

Stand Alone Sermon: Loving Jesus

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Preacher: Alex McCoy

[0 : 00] Good morning, Walter Mark. The scripture reading today comes from Luke chapter 7, verses 36 to 50. If you are using the church Bible, please turn to page 8111.

Starting from verse 36, we read, Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he answered, Say it, teacher. A certain moneylender had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii and the other 50.

When they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which one of them would love him more? Simon answered, The one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt.

And he said to him, You have judged rightly. Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I entered your house.

[1 : 48] You gave me no water for my feet. But she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss. But from the time I came in, he has not ceased to kiss my feet.

You did not annoy my head with oil. But she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven.

For she loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little. And he said to her, Your sins are forgiven. Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?

And he said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. This is the word of God. Thanks very much, Iris.

Please keep your Bibles open. All jokes aside, yeah, Kevin and I just did have a bit of a mutual admiration society here going. And it's delightful. And I value his friendship and Neil's friendship.

[2 : 52] Kevin was preaching, I think, two weekends ago at Resurrection Church at their weekend away. Resurrection Church is one of the daughter churches from St. Andrews. And then their pastor is preaching at St. Andrews today.

Hey, one of our pastors is preaching over there and I'm preaching over here. And it's wonderful just to have this, yeah, you could call it collegiality, but it's more fellowship in the Lord, fellowship in ministry.

And wonderful to see what the Lord is doing in churches across Hong Kong. We're delighted to be here. Please keep that Bible passage open. Let me pray for us as we dig in.

Lord God, we do thank you that you've created your word and that you speak to us in the words of Scripture. And you've caused the Bible to be written for our understanding, that we might know you and your way of salvation in Jesus and how we can live lives which honor him.

But we confess, Lord, that we need your help because we are distractible, forgetful. We chase after the good things that you give us rather than chasing after you.

[3 : 54] So, as we come before you and your word, what we know not teach us, what we are not make us, and what we have not give us.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Many of you have probably traveled to Britain before and you'd know that in the United Kingdom there are names for different kinds of roads. So, for instance, the big multi-laned highways are called M roads.

The slightly smaller roads, still large roads, are called A roads. And then you have these things called B roads, which are roads that sort of small roads that are often only wide enough for one car that sort of tail around in the countryside.

Now, there's this story of a tourist who was traveling on the M25 and he was only going 25 miles an hour. And the police pulled him over and they said to him, you are traveling too slow.

This is a hazard. And he said to them, well, I'm only going 25 miles an hour because that's what the road sign says. And they said, no, no, no, no. That's the name, not the speed limit.

[4 : 58] And then they looked in the car and next to him was his wife and his wife looked particularly traumatized. And they said to him, is your wife okay?

She looks unwell. And he said, well, she's actually been looking like that ever since we're on the B140. Now, sometimes it's important to be clear about where you're traveling.

Otherwise, you're going to be confused, right? Now, we have all sorts of goals, aspirations in life, aspirations for family and work, things that we want to achieve and do in this brief time that the Lord has given us.

But amongst all the great things that we have opportunities to do, it's important to be reminded every now and again about where we're traveling, about where we're going so that we're not confused.

One of the claims of Christianity is that what you think about Jesus is the most important thing about you. One of the things about the things that you think about Jesus are the most important thing about you.

[6 : 04] And that affects your life not only now, but also into eternity. And in the Bible reading that we just read from Luke, we meet two people, two people who meet Jesus.

They both want to listen to him. And we're supposed to compare and contrast them because it's possible to be interested in Jesus, to turn up, so to speak, to want to learn about him, but to be confused about who he is and what he has done.

And therefore, to be confused actually about where you're going in life. So as we look at this incredible passage, we're going to see two things, two responses to Jesus and the reasons for those responses.

The first person that we meet is Simon. And we're told at the outset, Simon is a Pharisee. And if you're familiar at all with the Gospels, you'll know that the Pharisees are the religious experts. They know all about the law. They're incredibly moral, respected in the community. But also, they're the ones who most opposed Jesus. And they're the ones that Jesus came in conflict with.

[7 : 13] But Simon is different. He was interested in Jesus. Maybe he'd heard Jesus preaching before. Maybe he'd even witnessed some of his miracles. And he's prepared to think that Jesus is actually a prophet.

