimes when we come to the Old Testament, that point is there but we have to read and read and think about it because often it's hidden in the shadows because the ultimate fulfilling of this truth is in Jesus Christ.

And so we see these truths there and we read them and we compare them to what we know of the story that God is weaving throughout all of Scripture. And so this passage today talks about the desert times, talks about the difficult times and I don't know what the desert times are for you in your life.

When I looked at those first charts and I looked at this despair, I think of country western, okay, I'm gonna confess, I think of country western music. Does anybody here ever listen to country western music? Okay, so country western music is like the most listened to music in America, maybe worldwide, I don't know.

[ 10 : 51 ] But in country western, I don't know. It's where I learned about grief and despair before I became a Christian, okay? But in country western music there is a scale of despair.

If you hear the guy singing and he's singing about he lost his job or his boss is a jerk, then his despair is pretty low. I mean, if he's singing about his boyfriend or his girlfriend broke up with him and life is terrible, then the despair is a little high.

If he talks about his car broke down, especially his truck, then it's in the medium level of despair because that's very important for country folk, their trucks.

If he talks about his wife left him for his best friend or her best friend, that's really bad, okay?

And the ultimate is if he talks about his dog dying. If you're listening to the song and a guy's talking about his dog dying, you know that he's like in the pit of despair.

[ 11 : 57 ] I mean, the only thing worse than your dog dying is if you lost your job, your boss is a jerk, your boyfriend and your girlfriend broke up with you, your wife left you for her friend or your best friend, your car broke down and your dog died, then your life, you're in despair, you just give up, there's no hope.

I don't know where you are today and my hope is that you're not there. My hope is that some of these things you're gonna hear today, you're gonna go, that's just not where I'm at.

I'm not in the desolate times. But if you're God's child, you will be.

You will be. Because the Bible says that God loves us so much that he doesn't want to leave us as we are.

He doesn't want to leave us broken. He doesn't want to leave us needy. He doesn't want to leave us in guilt. He doesn't want to leave us in shame. And often, he will take us to the desert places to fix those things.

[ 13 : 03 ] I don't know what the desolate things are in your life. Maybe they're broken promises. Maybe they're broken relationships. Maybe they're broken families. Maybe they're broken kids, or your kids are out of control.

Maybe your boss is out of control. Maybe your health is broken. Maybe it's caused because you've been sinful, and you've just been disobedient to God, and you've gone into this desert place.

Maybe you've made poor choices. Maybe you're married to your desert place. But the passage today, for me, and I've only been at this for about 38 years, okay, so I've been on this Christian journey for 38 years, and it's scary to me because every day I learn something new about God's grace.

Every day I learn something new about God's mercy. Every day I learn something new about what God is doing in my life, and what he needs to do, and what I need to give up to him. But this passage has three seminal points I want you to hear really carefully.

Because if you don't need them now, you are going to need them sometime in your life. And we're in the book of Exodus, and Exodus begins at about 1500 B.C. The people of God have been in Egypt for over 400 years.

[ 14 : 21 ] I mean, it ends in Genesis when we're told that Joseph brings his whole family, the people that God has chosen, and we get to this part in Exodus where we're told that the king dies, and things get really bad.

They get so bad that the people of God start to cry out and ask God, where are you? Where are you in this despair? Where are you in these terrible times? You can take that off.

That's great. Where are you in our lives? And as I look at that in my life, there are three things that keep sticking out to me. The first thing is the question, what?

What I hope to do is we're going to cover what, where, and will. Those three points. And the first thing that sticks out to me in this passage is the question, what?

As we've gone through this journey time, as you look here in this passage, now it came about in the course of many days that the king of Egypt died and the sons of Israel sighed because the bondage, and they cried out greatly.

[ 15 : 19 ] They cried, it says four times, different ways. They cried, they cried for help. They wailed because their bondage rose up to God and it was really, really bad. So God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and God saw them and he felt compassion on them.

The word is he noticed them but it's actually he, he has been noticing them. But it's not just he's woke up one day and realized, oh, I have this promise.

But the scripture says that he's been watching them the whole time. And the first thing that I learn about prayer in the desert places, in the difficult places, in the desolate places, is that often God is the one who takes us to these places.

