

# Treasuring Christ Above All Else

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Date: 24 October 2021

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[ 0 : 00 ] The scripture reading this morning comes from Matthew chapter 13.

Please follow along in your bulletin or on your Bible. Starting with verse 44 we read, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.

Then, in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and stole all that he had and bought it.

This is the word of God. Great, thank you, Angie. Okay, well, there we go. Okay, you can hear me. I'm not sure why the speakers didn't like you, Angie, but thank you.

In October 28th, so this week, 1949, 72 years ago, somewhere around there, a young American man by the name of Jim Elliott writes these words in his journal.

[ 1 : 24 ] He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.

Seven years later, January the 3rd, 1956, Jim Elliott and four other men would put their conviction to the test as they flew over the Ecuadorian jungle in the Amazon.

They were missionaries to a tribe there, the notoriously dangerous Orca tribe. They had been preparing for years to reach out to this tribe to connect with them, build relationship, learn their language so that they could eventually share the gospel with them.

And they land on the beach, and the five men never returned. They were speared to death on the landing. Now, we are looking at this very short passage of Scripture today.

Last week, we looked at this big passage, and we kind of zoomed out and took a high view level. This morning, we're going to dive deep down, and we're going to look at just three verses in Matthew 13, verse 44 to 46.

[ 2 : 38 ] Let me read it to us once again. It says, Jesus says, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that is hidden in a field, which a man found, and he covered it up. Then, in his great joy, he goes and sells everything he has, and he buys that field.

Again, Jesus says, The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant, someone who's searching for very rare jewels, and he finds one pearl that is of great value. He goes and he sells everything he has to obtain that one precious pearl.

In these three verses, we have two parables and one meaning. They're slightly different, but by and large, they come down to the same thing. This is one story that Jesus wants us to see.

But let's consider first what Jesus is not wanting to say. Jesus is not commenting on the ethics of buying somebody else's property if you've got secret intelligence that there's a treasure hidden deep below the surface.

If you've got concerns about first century Jewish property law, you can go and read up about that. That's not Jesus' point here. Jesus is not saying that we should all wear fine pearl necklaces and bling jewelry to church on Sundays.

[ 3 : 56 ] That's not the point of these stories. Jesus is not saying that you can buy your way into the kingdom of heaven. In fact, Jesus makes it clear that the wealthier you are, the more difficult it is to be a Christian, which is challenging for us in Hong Kong, right?

No, friends, what Jesus is saying is this. Jesus is saying that being part of the kingdom of God, which means coming under the saving rule and reign of Jesus, that's what it means to be part of the kingdom, where Jesus is your king, you submit to him, you come under his authority, to be part of the kingdom of God is so valuable that losing everything on earth but getting the kingdom is a happy and worthwhile trade-off.

Jesus is saying to give up everything you have in order to have the kingdom of God would be a joyful sacrifice. Okay, is that clear? Now, before we dive in, there's a couple of things we need to take note of.

The one thing that, in order to understand this passage, we need to think about this, is what is the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church? And that's a really important question.

What is the relationship like? Is Jesus saying that your local church, Watermark Community Church, Hong Kong, is like a treasure that is buried in a field and it's worth sacrificing everything for it so that it can advance and become glorious?

[ 5 : 26 ] No, that's not what Jesus is saying. The local church, although an extremely important expression of the kingdom of God, is not the kingdom of God itself.

Those two things are not one and the same. The kingdom of God is the rule and reign of Jesus and the local church is one expression of it and it's important to be part of a church.

I'm so glad that just last Sunday, we had 13 people joining our membership class looking to become members of this church. It's important to join a local church and become a member of a church. But the church is not the same thing as the kingdom of God.

And that's important because sometimes you'll find pastors, I apologize on behalf of my friends, that we'll confuse these two things. And as pastors, we like to sometimes crack the whip and drive our congregations harder and harder and demand more and more saying, the kingdom of God is like a pearl.

You've got to give up everything for it. Therefore, we want you at church seven days a week. You've got to give everything you have. Sacrifice your family, sacrifice your career, just serve in our church.

[ 6 : 31 ] Friends, the church is not the same thing as the kingdom of God. That's not what Jesus is saying. Of course, every church, every family, we do make sacrifices, whether you're a nuclear family or the church family.