Now, Simon clearly respects Jesus. Maybe he even admires him to the extent that he invites Jesus over to his home. And this is Simon's way of saying, Jesus, I want to find out more about you.

I've heard so much, but I'm doing my due diligence. I want to find out a little bit more. I'm even thinking about following you. Then next, we meet a woman. Simon is given a name.

We're not told this woman's name, but we are told lots of information about her. Four times in the whole passage, we're told that she is a sinner. Now, we don't know specifically about what her sin is, but a lot of commentators say, given that label, she's probably a prostitute.

She is a woman in that town who has a reputation and everybody knows it. If Simon was down one end of the moral and religious and social spectrum, the good end, she's down the other end.

[8 : 24] She's a social outcast. Now, a common way in those times for people to eat at someone's home was to recline on a couch.

And these couches would wheel out in a room, so to speak, like spokes. Your head would be at the center. That's where the food was. Your feet would be radiating towards the outside part of the room.

And maybe this woman's plan was to come into this room unnoticed and quietly on the periphery anoint Jesus' feet with perfume.

But she does two extraordinary things. First, she brings with her an alabaster jar of perfume. And the scent of this perfume would emit from some small holes at the top of the jar.

And often women, if they could afford it, would tie these alabaster jars of perfume around their necks. Because remember, this is the ancient Middle East. It's hot.

[9 : 25] This is before air conditioning. Not many people have soap. No one has deodorant. And so people stink. And if a woman could afford to have such a jar around her neck, it meant that she would be able to walk around in this cloud of wonderful fragrance.

She would become someone of beauty and incredible attraction. But just think about who she is for a moment. She's a prostitute.

That means this jar would be something necessary for her work, something necessary for her to attract business, so to speak. And look at what she's doing.

She's pouring out the perfume on Jesus' feet. And the only way she can do that is to break the top of the jar and pour out the perfume. And once she's done that, it's all gone.

I mean, do you see what she's doing? This perfume was her financial security, her way of making business, so to speak. It was her beauty, attractiveness, her desirability.

[10:27] And she's pouring it all on Jesus' feet. But then the second extraordinary thing that she does is that she wipes Jesus' feet with her hair.

And in that culture, for a woman to uncover her hair in public was an incredible social taboo. It was to break all sorts of social rules.

This was an act of intimacy. The rabbis had ruled that if a married woman uncovered her hair in public, that was grounds for divorce. Now, this lady isn't just taking a financial risk.

She's taking an incredible social risk. She's taking this social risk by turning up uninvited, unwelcome to that place. As soon as she heads in that door, people would be going, there's that woman.

There is that sinner. And again, maybe her plan was simply to gently perfume Jesus' feet unnoticed by others and then leave.

[11:25] But her plan probably wasn't to weep. And her plan wasn't to dry Jesus' feet with her hair. And now, people back then are no different to us today.

You know, there are social conventions for how you're supposed to conduct yourself in social situations in public. Things that you should do and not do. And she's doing all sorts of things that you should not do.

Letting down her hair, weeping. She shouldn't even be in that room. We know what we should do in public settings. How we're supposed to conduct ourselves. Not a hair out of place, so to speak. But here is this notorious woman who looks like she's falling apart. She's weeping. She's drying Jesus' feet with her hair. And people would have looked at her and thought, what is this woman doing?

This is scandalous. This is utterly disrespectful. She shouldn't be here. She shouldn't be doing anything like this. But we're told what Simon thinks.

[12:27] But his verdict doesn't have to do so much with the woman. It has to do with Jesus. In verse 39, Simon says to himself, if this man were a prophet, he would know who it is who is touching him and what kind of woman that she is, that she is a sinner.

It's like he's saying, this is completely inappropriate. There's no way that Jesus should be allowing this woman to do this to him. If Jesus really is who people are saying he is, he would know.

He wouldn't have anything to do with it. In other words, Simon's not just saying the claims about Jesus are wrong. He can't be a prophet. Otherwise, he would have stopped this. He's also saying this response to Jesus that this woman showed is wrong.

And now Luke, the gospel writer, wants us to compare and contrast these two responses to Jesus. Here's a lady who's consumed by devotion to Jesus.

