

Room for Jesus' Arrival

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- [0 : 0 0] How you guys doing? Oh, come on. That's the first Advent, and then we just go good. How you guys doing? Are you glad to be here? I hope so, yeah.
- Hey, so we are welcoming our first Sunday of Advent for 2015. Advent is this idea of preparing our hearts, preparing our lives, preparing everything that we have and who we are for Christ.
- Christ is already here, but the question is, what are we going to do with him as he's here? How are we going to invite him into our life, into our homes, into our work, and wherever he has us?
- Okay, I've been trying to pray about whether I should share this. So, for me, we talked last week about serving. We talked about being servants and wherever God has called us as a family, and what does that look like for us as a church?
- And this message is about serving, but it's about also letting God into our lives, letting God into our lives at different points of our life and letting him change us and speak to us.
- [1 : 0 5] God's word says that he's speaking to us all the time. The question is, do we hear him? And my confession is, is the area where I feel like I have the hardest time of letting him into my life often is with my kids.
- I feel like in the area of being a dad and being a parent, I probably fail more than I succeed. And I'm sharing this with my kids right here, who I did not know who were going to be in here today, but it is the reality of my life.
- I didn't have a great role model. I'm still trying to learn what it is. I'm so thankful that God doesn't call us to be perfect parents, because if he did, my kid would not need, or our kids would not need a perfect Savior to take them and to love them.
- So, one of the hardest things in our family is putting our kids to bed at night. I don't know if you guys have this problem, but in my problem, my kids just cannot, they just don't want to go to bed.
- Again, I'm sharing this here, and now there's one kid, and they just said something, they go to bed right away, but all the other kids do not go to bed. Okay, Becca? So, you're okay. You're good. She's the truth teller.
- [2 : 1 6] But, you know, my kids have a hard time, and so whenever it comes time to bedtime, we enter into this phase of negotiation and stalling, negotiation and stalling, and they use all these different techniques to get as much time out of their sleep as they possibly can and to stay up.
- And so, this last week, I was putting one of them to bed, and they asked me to come into their room, and they said, can you give me a back rub? And so, I'm rubbing their back, and I have things to do.
- I'm busy, right? I've been a servant for 15 minutes, and I'm ready to get off and go watch football or whatever I need to do as a dad, whatever is more important than that event. And I'm just being honest, and so, which is not good.

And so, it's about time for me to get up and to leave, and this kid pulled the perfect stalling tactic of all time. I said, I really have to go. And they said, can you pray with me? You know, it'd be like if I were a banker, and they said, hey, can you explain to me derivatives?

You know, all of a sudden, you'd go, okay, I've got to stay in here and help my kids understand this, because no one understands this. But so, as a pastor, when your kid says, can you pray with me, you feel like, okay, well, I can't just leave because they want me to pray with them.

[3 : 25] You know, and maybe this is a teachable moment of what God is teaching me and what he wants me to learn in this process of being a dad. And so, I said yes, and I paused.

And I paused because I've been thinking about all the things that have been going on in our life these last six or seven months, just the craziness that God's allowed us to experience and all these things. And in this process, I'm trying to figure out how am I going to pray for this kid?

How am I going to pray that God would work in their life and to change them and to heal them? And just to do an awesome work in their life. And so, I didn't say anything and it was dark. And all of a sudden, my kid asked me, are you still here?

Are you still looking at me? Are you still with me? Because it was quiet. It was dark. And they asked that question, are you still here?

Are you watching me? Are you with me? And I assured them that I was with them, that I was watching them, that I was always going to be there as long as God allowed me to be there.

[4 : 31] And I prayed with them. But I left that room, teachable moment. And I was hoping to have a teachable moment for my kids. But then I really, God was giving me a teachable moment in my life.

And I walked through the house and I was thinking about all these promises that God has given to me as his kid. Like I just gave my promises to my child. And so, I did this search as any good pastor would do.

And I went on the internet and I did this thing. So, what is the most common promise that God gives his people? And I was thinking it was going to be something about sin or temptation. Or just a happy life.

Or freedom. Or forgiveness. Or heaven. I thought that was what the promise was going to be about. And all those promises are amazing. And they're in the Bible that God talks to us. But what the Bible says, and the most quoted promise in all the Bible, is God saying to you and to me, I'll be with you.