God is the one who leads us. God is the one who takes us. God is the one who allows us. God is the one who places us in these places and is through throughout scripture.

He brings the people of God in Genesis to Egypt. He brought Moses to the wilderness and to the mountain. He brings the people in a little while out into the wilderness where they travel for 40 years.

[ 16 : 37 ] He brings Jesus, his son, into the wilderness for 40 days. And in the wilderness he does something that he changes them.

he changes us. I mean the Bible tells us that God is going to take everyone he loves into the wilderness. Now I know that's not sexy.

That's not the sexy gospel. The sexy gospel says well you become a Christian and you get a Rolex and everything is perfect and you never have problems. But the Bible it doesn't say that. It says that he loves us so much that he wants to heal us and the only way that he can heal us is by taking us into these desert places into the desolate places.

And what we see there is when he takes us into these places he teaches us two things. The first thing that he does is he shows us a lot about ourselves. He shows us our idols.

He shows us our pride. He shows us our arrogance. And he can only show us us these things when everything is stripped away when things are difficult.

[ 17 : 56 ] I mean you look at the passage here and sometimes we read through it really quickly but I think it is an amazing passage. Verse 1 look at that really quickly here. What does he say? Now Moses who is pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law the priest of Midian and we're going to stop right there.

Now if you were a Hebrew person and you read this passage you would be freaking out. And if you were an Egyptian you would be even more concerned and messed up because you have to realize that it's Moses.

Now of all the people in the scripture besides Christ he is the person who probably has the greatest influence in all of us. Moses who was raised and educated in the best education system in the world at that time.

Moses who hated shepherds when Joseph came and the Egyptians hated shepherds they said don't even tell Pharaoh you're a shepherd because shepherds are disgusting.

The Egyptians used to shave all the hair off their body and it was a daily ritual of cleansing and they realized and they thought that anybody who dealt with animals and livestock especially shepherds were defiled and unclean.

[ 19 : 10 ] Keep them away from us. But here we see that Moses is shepherding the flock of his father-in-law.

Moses the prince of Egypt who had enormous amounts of wealth. He was one of the most wealthy men in his age before he made his exodus into the wilderness.

And here he doesn't even have his own flock. He doesn't have anything to say this is mine. God took all that away from him because he realized that Moses was clinging to those things more than he was clinging to God.

We read in the passage that Moses is a hired hand and he basically is subservient to his father-in-law. So we see that God took Moses who for 40 years was the best educated the wealthiest in the middle of Pharaoh's court and he took him to this desert place for 40 years to teach him to teach him about himself.

It took 40 years to get Pharaoh's court away from him. I've thought about this often as I've gone through the desert times and I wonder how often and how long many of us have been working in Pharaoh's court today.

[ 20 : 42 ] And I wonder if God were really to use us and to use us in mighty ways how many times would he have to separate us remove us take us to the desert places where all we can do is trust him cling to him be careful how you pray when you're in the desert times.

Often my prayers are get me out of here right away. This is uncomfortable this hurts I need relief get me out of here. But what we see in the scripture is that God has this amazing thing that he wants to do to your story he's weaving your story into his story he's making something wonderful something amazing sometimes the only way he can do that is by taking you into the desert and showing your heart.

In the desert we learn about ourselves but we learn about God I mean this passage is all about God in the desolate places we learn in verse 14 that he is who he is that he's holy he's separated nothing influences him he's dependent upon nothing he's totally other we learn in the passages that he is holy it's the first time that that's ever used in verse 5 in all of scripture but Moses knows what it means right away because he doesn't even want to look at God but he bows his head and he drops to his feet we learn that he's the God of your fathers the God of Abraham the God of Isaac the God of Jacob the God of your father and what he's saying there is I'm not this God that's way out there but I'm a God who's right here now the people would never have understood that because all the time they thought that God was out there

God was out there don't bring him close if you bring him close you're going to get destroyed don't look at him or you're going to die but what God is saying here is that he's knowable and he's personal and he wants to do something amazing in your life and so when you go into the desert times what I'm learning is I don't want to pray I want to be careful how I pray my heart says pray why why why is this happening to me why are you allowing this to happen why is this person so mean why is these things not going the way I want them to do but what I've learned is what I should be asking is what God what what are you trying to teach me in this God what are you trying to teach me about yourself God what are you trying to teach me about me what do you what do you want me to what am I supposed to do with this how am I supposed to glorify you don't be so quick in the desert I'm warning this because we don't want to keep going into the desert we want to be in the desert and