But Jesus' point here is to give up everything you have in order to come under the saving rule and reign of King Jesus is a happy and joyful sacrifice. Now, when we hear these scriptures, if you've been a Christian for some time, and I know that might not be true of all of us, there is a danger.

And one of the dangers is that familiarity breeds complacency. Right? We all know that in our lives. Remember when COVID first hit the world, we were all on high alert.

Okay? We were all hand sanitizing 100 times a day. Very, very conscious. Two years later, familiarity breeds complacency.

Right? And there's nothing like scripture for us to become familiar with and to become complacent with. Richard Baxter, a famous pastor, said, these words need more consideration than explanation.

[ 7 : 37 ] The explanation is pretty clear. What Jesus is saying, you don't need to be a rocket scientist or a nuclear physicist to work it out. He's saying that to give everything for the kingdom of God would be a joyful sacrifice.

The explanation is clear. The question is, will we consider them? Will we allow Jesus' words to penetrate our hearts? Will we allow them to arrest us? And allowing them to arrest us, will we believe them and believe in them?

Will we allow them to change us? So let's consider these three short verses this morning. And I've got four very simple things to say. Okay? So one meaning, two parables, three verses, four things to say.

My math is hot this week. Okay? So first thing, let's consider this. No one enters the kingdom of God by accident. Consider these parables again.

This farmer is confronted by the unearthing of this treasure. This merchant is arrested by the discovery of this pearl that exceeds even his wildest expectations.

[ 8 : 43 ] And here this laborer, farm laborer, here this merchant are arrested by this discovery and they've got a choice to make. What are they going to do? In order to obtain this treasure, this pearl, is going to require some sacrifices.

They're going to have to sell some things. They're going to have to get rid of some things. There might be some very important things. Maybe some family heirlooms. Some important piece of furniture. Maybe that thoroughbred horse that he has been saving up for.

Maybe some gold bars. There's going to be some decision that is going to be needed to be made. The merchant may have to sell his collection of prized jewels. What's he going to choose?

Jesus' point here is that the kingdom of God is not just like a lottery, that you wake up one day, your number's been called, and Bob's your uncle. You are now in the kingdom of God.

Jesus' point is that you don't just enter God's kingdom by osmosis, or by accident, or just by growing up in a Christian family. The kingdom of God is entered into by a decision, a choice that's made.

[ 9 : 47 ] Jesus makes the same point elsewhere. He says in Matthew's Gospel, which of you, you desire to build a building? How many of you are going to engage in that building process without first considering the cost?

You've got to weigh up the pros and cons. You've got to come to a decision. You want to launch a business? You've got to work out. What's the cost going to be involved? How many of you, he says, how many kings go off to war, and they've got to first work out with my army, are we going to win the war against that army?

If a business wants to take over their competitor, launch a hostile takeover, bid for their shares, you've got to weigh it up, make some decisions. Jesus is saying, the point here is no one enters God's kingdom haphazardly.

No one enters it just by osmosis. You hang around with some Christians, and you find out you're part of the kingdom. Friends, if you were born part of a wonderful Christian family, praise God for that. But that doesn't make you a Christian.

You don't get citizenship in God's kingdom by way of ancestry. You enter the kingdom of God by weighing up who Jesus is, by being confronted by who Christ is, and making a decision.

[ 10 : 55 ] Am I going to be part of his kingdom? Am I going to come under the authority, the saving rule and reign of Jesus? Jesus' point here is that, like the parable on the soils that Christ spoke about a few weeks ago, no response is very much a response.

It's tempting to say, I'm a little busy at the moment. I'm just trying to finish my degree. I've got young kids. I'm trying to launch a business. I'll get to that some later stage. And Jesus is saying, that is as much of a response as saying, no, I think I'll stay the Lord of my own life.

No one enters the kingdom of God by accident. Secondly, Jesus tells us that the way into the kingdom of God is the same as the way of the kingdom of God.

The way into the kingdom is the way of the kingdom. Now, last week, we looked at this passage right at the end of the sermon. We just looked at it in a few minutes. And one of the things that I said was that this is the way into the kingdom of God.

And that's true. But one of the things that we at Watermark are learning is that the way into God's kingdom is also the way of God's kingdom. The way that you become a Christian is also the way that you live as a Christian.