I'm here. Don't be afraid. You're not alone. I'll be with you. And I thought about that promise as I talked to my kid.

[5 : 39] And as God is talking to us through his word. And I realized that this promise is probably the primary promise of all the Bible. It's the central story of the Bible.

I don't know if you know that. But it's the central story of the Bible. The central story of the Bible is that God promises to be with us. That he's seeking us out. The central story of the Bible is not Tobin seeking God.

Because if that was what the Bible was all about, it'd be like one page. Because we don't seek God. But the central story of the Bible is about God seeking us out and pursuing us and going after us and loving us and wanting to be with us.

And sometimes, guys, you know, when we're in the midst of life and we're living life and life is crazy and busy and there's darkness and things aren't going the way we want, the Bible says that God continues to speak to us.

He's talking to us. He wants to be with us. Sometimes we can't hear that. Because there's chaos. And there's darkness. And what we see in this passage, there was chaos and there was darkness and there was unexpected things happening.

[6 : 44] And what you realize in the Bible is that no one's life turns out the way they wanted it to turn out. A minute God enters into a person's life, there's just upheaval. And there's unknown and there's craziness and there's uncertainty.

And God works in your life and he wants to change you and he wants to do an amazing work in your heart. And the question of the Bible, the question of my life, the question of your life is are we going to let him do that?

Are we going to listen to him as he speaks to us through his word? Are we going to listen to him as he speaks to us as we put our kids to bed? Are we going to listen to him as he speaks to us when we go to the hospital or something hard happens in our life?

Because the passage is saying in the midst of all this chaos, that God is speaking and he's doing things. And sometimes it's uncomfortable and sometimes it's unexpected. And sometimes it's just utterly what we don't expect him to be doing.

But he's making his name great and he's making people know about his son. And the question is, will we listen to him? Will we take time to pause in our day and at work and in our family and listen to him speak to us?

[8 : 00] Because that's the message of Advent. The message of Advent is God is here. He's with you. He wants a relationship with you.

Even when it doesn't seem like he's here. Because in this passage, when you read it, we have this kind of glorified way of reading it because we've read it so many times and we've seen Charlie Brown and the Snoopies do it so many different ways.

But it wasn't like that. It was darkness. I mean, it would be more appropriate to have the Star Wars theme going on, dun, dun, dun, in the days of the evil empire, than it would be Chopin and Peanuts playing.

But we've forgotten that. And we've kind of sanitized it. And when we sanitize things and make them look fun and happy and things like that, that sometimes we miss that in our lives.

And we miss God working, especially when the things get difficult and they don't plan out the way we want them to plan out. Does that make sense at all? That's what this passage is about.

[9 : 03] It's about asking us the questions. Are we going to shut Christ out? Are we going to allow him into our lives? And everybody in this story had this chance. They had this option of either to allow Christ into their life and what God was doing in them, or they had a chance to shut him out.

And the story is about disturbing things. The story is about inconvenient things. The story is about things that are out of our control and not as we planned. And yet God is working and doing all of these things in your life today.

And the question is, do you know that? Do you hear his voice? When you read the story of his baby son being born for you, do you understand that?

You look at this passage and what you learn right away is that historians have been telling us that for about 20 years before this passage, that there have been these stories, and you heard it in the advent, of this Messiah coming, this new Messiah is coming.

He's going to come and he's going to free people. He's going to come with power. And it wasn't just the Jewish people saying it. It was the Roman people saying it. And other people were prophesying. There were hundreds of prophecies of this Messiah coming. And that he was going to come and he was going to set his people free.

[10 : 14] He was going to be a mighty warrior. He was going to be a king. He was going to bring freedom to all of God's people. But in verses 10 through 12, what they got instead was a baby. Well, no one wants a baby.

That doesn't fit into their plans at all. That's not what they figured out for their life or for their country or for their freedom. A baby can't do anything. It's helpless. And they wanted somebody with power and for strength and a warrior to free them and to come in there and just crush people.

I think it's so different than us today, right? Because when I talk to people today, they want a baby. They don't want a warrior.