She's captivated by him. She's prepared to take incredible social and financial risks. And then there is Simon. Yes, he's interested in Jesus. He's wanting to meet with him.

[13:39] He's invited him over to his home. But that's where it stops. Simon is interested, but he's not engaged. His intellect is there, but not his heart.

And I think, actually, that's one of the points of the story. Whether or not you have intellectual interest, we're told just having intellectual interest, just showing up to meet Jesus is not enough.

Because Simon has all these things. Simon has morality and virtue and respect. He knows how to follow all the laws. He's a religious guy. He turns up. And yet that is not enough.

I think some of the most frightening words in the Bible are words that Jesus speaks to the church in Laodicea in Revelations 3. Jesus gives a message to the Laodicean church, saying to them, I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.

And I wish you were one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I'm about to spit you out of my mouth. Now, Jesus is calling these Christians in Laodicea spiritually lukewarm, neither hot nor cold.

[14:55] Now, we're always going to love something intensely, right? And we're always going to act in response to whatever it is we love the most.

What we love the most will shape our priorities and our decisions, our habits and our character. What we love the most is what we tend to think about the most. And we're not going to be lukewarm towards what we think about the most.

We're going to be hot towards it. We're going to be hot towards what we love the most. And Jesus is saying that the Laodiceans were spiritually lukewarm towards him.

They were spiritually lukewarm. That means they weren't electrified by Jesus's love for them. They were not changed by it. And so like Simon, maybe they were very good and moral people.

They could have been interested in Jesus. They could have believed in him as an intellectual reality. But that's where it stops. They weren't captivated by Jesus. And the problem with spiritually lukewarm people is that they're actually further away from God than people who don't know God, than cold people.

[16:07] Because spiritually lukewarm people actually think that they're okay with God when in reality they're not. And so what Jesus says is really frightening because he says, Because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth.

Now it's a warning. It's a word of judgment. He's angry. It's like he's nauseated by these people. He wants to spit them out. And Jesus gives the later scenes further down this remedy.

He says the remedy to being spiritually lukewarm is to be earnest and repent. Now that word for earnest is the opposite of lukewarm.

In Greek, it's often the word that's used for the word jealousy. It's the same word that's used for jealousy. And we often think about jealousy as being a bad thing.

It's a bad thing. And often it is. It's often a bad thing for us to be jealous. It's wrong for us to be jealous of other people, their achievements, their family, their job, their looks.

[17:10] It's wrong to desire something so much from somebody else that you want to take it from them. To be that self-absorbed and self-centered. But sometimes it is appropriate for us to be jealous.

So, for example, it's appropriate for someone to have a jealous love for their spouse. When this happens, you're not setting your love on a commodity that you want to take from another person.

No, you're setting your love on a person that you want to be with that person. And this kind of jealousy gets you not to think about your own needs, but the needs of your spouse.

You're passionate. You're involved. You're concerned about that person because they're the ones whom you love. And Jesus is saying, I want you to love me with a jealous love.

Don't be lukewarm towards me. Love me with everything that you got. Love me more than anything else. Love me so that your priorities and your hopes and your habits are utterly changed.

[18:13] And so do you see what Luke is doing? This story is an invitation for us to test ourselves. How have I responded to Jesus? Am I just interested in him?

You know, I show up, but I'm spiritually lukewarm. I'm neither hot nor cold. I'm dispassionate. I'm not emotionally invested. Or am I like this woman?

I'm just absolutely besotted. I'm captivated by Jesus. So there are two responses. But then next we want to see why do these people, why do Simon and this lady respond in this way?

Jesus knows what Simon is thinking. It's like Jesus has got this MRI for the soul. He can see what's inside. Nothing is hidden from him.

And Simon has been wondering if Jesus knows what this woman is doing. But Jesus doesn't just know what this woman is doing, has been doing. He knows what Simon is thinking.

[19:12] He knows what's going on in his heart. Which is a pretty sobering reality because we cannot play games with Jesus. He always knows what's in our heart. He knows everything about us. And so Jesus tells Simon this short parable.

He tells Simon and he tells us this parable about what it means to be shaped by love for Jesus. Two people owe money to a money lender.