[ 12 : 09 ] Maybe a good analogy of this is it's similar to marriage, right? Those of you that are married, one day you stand at the altar and you hold your wife's hands, your husband's hands.

You look them in the eye and you say, with all that I am and all that I have, I give myself to you in the covenant of marriage for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part.

Right? Does that sound familiar? Okay. Justin and Annabelle nodding. Four weeks in, still doing strong. Okay, great. Well, that's, I'm glad that Dave's still onto it, okay?

But those of us that are married 40 years, I hope you're still onto it as well, right? It's not just four weeks. It's 40 years in. You can't 10 years into marriage, you know, your wife asks you to do something and you say, no, not really interested.

And she says, hang on, what is all about, what is all that better and worse stuff? You know, you give yourself to me, I give myself to you. What is up with that? And you say, oh, that is just in order to get married. You didn't expect me to actually live like that, right?

[ 13 : 11 ] I mean, no one actually does that stuff, right? No, no, the way into marriage is also the way of marriage. You say these vows in order to get married, but you live out those vows in order to have a healthy marriage.

In the same way, the way you become a Christian is through faith and repentance. Repentance means turning away from some lesser God, some counterfeit God, some idol, something that grabs our heart's attention rather than the true God.

We turn away from that, but then we turn to Christ in faith. Faith and repentance are two sides of the same coin. They go together. Eric Scott says, they are the two pedals of a bicycle, right?

If you're just doing repentance, you're going to go around in a circle, right? If you're just doing faith, you're going to go around in a circle. You've got to, faith and repentance is the way into the kingdom, but faith and repentance is the way of the Christian.

It's the way that we live out our lives. It's until death do us part. Tim Keller famously says, faith and repentance, or the gospel, is not just the ABC of the Christian life, it's the A to Z of the Christian life.

[ 14 : 28 ] And Tim Keller actually got this from a famous man called Martin Luther, who 504 years ago, this very week, 31st of October, 1517, he's this Catholic monk, and he wants to talk to, he wants the Catholic church to have a big discussion about some things that he thinks are going wrong, right?

And so he posts this post on the social media of his day, right? He posts this post on Facebook, except they didn't have Facebook 500 years ago. And so the way that they did it was he goes to the church door of Wittenberg Castle and he nails this big poster on the church door, okay?

That was like social media 500 years ago. And he says, hey guys, there's some stuff we've got to talk about. And so he nails this long piece of paper with 95 statements called theses that he says we've got to talk about.

Now Martin Luther wasn't trying to start the Protestant revolution. He wasn't trying to start a new church. He was just saying, listen, we need to talk about some things. Do you remember the very first one of his 95?

I think it's on the screen. There we go. He says, when our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said repent, he willed that the entire life of believers be one of repentance and faith.

[ 15 : 42 ] What Martin Luther was saying is the problem with us as a church is that we enter the Christian life through faith and repentance and then we go on with our way of living ourselves. He says actually, when Jesus said, come and follow me, turn from your false gods and follow me, he willed that that would be the pattern of our lives day in and day out.

Friends, if somebody told you once upon a time, just pray the sinner's prayer, surrender to Jesus and then you can get on with your life, I'm so sorry to tell you they lied to you.

Please forgive them. That's not true. The way into the Christian life is the way of the Christian life. Faith and repentance. And actually, what we see in this parable are those two things that work, right?

This is actually a parable of what faith and repentance looks like. We see here Jesus tells this parable to demonstrate what this life looks like. It is giving up the false and taking hold of the true.

It is giving up the counterfeit and taking hold of the genuine. It's giving up some lesser God, some lesser treasure in order to take hold of the true treasure of heaven, which is the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ himself.

[ 16 : 53 ] This is the life of a Christian. Day by day, week by week, month by month, letting go of that which captures our heart's attention and reminding ourselves Christ is true, Christ is real, take hold of the treasure of heaven.

And so what that means, friends, for those of us that are not Christians this morning, friends, you'll never become a Christian until you give up those things that have captured your heart's attention and discover the beauty of who Christ is and take hold of him.

But what it also means is that for those of us that are Christians this morning, the life that Christ calls us to is to day by day give up the things that are tempted to capture our heart's attention and to turn to the treasure that is Christ.

This is the gospel-centered life. Okay, so the way no one becomes a Christian by accident, the way into the Christian life is the way of the Christian life. Now here's another question.