They don't want a king. I mean, one of my favorite theologians and one of the greatest philosophers of our day, Ricky Bobby in Talladega Nights, he's having this discussion at the dinner table with his family.

And everybody's talking about what Jesus is like. And he's praying and he's going, oh, dear little baby Jesus, eight pounds, cuddly, warm little baby, sitting in a manger naked. Please come here and be with us today.

[11 : 20] And everybody's arguing, this isn't what Jesus is like. Jesus is like this. No, Jesus is like this. No, Jesus is like this. And he goes, I don't care what you think, but I like Jesus as a baby because he's just soft and cuddly. And he doesn't ask me to do anything in my life.

And I think that we're so much different than the people in Jesus' day because the people in Jesus' day, they wanted a warrior. But today we know what Jesus is really like. We know that he came to serve and to sacrifice and to call all his people to sacrifice and to love and to care.

And when we hear that message, we go, I don't want that. I want a baby. Because a baby I can play with and I can cuddle with and I can put him aside. And it's so much easier. I mean, everything about this passage says that God works in ways we don't expect him to.

That God is doing something different in our world. I mean, if you just look at the story of Mary and Joseph. I mean, in chapter 1, the angel Gabriel comes to her and he says, Hail, favored one.

And she goes, well, what does that mean? And she's trying to ponder all these things. And he goes, well, you're going to be pregnant. She's probably 13 or 14 years old. She goes, well, I'm not even married yet.

[12 : 27] He goes, well, I'm going to give you this great gift. God's going to give you this gift. God's spirit has come upon you and you're going to have the Messiah. Now, that's probably not what she planned for her life. That's probably not what she wanted to be as a 13 or 14-year-old girl.

In the culture, that was basically a death penalty. I mean, just last week they showed a video on YouTube of a girl being stoned to death in Iran because she was caught having sex with somebody who wasn't her husband.

They don't talk about the husband, but they do the woman. And so when Mary heard this greetings in Luke 1, her world was turned upside down. It wasn't like what she wanted. It wasn't like what she planned.

God was doing something else in her life. And she just chose to trust him. I mean, the same with Joseph. Joseph was this 15 or 16-year-old boy.

He was from royalty. He could go into a town and say, I'm Joseph, son of Amati, son of David, and everybody would know who he was. He's like the royalty of that town. But now he has a wife who's pregnant, but they're not married.

[13 : 31] And I'm sure that everything he planned for his life, everything that he wanted to have happen in his life, everything that he logistically laid out came to pieces.

And he had to come to this point of in the darkness and in the chaos of how God was working in his life. Am I going to trust God? Or am I going to trust myself? Am I going to do something different in my life?

And the passage is full of stories like this. And your lives are full of stories like this.

You have plans. You have hopes. You have desires. You have things you want to do. And somehow God comes in in the midst of the darkness and the chaos and things are out of control.

God speaks into your life and he wants to do something different. He wants to change you. He wants to give you this life that you could not even dream of or even think of. And the question is, are you going to trust him? Are you going to allow him to be God?

[14 : 35] Are you going to make space for Christ in your life right now? Are you going to make space for Christ at your workplace? Are you going to make space for him in your marriage and all your relationships?

Or are you going to feel uncomfortable and say, you know, that's just not what I want. I'm not going to do that. I'm going to push that out of the way because that's not who I am. And that's the story of this first advent of Christ's coming.

I mean, I love it because no one's plans worked out the way they planned. Not even the shepherds. The shepherds were just planning to stay in the fields and shepherd their sheep.

These are the fields. These are the fields right outside of Bethlehem. So six miles to the north is Jerusalem. In these fields, a lot of things happened.

In these fields, Boaz met his wife Ruth. In these fields, David and his father and his family were. And one day the prophet comes and he anoints him king.

[15 : 33] And in these fields, in this passage, there's a group of shepherds sitting there, tending their sheep, watching them, thinking about what they want to do. And all of a sudden, this angel comes in and he just blows their world and changes what they want to do.

And God's speaking to them. And they have the question of, are they going to listen to him? Are they going to follow what God called them to do? Are they not going to do that? Are they going to do something different? And I love it because when you think about it, God says to them, hey, this is where the baby's born.