One owes 500. One owes 50. Neither of them can pay it back. And so the money lender forgives. Literally in Greek, he graces the debt of both.

One translation puts it, he makes a present of what they owe. And the question that Jesus asks Simon at the end of the parable is, who's the one who loves the most?

And Simon, kind of almost grudgingly, says the correct answer, I suppose the one who has the bigger debt forgiven. Now, this parable is important for us not just to understand why Simon and this lady have responded this way.

[20 : 17] But it actually helps us to understand the whole message of salvation. It provides us the message of salvation in a nutshell. And so you might be here today and you're investigating Christianity.

You're exploring it. You're trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. And it is so good that you are here. If you can grasp the truth of this parable, then you can actually grasp all of God's plan for human history.

This parable communicates to us just some simple steps in salvation. In other words, how you can be in a relationship with God. Step one, there is an owner.

Recognize that there is an owner. Someone who created all things, who owns all things. And we cannot fool this owner. Second, the parable tells us that we all owe a debt.

We all owe something to God. Third, no one can pay that debt. That's true of the people in this parable. It's true of every person in human history. Fourth, the owner forgives that debt at great cost to himself.

[21 : 23] And fifth, the only way you can respond is to just accept the free offer of your debt being forgiven. That parable is Christianity in a nutshell.

And it helps us then to go further and piece together what else is happening in this scene. Now, some people might hear Jesus' words here and think, well, of course, this woman will love Jesus more because she has more forgiven.

She's the 500, not the 50. She's the woman with the reputation in that town. She's broken more commandments, committed more bad things. She has the bigger debt.

Of course, she's going to love more. But that's not what Jesus is saying. Jesus says to the Simon, there are two debtors. The word two here is aimed at Simon.

It's like Jesus is saying to Simon, you are also a debtor. You see, the reason why Simon has this kind of lukewarm response towards Jesus, the reason why he isn't captivated by him is because of his understanding of how religion works.

[22 : 32] And it's a pretty common understanding of religion. If there is a God, if there is a heaven, if I have to pass the test, then I've got to do the right things.

I've got to follow the commandments. I've got to follow the religious rules. I've got to turn up. I've got to be generous. I've got to do all these kinds of things. And Simon was doing that. And he was very good at doing that. He was a Pharisee.

He knew all about doing these kinds of things. And so pleasing God, according to Simon, was a lot like an accounting exercise. You just have to make sure your good things offset your bad things.

You know, you keep the ledger in the plus, in the black, not in the red. But Jesus' point isn't about the different sizes of the debt. His point is that they both have a debt.

One might be much, much, much more of a sinner than the other, but they're still both sinners.

They're actually both in the same boat. Now, let me give an illustration, putting it a different way.

[23 : 32] Imagine that there are two people who want to race each other in a swim, and they're swimming from Central to Macau. Now, the first person makes it a kilometer before he drowns.

And then the second person makes it a lot further. He actually makes it to Lantau before he drowns as well. Now, does that make any difference, that this person has made it much, much further than the first swimmer?

Well, no, okay, because he still hasn't made it. He's drowned. He's in the same situation. He's at the bottom of the ocean. Same thing with that. The outcome is the same. Jesus is saying to Simon, look, you don't realize that you're actually in the same position as this woman.

He's saying to this very moral, very respectable, probably very generous and upright, respectable guy in that community, you might have a particular position with people.

You might think you have a particular position with God, but really you don't. Your debt will bring you to the bottom. You have a debt that you need to pay and you can't pay it yourself.

[24 : 40] Do you remember at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives the Beatitudes? And the first of the Beatitudes, Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Now, to be poor in spirit means that you recognize that you have an incalculable debt to pay to God, that you're spiritually destitute, you're a beggar, you cannot pay this debt.

But our difficulty is that often we're not poor in spirit, we're middle class in spirit. We feel like we have earned our way a little bit, we're doing okay.

We say to ourselves, I'm not perfect, but I work hard. You know, I'm a good person. I try to treat people okay. And as you guys well know, we live in a meritocracy.

Hong Kong is a meritocracy, which means life is based on effort and reward. You study hard at school and university, you get the good grades, you go to the good colleges and universities so that you can get a good job.

[25 : 49] And then it starts all over again. Effort, reward, you work hard at your job so that you can get the projects, the raises, the promotions and so on.