What is it that Jesus asks us to give up? I mean, Jesus here in these parables says, you tell these parables of these two guys that go and give up everything they have. What does that actually look like for us in 21st century Hong Kong?

[ 18 : 12 ] Ah, Jung, that's totally fine. Your little one is too cute. Okay. What does that actually look like for us? Well, that's a great question. For every one of us, it will look different.

But the overall answer is this. Whatever owns your heart has the tendency to keep us from the kingdom of God. Whatever owns your heart has the tendency to keep us from the kingdom of God.

For some of us, that may mean the everyday pleasures of life, right? So the things that in everyday life that grip us, that amazing new car, that career promotion, career success, the things that make us feel good about ourselves, the things we look to that grab our attention and think that's going to make life worth living.

For some of us, the things that own our hearts are people's approval, the affirmation of others. And so we do whatever it is to please people, to gain other people's recognition and their favor.

But what this means is that those people own our hearts. They're actually our king. They're actually our treasure. Jesus says that everything we look to to make us feel worthwhile or commendable or admirable needs to be sold off, given up in order to take hold of the treasure that is Christ.

[ 19 : 34 ] Friends, for some of us, one of the most difficult things to give up is not the pleasures of life. It's not the big car or the big house or the overseas holiday that owns your heart. For some of us, it's the pride of our hearts.

I see this in my own life. That's what's so deadly serious. And Jesus says that the pride of our hearts has a way of blinding us to seeing the treasure of Jesus.

Pride manifests itself in many different ways. One of the most unobvious ways, the most sinister of ways, is when we feel sorry for ourselves.

Maybe someone's disappointed you or let you down. Someone's hurt you. Maybe, hopefully, they've come and said sorry to you, but maybe they haven't. Friends, are we still holding on to that offense, that bitterness?

Holding on to it because it's a position of power that makes us feel justified? Jesus says, it's very hard to let go of everything, to take hold of the treasure of Jesus and still hold on to bitterness and offense.

[ 20 : 43 ] Friends, for some of us, maybe it is, for some of us, it's our very religious duty that keeps us from taking hold of Jesus. There's this amazing sentence in a book by Flannery O'Connor called Wise Blood.

I remember reading this book five or six years ago and I stumbled across the sentence that absolutely blew me away and when I read it, I realized that actually I'd heard Tim Keller quoting this before, but I'd forgotten it until I read the sentence in this book.

The book Wise Blood is about this young man that is abandoning the faith of his upbringing. He grows up in the American South and he's turning his back on the faith of his upbringing. And he says, there's this sentence in the book where Flannery O'Connor writes this, there was already a deep wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin.

Okay, just think about that for a second. Is that not an amazing insight? Right? Here's this person, sorry if you can't see, Ellen, here's this person that wants to avoid the gaze of Jesus looking into his heart.

And the best way to fly under the radar, he reckons, is not by running far away but by sticking close. You know, isn't there that saying, some saying about keep your friends close and your enemies even closer?

[ 22 : 08 ] If you want to be an enemy of Jesus, if you want to avoid coming under the rule and reign of Jesus, one of the best ways to do it is to hide it with lots of religious activity and duty. So you serve in church, you're part of a CG, you attend, you come early, you unpack, you stay late, you sit up, you do all these things in order to avoid the gaze of Jesus.

Friends, don't you see how you can use religion, even Christian devotion, as a way of avoiding coming under the rule and reign of King Jesus? You think that if you serve enough, give enough, do enough, no one will notice and you can fly under the radar.

You see how religious devotion can be a way of avoiding the reign of Jesus, the saving reign of Jesus? But Jesus says that if you want to encounter the life transforming power of the gospel, if you really want to encounter the life transforming grace of Jesus and the love of Christ, you've got to come to the place where you see Jesus for who he is and you take hold of him and you abandon even religious devotion, even religious duty in order to take hold of who Jesus is.

Remember the apostle Paul, he says in Philippians chapter 3, that famous passage of scripture, he says, I once was extremely religious. I had my resume all printed out, top marks.

I was the top of my class. I was born to the right family. I was tutored by the right teachers. I was excelling way above everyone else in my age. I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. I had everything going for me until one day I discovered your surpassing worth of the treasure of heaven.