God teach us and we say well I learned that that's great I don't need to go back there again but don't be so quick to say I need to get out of here because God wants to teach you an incredible question and I think that question is what not why another thing that I've been learning in these desert times in my 38 years is as I listen to God and I try to figure out where is he working here and I feel very disappointed sometimes when my lines don't match up and what I realize is I'm disappointed because God is not writing the story the way I want it written I mean in my mind I had this very specific idea of how my life is to be lived what's going to happen when is it going to happen and when that does not happen I become disappointed the story isn't being played out the way I want it to be God where are you don't you even see me and we see in verse 24 and 25 that he's the God who hears that he's the God who is present that he remembers his covenant he remembers his relationship with his people he remembers his relationship with you and I mean sometimes we just think well I'm married to God that's what scripture says but every once in a while God just forgets his ring or he forgets to look down on his hand because life gets really difficult and really bad but the scripture says here that God remembers his covenant that there's never a time that he forgets about you there's never a time that he says oh yeah I forgot all about Tobin yeah I need to go back and see how he's doing there but that he's always involved he's always working in verse 7 which I think is one of my favorite verses it says the Lord said I have seen the affliction of my people that are in

[ 26 : 40 ] Egypt I have given heed to their cry because of the task masters I'm aware of their suffering so I am going to come down and the words you see there is he's the God who sees he's the God who hears he's the God who knows he's the God who acts that in the midst of the desert time in the midst of things when things aren't working up in the midst when I feel the tension I come back to this truth and I realize that it's God and he's there he sees he knows he hears and he acts and the tension is with me sometimes that he's not doing it the way that I want it done or I feel like he's not there maybe instead of praying God why aren't you here where are you how come these things are happening what's going on here God I just feel like you're not with me here maybe we should be asking God where are you in this he says really specifically it's a very special word in verse eight he says I have come down to them in

Hebrew translated into the Greek that word is Advent it's the word we get our Christmas Advent from and what he's telling the people of God as they're on this journey as things get difficult that God is making himself known in your life right now in Moses story it was a burning bush there was a bush burning and it was the presence of God look what he says here in verse three the angel of the Lord in verse two appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush and he looked and beheld the bush was burning yet the fire yet the bush was not consumed so Moses said I must turn aside now all throughout scripture we see that God is making himself known all throughout scripture we see that God is entering into our lives he says I'm in the bush he says it I'm coming down and the question is do we look for him I think what I'm learning in the journey is instead of saying where are you or why are you allowing me to go through this the question I ask is God where are you because your word says that you're here somewhere your word says you're working in the midst of me getting fired your work says that you're here in the midst of my family life out of control your word says you're here when I just got this incredibly bad doctor's report your word says you're here when my best friend has left me where are you what are you what are you trying to show me in this how am I supposed to react to this make yourself known to me help me help me to see you more clearly in the desert times we're going to be tempted to say what the heck is going on and where are you I feel like I'm looking for you in a crowd and I cannot find you but this passage says that God is right beside us and he wants a relationship with us and the question we should be asking is where the Bible always says that

God comes into your life right now he wants to do two things he wants to save you from something verse 8 says he wants to save us from Egypt he wants to save us save us from slavery he wants to save us from bondage and he wants to save us to something verse 8 says he wants to save us to a land flowing with milk and honey he wants to save us to a place where we will be safe and whole and fixed one of the things I'm learning in the desert places is that God's story always ends in hope did you know that it's very interesting I'm watching movies nowadays and I went to the Hunger Games with my wife I'm not recommending that if you have kids don't take your kids it's one of the first movies I've seen lately that has some kind of hope in it but it really doesn't end in hope because you know something bad is going to happen but hope is a very specific Christian message I mean my wife calls me a geek because I like to read and I like to read ancient stories and things like that in Greek plays and things like that and what you see about the Greeks are two things one is they only have two types of stories they have comedies and they have tragedies comedies are fun and funny but they're not real life tragedies are not fun but they are real life and until Christ's time this was how all stories were laid out and then we have God who advents into our life and for the first time in human history we see this idea of hope and so the question I want to ask ourselves is where where's the hope God where are you in the midst of this where are you working how can I see you please let me see you what where and will and for me this is the biggest challenge for me as I walk with Christ when I enter into the desert I come back to verses 3 and 4 I want you to read them with me really quickly so Moses said I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight why the bush is not burned up then the Lord saw that he turned aside to look