He is a savior. He is Christ the Lord. Go find him. And you wonder what these guys are going to do because they're just peasants. They're the guys that no one trusts.

I mean, even in a court of law, a shepherd could not go in and give testimony because no one trusted them. They were like considered liars and thieves. And all of a sudden, God takes the most important message in the world and he gives it to a group of liars and thieves and broken people, just like our church.

And he asks them to go out and look for this baby. Can you imagine what that would have been like? I mean, just think about this.

[16 : 41] They're not women here because women will be much more sensible. But they're guys. Guys never ask for directions. And so they leave these fields and they're probably leaving and there's several hundred sheep following them because they don't leave the sheep because the sheep go wherever the master goes.

And so they go into this little town of Bethlehem, which is about 400 houses. And the story tells us and most cultural tells us that Jesus was born inside somebody's house. It was this big house on the door and then you would step down to go out the door.

And when you step down, there's this little pin of animals. And when you came in at night, you put your sheep there because you wanted to protect your most valuable animals and your cows and all those things. And you would step down and you'd open the door and you'd go out.

So Jesus wasn't born out in this manger where everybody could see him. He was born in somebody's house. And so you could see these shepherds going into this town and they're knocking on every door. They're not going to ask directions because they're dudes.

If they were shepherdess, they would have thought through it. They would have gritted it out. They would have just walked around listening. But these guys just go in and they knock on every door. Knock, knock, knock. Yeah, what do you want? Yep, you know, it's going to sound crazy, but there's an angel and he said that the Messiah is born here and there's a little baby.

[17 : 47] You don't have a little baby sitting with the animals, do you? Honey, who is it? These shepherds. What do they want? A Messiah. What? Tell them to go away.

No, he's not here. Shut. What do you think they did next? They went to the next door. And they probably went from door to door to door in this town of 400 people because knowing how God works, he probably didn't let them find them the first time because he wanted the whole town to know that in this night, your Savior was born.

And God's speaking to you. And the question is, will we listen to him? Will we make room for him? Will we allow him into our lives? Will we shut him out?

Will we? Will we? Will we? Will we? I've asked Sybil and Lobo to come up and to share a little bit about their journey because I think journeys and Christmas is what we're about as a church.

We talk about journeys. And this passage talks about sometimes God sends us on journeys, and we're going to try to do this with Isaac. We'll see what happens. Sometimes God sends us on journeys, and these journeys don't turn out the way that we hoped or planned.

[19 : 10] And so I've asked him to come up. How are you guys doing? You did an awesome job reading. You know that? And you could tell she was distracted because Isaac was sitting there, and he was just, whoo!

And she was just smiling and looking at him. So how are you guys doing? Yeah, we're good. Okay. So we've talked a little bit about your story, and we've known you guys. How long have you been at Watermark now?

Four years. Four years, yeah. And so I thought we just wanted to share about your story. And so I wrote out some questions, and we're just going to kind of do a dialogue, and we'll see. Can you hold your baby brother?

That's awesome. Sure. Let us introduce us first. Yeah, yeah, go ahead. So my name is Lobo. I work as IT in a bank. So boring. And this is Sybil. She is an art consultant.

She appreciates art. That's why 14 years ago she married me. And this is Cassie, eight years old, year three. And this is Isaac, a year of eating.

[20 : 09] I apologize. She is a little bit cranky. Yeah. We'll see how it works. Yes. Let's see how it goes. Okay. So maybe as we're talking about this journey and people being on journeys. Yeah. Sorry.

I think. Maybe we can add a... You want? Yeah. Sorry. You want to come get Isaac? Yeah. Just so he doesn't fall off. Oh, thank you. Sorry. No, no.

So maybe... And you guys sit down. You can... Sure. Maybe would you just kind of share... I've asked you guys to think about your journey. Maybe just share a little bit about what God...

What kind of journey God has had you on since you found out about being pregnant with... Not you being pregnant, but her being pregnant. What have you found out about being pregnant with Isaac? I think the story starts when we took the Love and Respect course at Watermark.

And we were really blessed by... And also grateful by what we have learned from the course. Yeah. I think it starts from being holy and pure. Sure. So from the course of Love and Respect, we realized that it is not really the intent of a marriage.