[ 23 : 44 ] And now I consider all those things as rubbish, as dung, compared to the all-surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, and taking hold of the treasure and becoming like him and being found in his likeness.

Friends, sometimes we've got to give up even our religious devotion to take hold of the treasure of Jesus. For some of us, lastly, the thing that stops us discovering the treasure of Jesus is not our religious devotion, it's how irreligious we are, how modern we are, how authentic we are, how woke we are.

We look at religious people and we think, oh, they're so stuck up. They're so full of themselves. Well, at least I'm authentic. At least I'm not trying to pretend to be somebody that I'm not. I'm authentic millennial, right?

But friends, don't you realize that in your authenticity, in your wokeness, you can be just as full of yourself as the religious person sitting next to you. Jesus says the only way to encounter the kingdom of God, to really discover who he is, to see the beauty of who he is, is to lose ourselves and to be enamored with who Christ is.

Friends, it's tempting to look at Christianity and think, I've got the jade stone, I've got the diamond, now let me add a pearl to my array of jewelry. And Jesus says that will not do.

[ 25 : 11 ] That will not do. You cannot add a bit of Jesus to your life. You come to him and you say, have your way. Let me come under your rule and your authority. Jesus, you are Lord and I am yours.

You discover the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who in finding one of great value, exceedingly great value, went away and sold all that he had to take hold of the pearl of great price.

No one enters the kingdom by accident. The way into the kingdom is also the way of the kingdom. Thirdly, the hindrance is the kingdom and finally, the promise of the king. Now, look at verse 44 with me again.

Jesus says this, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his extreme misery and sadness, he went and he bought that field because that's what God expected of him.

Okay? No, that's not what it says. What does it say? The kingdom of heaven is like a man that found a treasure and he covered it up in his great joy. He went and sold all that he had.

[ 26 : 23 ] He sold it at a bargain. He sold it for a discount. Take whatever you want. I just need your money. Whatever it takes, I must have that treasure. Jesus promises that being part of his kingdom, coming under the saving rule and reign of Jesus as king is so valuable that losing everything you have on earth to gain the kingdom is a happy and joyful and worthwhile sacrifice.

Friends, in some ways, this describes the job description of the elder pastors at Watermark Church. Our job at Watermark Church is to do everything we can to clear away the dross, to clear away the haze and to help us to see week in and week out the infinite glory and the infinite worth of Jesus so that as a church we can live lives that say yes to you Christ and not be distracted by the glitz and the glamour of the world around us.

Our job as elders is to help us not just accept Jesus not just admire him but to utterly adore him. Our job as elder pastors is to help us not just tolerate Jesus but to treasure him above all things.

And friends, can I say that if you are a parent here that is your job too. Your job is not just to provide a house and a roof and clothing and food for your kids.

That is an important job. Don't neglect that. Those social services are going to come knock on your door. Do that. But don't just do that. Don't just get your kids through school and good grades and university.

[ 28 : 07 ] Do all that you can to help them see the infinite worth of Jesus. That they won't just admire Jesus or accept him they will utterly adore him and treasure him above all things.

And can I press a little further and say men you are the head of your home. It is primarily your responsibility. Don't sit back and let someone else do it.

Stand up. Take responsibility. Friends, husbands, wives, parents, this is our job. Jesus is saying that for the one who has eyes to see it give up everything you have it is totally worth it because of the all surpassing worth of Jesus.

Friends, let me ask you what's holding you back? What's that thing that is so tempting to earn your heart? What is it that is so hard to give up for Jesus?

Friends, that thing, some boyfriend, some girlfriend, some career progression, some bank account, those things may be a great gift from God. They may be a wonderful thing.

[ 29 : 09 ] But are they still going to be the treasure of your heart in a hundred years from now? Maybe in five years time they'll still be great, wonderful. Ten years time, maybe if you're very lucky 50 years time you'll still be treasuring them.

But in 200 years time and a thousand years time and a billion years from now, what are those things going to mean to you? Friends, Jesus says that if we treasure Christ supremely above all things in one billion years from now that will still be a joyful and a worthwhile transaction.

salvation. But as we come to close, here's another reason why giving up everything to follow Jesus is a happy trade-off. We spoke earlier about Philippians chapter 3.