God called to him from the midst of the bush and said Moses Moses and he said here I am I think the question we have to struggle with is the question will will we turn aside will we meet with God will we spend time with him because to be honest with you sometimes in my day I'm so busy even in the midst of the desolate times I just don't have time to spend time with God because I have so many things on my to-do list but the message here in the desert is really clear God turned and spoke to Moses after Moses noticed him and moved towards him there's a really strong cause and effect thing happening here you see that God spoke to him after he saw Moses turn to him and in this passage there's two groups of people there's the people in captivity they're crying out to God in Hebrew it says they're they're praying they're



God why aren't you here what is going on for 400 years and they have Moses it's interesting because Moses isn't crying out for God I mean they're both working in the desert the people are in the desert and they're desolate in captivity Moses is in a desert and he's desolate in captivity the only difference is that Moses doesn't know it and God comes to Moses and he shows himself to Moses in a desolate place and Moses makes a choice and he turns to him and spends time with him one of the biggest lessons I continue to learn after 38 years in the deserts is that I have a choice the choice is will I look for God where he is and when I see him there will I turn to him and spend time with him will I pray to him will I spend time in his word will I come back to community will I be involved in what God is doing there's a choice as we journey with Christ in the midst of this life our stories are being woven together with him he wants to change us and make us more like his son in the midst of this he's trying to show us why he's trying to show us where but the question is will we spend time with him will we come to him will we allow him to change us I don't know what's happening in your story today I don't know where you are I think some of us think of prayer as something that we just do in a vacuum or we do when it's difficult but the passage says that prayer is something that we do all the time because God is with us all the time that God is personal he wants to be in a relationship with us he wants to be with us in the good times and he wants to be with us in the difficult times he wants to start a relationship with us and the question today is will we will we allow him to have that time with us will we turn to him when things are difficult will we trust him will we allow him to change us in the difficult times where are you on your journey my prayer is is you don't need these points right now but I know that someday you will and my hope is is you will come back to them and allow God to change you father we just thank you for this day we thank you for your goodness in our life we thank you for your mercy we thank you that you desire to take us to a new place a place flowing with milk and honey father we thank you that even in the midst of the chaos which is our life in our world that you're speaking to us you're speaking to us in burning bushes you're speaking to us in sunrises you're speaking to us in worship songs you're speaking to us through friends you're speaking to us through relatives but I just pray as you speak to us that we will turn aside to you that we will spend time with you we will allow you to take us to these places that only there you can change us and make us the type of people you want us to be only there can you heal us and strip away the things that cling to us and drag us down only there can you show us who you really are that you are the God