[21 : 14] We deal with our own problem. It's actually three of us. You know, no bone, me, and God. Right. So from that, you know, we learned quite a lot.

Yeah. And for me, I think the most important thing I learned is between men and women, there's no right or wrong. Just different. And that's why we need God in our relationship.

There's a lot of single guys out there writing really quickly. Yeah, I'm going to... You want to repeat that again? There's no right or wrong, just different. Okay. So we need God as a triangle. There's no right or wrong, just different.

Single guys. Right that down. Very guys. Write that down. And I remember one... I think once we have a huge argument. And then we're off to do different things. And I was home early.

And she hasn't back home. And I suddenly have that weird thinking. It's like, well, maybe he finally realized she did something wrong. And then maybe she's choosing a chocolate cake or mango mousse at Kofar.

[22 : 15] So I was waiting and waiting. And then she finally opened the door. And then she did bought something, but not from Kofar. It's a plastic bag from Watson's. You know what is it? It's a nose patch. And then she said, hey, Lobo, look at what I bought you.

It's a nose patch. It can fix your snoring. So it's like... And I say, okay, this is no right or wrong, just different. And then help with our marriage.

Basically, I think through the course, we found a lot of healing. Because there was a lot of rough patches between us. And we find that the self-reliance and independent really took the joy away from our marriage.

So from that point on, you know, God was speaking to us. And there was one day that God told me that, you know, if you submit and obey, you will have a son.

And, you know, I'll take care of your work and everything. So not to worry. Wow. Okay. So with that process, what would you say would be, like, one of the most difficult things that you experienced when you were talking about submitting and obeying and trusting God, working in your life?

[23 : 19] What did you face during this time? I think everything was all good, you know, until the third month of my pregnancy. We have to usually go through a blood test. That's when we have to test on Down syndrome.

And I found out that the baby I was carrying was very high. On the possibility of being Down syndrome, it was one to eight. And we need to go through a further test.

And it took two weeks for us to get the result. And it's really a test of faith. But I was clearly failed. Because when I first heard that news, I was really struggling.

Because I'm an engineering background and worked for IT for many years. So I think I'm pretty analytical. So my mind just started to go through the whole picture of the family for the next many years.

It's going to be a hard journey, especially when I grow old. I can't really take care of him. All the picture is in a negative way. And on the flip side, Sybil said to me, she's like, well, you know what, Noble?

[24 : 22] I think I'm going to keep this baby. Because she strongly feels that God has anchored this baby. I remember this word, anchor. It's really punched me hard. She said that God really anchored this baby hard and solid.

And I said, well, I'm really on this low side. So I'm really struggling. And then she was like, oh, you're Sybil, right? Not Mary. So hallelujah. And then I start to pray because I can't do nothing.

I start to pray and then pray and pray. And then I remember one evening. I really struggled. And then I wanted to find a quiet place. So before we went home, I go to the back side of the Hong Kong park.

There's like some public chairs. And then I was like, I start to pray and start to ask God why. And also I start to cry. And then I lost my passion. And then the emotion kicks in.

And I just look up at the sky and shout. And I said, so why? Just answer me. Are you here? And then suddenly there's some lightning on the sky. It's no rain.

[25 : 22] So I'm actually pretty scared. I said, oh, sorry. Sorry for this stuff, man. And clearly you're here. And I just dashed down to Cane Row. And I get a taxi home and sleep. Now I look back.

Now I look back. I'm really glad that I encountered him. So it's really a precious experience that I had. He's real. Yes, he's real. Yeah. Okay.

What do you guys would say in this journey that you've been on? Because it definitely is not turning out the way at this point. All your plans, all your hopes, everything you're doing.

It's nothing like you're doing. Even as you say, I'm going to trust you, God. I'm going to do this. And it's like, okay. So what would you say were some of the things that the Lord used in your life just to help you work through this process?

What happened there? Definitely community groups because we all prayed every other Thursday, you know, at Franklin and Teresa about the right timing to that, you know, the Trunks family can have an additional baby.

[26 : 22] So I definitely know that it's from God. And then, of course, during the two weeks while we wait for the final test, you know, Franklin and Teresa really lift us up in prayers and also provide a lot of wisdom.