Remember, very super famous verse, the apostle Paul says, I had all these things going for me and then I discovered Jesus and I considered them rubbish compared to the all-surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

And then Paul goes on and he says this, not that I have already obtained all this, in other words, not that I'm perfect, okay, I'm going to, but he says, I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

[ 30 : 28 ] Okay, so think about this for a second. I know this is late in the sermon to get theological but just stick with me for two minutes, okay, we're almost done. Paul says, not that I've got this all sorted out, okay, the way into the kingdom is the way of the kingdom, I'm going to carry on, but I press on day by day to make Christ Jesus my own, to take hold of Jesus because he has already taken hold of me.

What's Paul saying? Paul is saying that he continues to take hold of Jesus knowing that Jesus has taken hold of him.

Paul is saying that Jesus Christ gave up the glory and the treasure of heaven, to take on the mess and the shame of this world and the shame of the cross so that we broken people can give up the mess and the shame of our false gods in order to embrace the treasure that is heaven.

You see the exchange there? Jesus gave up heaven to take on the mess of this world so that we can turn our backs on the mess of this world and embrace the treasure of heaven.



Jesus says I will embrace the shame of the cross so that you can embrace the treasure of heaven. Friends, in the gospel, Jesus Christ had it all.

- [ 31 : 54 ] He had it all in heaven. But because of his infinite love for you and because he knows how much you and I need him, Jesus gave that up to walk in the shame and the mess and the brokenness of our world so that we can turn our backs on the mess and the shame and the brokenness of the things that capture our heart's attention and can have the treasure of heaven and can have Jesus himself.

Friends, Jesus gave it all so that we can have him. And now he asks us to give up a very small thing, a counterfeit God, a false idol, a worthless treasure, that we may have eternal treasure.

Friends, this is why we gather at church on Sundays. Six days a week we're being told money is your life, relationships are your life, sex is your life, career progression is your life, grades are your life, and once a week we gather to remind ourselves no, no, no, that is not true, Jesus is our life.

Those are false treasures, Jesus is the treasure above all treasures. Jesus and his saving rule and reign in our lives is utterly glorious and worth it all. And of course one hour a week is not going to be enough and so day by day we wake up in the mornings and we get into God's word in order that we go out that week to withstand the onslaught and to remember Jesus is the treasure above all treasures.

Friends, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose. Jesus gave up heaven so that we can gain that which we cannot lose.

- [ 33 : 39 ] Friends, can I invite you? Can I call you this day? Why don't you turn your back on the things that are tempted to own your heart? What's holding you back? The thing that you tempted to love and adore above all else?

The thing that you've come under its rule and its authority, its reign in your life? Friends, did it ever go to the cross for you? Did it ever lay down its life for you? Did it ever die on the cross for you?

Jesus Christ did. Jesus loves you so supremely he went to the cross for you that we in order can have the treasure that is here. Let's pray together.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we acknowledge the words of Richard Baxter are so true. These words don't need great explanation. They're pretty clear.

they need greater consideration. Father, the familiarity with these famous passages is challenging. God, we pray that you will arrest our hearts.

- [ 34 : 42 ] It's so tempting to nod our heads and say, yes, the kingdom is valuable. Yes, the kingdom is worthwhile. Jesus, won't you pierce through our head nodding apathy and open the eyes of our hearts to see you for who you really are.

Jesus, come and have your way in our life, we pray. Father, where we've tempted to love and adore and trust other things, won't you forgive us?

We want to turn to you in faith and repentance. Won't you give us the faith to turn to you? We pray. Jesus, come and help us. Help us to turn to you, we pray.

in your great and gracious name, amen. I want to ask us to respond differently. I think we got two questions up there.

I want to ask you just to take two minutes and maybe you want to write it down on your phone or on the bulletin if you've got a pen with you. What is it that Jesus is saying to you this morning?

- [ 35 : 46 ] And then secondly, how are you going to respond? And a good way to start off a response is these words, Heavenly Father dot dot dot. Heavenly Father, I come before you this morning.

Heavenly Father, I need you. Heavenly Father, come and help me to see the treasure that is Jesus. What's Jesus saying to you? How is he calling you to respond?

Let's take a few minutes to do that and then Ellen's going to sing and lead us and we can stand when maybe Ellen can tell us to stand at a certain point. But in the beginning, let's just listen to the words and then we'll take communion after that.