And to be middle class means that you're working hard and that's okay. But without realizing it, we can also slip into this sort of spiritual meritocracy, this spiritual middle classness.

You quietly believe that God owes you something because you're working hard at it. That God ought to answer my prayers. God ought to give me the life I want because I'm working hard at it. But we can easily forget that Jesus knows us intimately, like he knew Simon intimately, that Jesus has this MRI for our soul.

He knows that none of us love God the way we ought. None of us love others the way we ought. And to compound our problem, we often don't recognize our own spiritual poverty.

[26 : 53] We tell ourselves, I can do something. I know somehow I can earn it. And Jesus says, whoever has been forgiven little will love little.

Now think of that woman again. Maybe the people watching this scene at Simon's house would have wondered, why is she weeping? Are they tears of guilt or grief or are they tears of joy? Jesus knows why she's weeping. Jesus knows why she washes his feet and Simon doesn't. Jesus knows why she warmly welcomes him into that place and Simon doesn't.

It's because she knows her spiritual debt and Simon doesn't. And she knows what Jesus offers. And Simon doesn't.

Her tears are tears of joy. Something about Jesus has overwhelmed her and she can't help it. Somewhere in the past, she brought the dreadful debt and burden of her sin to Jesus.

[28 : 04] Notice what Jesus says in verse 47. I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven.

Somewhere in the past, she recognized that Jesus is the one who is able to forgive sins. Now think about what Jesus is claiming when he says that he can forgive her sins.

If the only one who can forgive sins is the one who has been offended against. And if all sins, all debts are ultimately an offense against God himself, then in claiming to be able to forgive her sins, Jesus is actually claiming to be God himself.

That's the most extraordinary claim that Jesus makes. Most people prefer it if Jesus is just a wise teacher, a moral example for us to follow. But Jesus isn't claiming to be those things.

He claims to be able to forgive sins. Therefore, he's claiming to be God himself. And the other guests recognize the magnitude of that claim because they say in verse 49, who is this that even forgives sins?

[29 : 15] This woman can't see it yet what it would cost Jesus to pay her debt and forgive her sins, to bring her this peace and relief and joy.

This euphoria even, which this perfume that she offers up is only a token in response of. She can't see it yet. That Jesus will go to the cross and take her sin and take my sin and take your sin. That he'll be betrayed and abandoned and suffer this most humiliating and shameful of deaths so that we can all receive grace. We see the magnitude of our debt to God by the magnitude of what it took to pay it.

But we also see the magnitude of God's love for us, Jesus' love for us, because he was willing to pay it. And this story, therefore, holds up a bit of a mirror to ourselves so that we ask ourselves, how actually have I responded to Jesus?

Do I come to God with this same sort of sense of spiritual self-sufficiency that Simon does? You know, I'm okay 90%, I just need a bit of help for the rest of the 10%.

[30 : 34] Or do I come to Jesus like the woman, recognizing my terrible debt, but overwhelmed with gratitude, accepting this offer of forgiveness?

Two brief thoughts by way of application. First of all, your love for Jesus should lead you to love his people.

Now, Simon showed little grace to this woman because he didn't understand grace. Jesus had said to him, if you have been forgiven little, you will love little, but if you have been forgiven much, you will love much.

And so the question, uncomfortable question that I have for you is, are there people in your life that you struggle to love? Are there people here that you struggle to love?

Are there people that you cannot forgive? Are there people that you really find it hard to be patient with? Imagine for a moment that you've been invited around to a friend's house.

[31 : 36] And this friend, these two, this couple you've been friends with for many years, and they've just had a baby child. And they've welcomed you to their place so that you can be introduced to their child.

And you hold this child in your arms, and you look at this child, and they're talking to you about the birth, and all sorts of little baby things, and it's a wonderful time. And when it's time for you to go, imagine that as you give this newborn back to your friends, you say to them, wow, it's wonderful being here with you today.

I love you guys so much. It's so great to be here today. Let's catch up again sometime soon, but don't take your child. I love you guys, but I don't really like your baby.

Is it all right next time we meet, don't take your baby? Now, that'd be pretty brutal. Now, irrespective of how much you love your friends as a couple, your lack of love for their newborn child would obviously reflect a lack of love for them.