There's this verse that always came up that two weeks. And it's Psalm 139, verse 1314. So from way at the beginning, you know, it's God's intention.

No matter if the baby is sick, you know, Down syndrome, whatnot, it's given by God. Yeah, for me, it's the pastor to help me.

So I work in a corporate setting for many years. So whenever there is incidents, what I usually do is escalate to the boss, right? And we didn't skip level. We escalate to the eldest first, which is Franklin and Teresa gave us some really good advice.

And then we escalate to the next level to Pastor Tobin. And then we went to the house. And then there was a very calm and spiritual conversations. And I was still on the negative side.

[27 : 38] I was still really struggling. And I still finding a way out. And I remember there's one conversation, one comment. Christine and Christina and Tobin mentioned.

He said, well, Lobo, you may not have the experience to deal with a Down syndrome person, but they are the most happiest person on the earth. And then you just do not believe, and you will not know how much fun and joy they will bring to the family.

And then it's amazing. Then my perspective changed. And I start to look in the positive way. And then I start to accept. And the thinking is actually getting to a lie with the wall.

So that's great. I think I shared maybe that the doctors told us the same thing about our KIPP was going to be a miscarriage. And when we were really down, a guy out of my team basically said, you know, doctors have been known to be wrong before, but God is never wrong.

So God's always in control on those things. That's awesome. So what would you say in this whole process, because this was several weeks and just phone calls and things like that, what would you say in this process God was teaching you about himself?

[28 : 46] Definitely, you know, it's a lesson of not controlling in our situation. And we think, you know, we're really just earthly beings. The ultimate provider is God. And really free us, you know, this thinking really free me from the bondage of questioning this and that.

And that peace, you know, came about when we submit. Yes. And submission, you know, it's a beautiful story, you know, how Isaac's name came about. After, you know, the day I gave my blood for the second test, I told Lobo that evening, I said, I think our son should be named Isaac.

Because, you know, the whole journey is like God has given. Seems like, you know, he has asked us to sacrifice, but he will provide in the end. So Isaac's name is perfect.

Yeah, very true, provide. Because that dude got a lot of hair. So it's actually provide more than he did. And what I learned is how to pray.

Being a Christian for many years, and I just, I think I just keep on praying what I want. And I just keep on praying what I need. And I kind of think, oh, this is somehow aligned to his directions.

[29 : 58] But this incident is really, really big in terms of spiritual impact. And also the test of faith. So I just suddenly got the idea. And I just pray for his wisdom to understand what he wants us to learn through this post-ex.

And more importantly is to let me understand what he's planned for. So when you guys are going through this, there were a couple other couples in the church also were struggling with some things that were very similar in the process.

And it came down to whether they were going to trust the Lord, right? And do we believe that he's good even when things are chaotic and not like we planned? And realize that his plans are so much greater than ours.

And so I just maybe, if there's somebody here right now, you know, struggling with some of these things, with kids or other things in their life, what would you want them to know?

What would you share with them after you've come through this process? And you're still coming through this process and you're still learning. What would you want them to know in that process? I would really share that, you know, God works differently in different ways in our lives.

[31 : 09] But ultimately, he knows what's the best for us, not us. So submit and allow him to work amazing things in our lives, like you always say. And don't water it down with our own plans.

Yeah, for me, as one Bible verse really helped me is there's nothing you are not able to undergo. I think for every test, I'm sure we can go through. But the other thing is he is born healthy, but that is only the beginning.

We've still got a long way to go. And I think that's why we need support from the church, community group, brother and sister. And I think the most importantly is the intimacy with God.

Great. Okay, so we're going to get to do something that I've been praying about forever since we've been part of your story. And we're going to dedicate Isaac today to the church family and to the Lord.

Wow, what's up?

[32 : 20] Kiss, kiss? Nope. Okay, I'm going to ask you guys two questions. I'm going to ask all of you questions. Can I ask you that too? Okay. Okay, and I'm going to ask the church a question.

So in coming today and bringing Isaac before the Lord to be dedicated and before our church family, do you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Is your desire to...

I always cry like this, gosh. Is it your desire to raise this boy and this beautiful girl in a household that always knows the Lord, is always filled with trust and joy, even when things are chaotic and out of control?