[ 38 : 26 ] who's noble that you are the God who desires to have a relationship with us that you are the God who's holy and just that you are the God who withheld nothing to bring us back to you that in a poker game you were all in and you laid it all there to win us back father we just thank you for this day and for your word may we be people that worship you that love you that trust you and we pray these things your son jesus name amen amen i'm gonna ask you to sit down just for one minute i remember more and more than that and i'm gonna ask uh josh and trish to come up here and so uh we're uh and my wife and uh so you know when we started the the church uh i shared this at a staff gathering last night uh josh and trish this is their last sunday here for a while so he's being called back uh by his mission agency to the states and then to the philippines and so we have been so uh blessed to have them steal them for this year and a half two years and so when we started the church i had a couple prayer requests i actually had three miracles i wanted from god because i we were still like god we feel like we want you need to do this but i need these things from you or i just can't do it and so my first uh miracle that i prayed for was someone who could come up and preach besides myself because i know that you get tired of just hearing me all the time and the goal wasn't just to have one pastor or someone sharing god's word because we want to multiply and plant other churches and so one day i met with josh at a greasy spoon place that no longer exists and he says trish and i have asked our mission agency whether we can join you and we we are going to join you and so for me that was the first miracle that god gave me personally and us as a church to move forward and to plant this church and so uh you guys we're going to incredibly uh miss you massively miss you as we say in the office and uh and so uh i'm going to pray for you but i wanted to uh give you uh this plaque so this is i think this is the first one of this type so we'll we'll so it's uh and i need to put some white behind it so i can read it um it says uh founding members joshua and patricia hammond found members of watermark community church so that's the first founding member one we've ever done so you guys are uh thank you for your partnership to watermark community church in hong kong spreading the gospel of the lord jesus christ your faithfulness commitment and sacrifice have resulted in countless people being influenced for our savior we love you so we want to so we want to uh give you that and i'm going to ask the elders uh the two elders we we brought on elders last week and so we had a huge week last week so again you're going to want to pick up one of these and we're going to just lay our hands on you guys and commission you and uh and pray for you and just pray for safe travels and safe return in what god's doing in your life so let me if you guys would join us father guys thank you for uh the hammond family thank you just you brought them here for this uh amazing special time and so uh we have been incredibly blessed by their them as a couple and as a family and with their kiddos and just to continue watching them grow with two boys and a

girl on the way uh and many more to come uh we just thank you for bringing them to us and what a blessing it is we we part uh in sadness but we know that you are sending them to great things as they go out to equip and train uh pastors and planters in the philippines and beyond and so we just we pray that you would watch over them guard them keep them safe and uh father we we love you and thank you for these amazing gifts you've given us and we pray all these things in your son jesus name amen thanks guys and they'll be around out back or out in the front so you can grab some time with them and uh please uh just yeah they they're our first miracle so let's yeah also uh let me just really quickly just two things i want to share up here really quickly the first one is this in your bulletin the very first uh thing right there there's going to be a woman's of watermark gathering it's a panel discussion it's this wednesday from 9 30 to 11 30 they're going to have women at all life stages single with kids with kids who are causing trouble and with kids who've gone and they're probably still causing financial trouble to dads and things like that so that will be this wednesday from 9 30 to 11 30 want to highly encourage you women guys you can't go there but send your wife uh want to highly encourage you to go to the community center from 9 30 to 11 30 for that time of fellowship also right after this class right after this service we're going to have a baptism class and so if you haven't signed up for the baptism class it's not too late to do that and so please come and see me or franklin who'll be leading it and so we want we're going to do a big baptism celebration on may 6th so we're going to bring out that sylvia and millen are laughing at me back there uh so we'll bring out our big uh kiddie pool out back we spared no expense in how we do baptism but if he uh scripture says it as a follower of christ the first act of obedience is to be baptized and so if you are a christ follower you've invited christ into your life and you haven't been baptized and you are part of this church we want you to be a part of this because this is a family event and a family gathering and also on tuesday nights at 7 30 the love and respect marriage group is gathering we've only done one session so there's time for you to gather there were 20 or 19 couples last tuesday it was an amazing amazing thing so husbands be a good husband and invite your wife on a date night for the next five tuesday nights wife be a good wife and say yes husband i'll go with you okay uh and with that let me just pray for us father we just thank you for your goodness in our life we thank you that um we thank you that your story is being written all around us it's being written in captivity it's being written in bondage it's being written through burning bushes it's being written through people crying out it's being written through people being faithful and everywhere you're speaking to us you're here and you've called us into a relationship into a covenant with you and where we just pray as we come before you as your people that we would realize just how amazing that privilege is that we'd realize in a desert and difficult times that it's not why but it's what you're trying to teach us and do in us and it's not why aren't you here but it's where are you because you've said that you're always there that you are the god who sees you are the god who hears you're the god who knows you're the god who acts so maybe we cry out where lord where are you help us to see the burning bush help us to see your hand help us to meet you where you're meeting and lord is the will will we turn

aside and i pray as a church that we would always turn aside to meet you i pray as families that we would always turn aside to meet you i pray as singles we'd always turn aside to meet you because you want to talk to us moment by moment and so we come and we worship you and we praise you and we love you we pray all these things your son jesus name amen god bless you and have a great week