They'd be right to question the sincerity of your love for them. And the same goes for our relationship with Jesus. If we claim to love him, but we're cold to the people that he loves, then he's right to question the genuineness of our love.

[32 : 59] Love for Jesus will be seen in the extent to which we love his people, that we are patient, we show grace and forgiveness, even when they've hurt us a lot.

Second, your love for Jesus should lead you to deep assurance. Now, it's easy to go about our Christian lives actually fearful, with a bit of anxiety, fearful of making mistakes, fearful of being disappointed, fearful of what people think about us, fearful of things getting out of control.

And I think that's often why we're so sort of defensive, sensitive to criticism. When somebody at work or in your home points out something uncomfortable about you, you get really sensitive.

You can easily snap back. But the reality is they can only see the surface. Remember, Jesus has an MRI for the soul. They can't see the worst of you.

Jesus does. And yet, we're still on performance mode all the time. We still feel like we have to prove ourselves. But think about what this woman does. She comes into this room and all the barriers, all the walls come down.

[34 : 13] She weeps. She washes Jesus' feet. She dries his feet with her hair. She's overwhelmed by Jesus. She knew that everyone would be examining her when she comes into that room.

Everybody would be thinking, here is that terrible woman. What is she doing here? But again, they could only see on the surface. Jesus sees way inside.

As we sung earlier, she realized her sins were many, but his mercies are more. And because his mercies are more, she could walk into that room because his mercies are more, and she could give everything.

She could give her security, financial, social, relational, emotional, because she knew he loved her, and therefore she could love him.

Therefore, she gave her everything. She bought her security, her alabaster jar. She bought her fears, her pride, her everything. And if you know Jesus loves you and has given you his everything, then it frees you up to give your everything to him.

[35 : 29] What's your alabaster jar? You know, what's your security? What is that thing that you're holding onto in life that you're jealously guarding? This is mine. Chances are, that's what you love the most.

What's your security? Is it more important to you than Jesus? Do the cost benefit. Can it forgive you your sins?

Can it give you eternal life? You know, we are creatures who have been made in the image of God. And we cannot, we haven't been built to worship things that aren't God.

Those little alabaster jars in our lives cannot carry the burden of all your hopes and expectations and joy in life. You will just crush whatever it is that you are worshipping, and you will be left disappointed when they let you down.

Only Jesus is big enough for us to worship him and give him our everything. The woman made the only sensible choice. She's a woman whose name we were not given, but her example we

remember.

[36 : 39] And so we walk in her ways, besotted with Jesus, dependent upon him because he has done everything for us. Would you pray with me, please? Lord God, we do thank you for this time where we've been able to look at the story of this nameless lady.

This lady with a baggage full of sin, with all sorts of shame. She's on the outside of society. She's disrespected. She's made lots of mistakes.

And yet she met Jesus. And she learnt about his grace and the free offer of forgiveness. And Lord, in many respects, we find ourselves in different situations from this woman.

If we're honest with ourselves, we're more on the Simon side than we are on this woman's side.

Lord, we're here. And we're respectable. And we're middle class. And we work hard.

And we're good people. But Lord, often we confess that we can take that spiritual pride in all of these things rather than having a deep dependence on you.

[37 : 43] Lord, we know that the Bible tells us the human heart is hardwired to self-sufficiency and spiritual pride and self-dependence.

And so, Lord, would you rid our hearts of this sort of self-sufficiency and help us to see Jesus and come to his throne of grace and see the cross. And see there at the cross the magnitude of our sin that it took Jesus to pay for it.

But also the magnitude of your love that you were willing to give your son. That Jesus willingly went to the cross on our behalf. And so, Lord, we pray that we would see Jesus more clearly and love him more dearly and walk with him more faithfully.

That until we are called home and we see him face to face, we give our everything to him. We need your help, Lord. Lord, we cannot do this on our own.

So, guide us by your spirit. Help us always to see Jesus. And guide us, this wonderful community at Watermark. May this community be a community where we continually point one another to the sufficiency of Jesus.

[38 : 52] To his love for us in all things. And that the best thing that we can do in our lives is to love him with an everlasting love. Help us in all these things, Lord, we pray. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.