Is that your desire? Okay, guys, I'm going to ask you as a church family for these little kiddos here, do you covenant with them to pray for them, to be in their life, to encourage them, as they've talked about needing the help in the struggles and the journey?

If you see these kids wandering and doing things they should not do, and I know you never do that, you never disobey your mom, but do you? Sometimes you do. Wow, can you hang out with my kids some more?

[33 : 29] That'd be really good. As you as a church family, do you covenant with them and with all the kids here, whether you're single or married or whatever stage of your life, you are spiritual parents.

Do you covenant to help them, to encourage them, to instruct them? For as long as you're a part of this community, would you say, I do? I do. Awesome.

Can I hold him? Is that going to work? What's up? My dear brother Isaac, son of the covenant, I dedicate you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

May you come to know our Lord at an early age. May you do mighty, mighty things for his kingdom. May you, even in the hours of darkness and doubt when things aren't going your way, realize how faithful God is to you and how he's brought you to this place and that you can trust him.

Father, we love you. We thank you for this precious family. We pray these things in your son Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, that's your family right there. See them?

[34 : 41] They're clapping for you. Is that awesome? That's awesome. See that over there? Bye-bye. Bye-bye. Bye-bye. Bye-bye. Thanks, guys. Bye-bye. That's awesome.

Okay, so I guess the question I need to ask all of us is, do we have room in our lives right now for Christ speaking to us and working in our life?

Are we open to him moving and changing and making things chaotic? Maybe not as we planned, not as we wanted, but as he wanted. Are we open to allowing him to change us?

Are we open to understand why he came? Is there a savior? Some people are going to read this story over and over again, and when I talk to them about it, many people are just going to walk away, and they're going to be indifferent.

They're going to say, that sounds really cool, but I don't really need this right now. It's not really who I am. I'm looking for other things in my life to give me hope and meaning and value. Maybe someday I'll think about Christ.

[36 : 02] Some people, when I share this story, get angry, because we read the part about, were you a savior?

And only people need saviors who are sick and hurting and in trouble. And they look at this story and say, that's not me.

I have my life together. I'm okay. I don't need a savior. In fact, I'm doing pretty good as being God in my life. My prayer for all of us is that we realize that the message of Christmas, this is in the darkness and in the chaos, that God comes into our life, and he changes us.

He does something so much greater than we've ever planned with our career, with our relationships, with our kids, with our marriage, wherever he has you. God's plan is so much greater than your plan.

But often to get to his plan, there's chaos, and there's darkness, and there's uncertainty, and there's difficulty.

[37 : 16] And the question we have to ask ourselves is, can we trust him? Will we allow him into our life to change us? That's the message of Advent.

That's the message of Christmas. We need a savior. God sends his son. He's the only thing that will help us.

Will we allow him not into our life just for eternity, but every day as you walk through the day? Will you allow this message to change us? Will you allow God to speak to you? Father, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for your awesomeness, that you use history and stories to interweave them. You work in ways that we never would have planned or ever thought through.

You do things that frustrate us and confuse us and break us because you want to show us something different. You want to show us your son.

[38 : 20] You want to show us your love. You want to show us your mercy. You want to show us your grace. And until you make our world's turn upside down and inside out and break us, Lord, we just will never, ever want those things.

Lord, I pray for us as a church. I pray for my heart. I pray for the elders and all the staff here. I pray that we would walk with you, that we would trust you, that we'd realize that it's not our journey alone that we play out, but it's you working in our lives.

Lord, we need you. And I pray for those in here who answered the first two ways. No, I don't have that need right now. No, that makes me really angry.

Lord, I pray that you would work in their hearts, that you would show them a son who came to rescue them, to free them, to give them the life that they've always desired.

Pray, Lord, that you would open blinded eyes darkened hearts, and ears that are stopped. It's the message of your son.

[39 : 34] Lord, I pray for us as a church that we would never forget this message, that you're speaking to us as we go through our workplace, that you're speaking to us as we go through our families, that you're changing us, you're working, and you're asking us to trust you.

May we be a people who trust you because you're good, because you've given us the most important thing, because you've promised to always, always be with us.

We love you, and we pray these things in your son Jesus Christ, holy name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.