The Law of Moses

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Preacher: Niels van de Kasteele

[0:00] Good morning, Watermark. The scripture reading today comes from Exodus chapters 19 and 20. Please follow along on the screen, on your bulletin, or in your own Bible.

Starting in chapter 19, verse 1, we read, On the third new moon, after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God.

The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples. For all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. So Moses came and called the elders of the people and sat before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him.

All the people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord. And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.

When Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, the Lord said to Moses, Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. And let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day.

For on the third day, the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai, in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, Take care not to go up into the mountain, or touch the edge of it.

Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No one shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot. Whether beast or man, he shall not live.

[2:28] When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain. So Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and consecrated the people. And they washed their garments.

And he said to the people, Be ready for the third day. Do not go near a woman. On the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended on it in fire.

The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

The Lord came down on Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain, and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. Then in chapter 20, verse 18, Now when all the people saw the thunder, and the flashes of lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled.

[3:47] And they stood far off and said to Moses, Moses, You speak to us, and we will listen. But do not let God speak to us, lest we die. Moses said to the people, Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.

The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. This is the word of God. Great.

Thanks so much, Iris. If you don't know me, my name is Niels. And it's my privilege to bring us God's word this morning. But we need God to speak to us, not just me.

So why don't we pray together? Our Father, may we come to you, and we thank you that you're the speaking God, just like you spoke back then, and showed yourself.

Would you speak to us today, and show yourself to us? Would we see your glory, your greatness, and would it change our life? In Jesus' name. Amen. Great.

[4:55] Well, as we get into today's text, actually, what I wanted to start with, you know the kind of idea of the small print. You buy something, and then there's a lot of small letters, with some, some that are just ingredients, but often disclaimers, that actually, it's not quite what you think.

I don't know, this is my favorite, that I found online. So here's a Superman pyjama, and there's a warning, and it says, warning, if you wear this, it doesn't enable you to fly. I'm really glad they put it on, right?

Or you buy eggs, and it says, warning, contains eggs. But, you know, I don't think anyone would buy this, in order to fly. The thing is, often it's disappointing, right?

You buy something, and actually, you read the small print, and it's not quite what you wanted. This airline, oh, we have the cheapest fares, except that in the small print, this doesn't yet include taxes, and check-in, and baggage, and actually, it's the same as everyone else.

But that's often the problem, right? We have certain expectations, and they're not met. Is that just cheating? Is that the small print? Because sometimes, we have that with Christianity.

Long ago, EJ and I did, we worked with Korean students, in London, and, you know, we had a Bible study group, and there was this girl, who came along, and she really loved it, and she was so excited, about what she heard, and she wanted to become a Christian, and it was great.

Except that, you know, a few months later, she got a boyfriend, one of her colleagues, and he was not a Christian, and they moved in together, and we had to talk to her, about that. And what was the, well, maybe we didn't, we also didn't handle it well, I think, but, yeah, she, well, I don't want it anymore.

You know, if it's like this, no thanks, and she stopped coming, and she gave it up. Right? Maybe she felt like, well, hey, there was this small print. I didn't know this, and so, no thanks.

Maybe you feel like that, right? You know, Christianity promises to be a very different religion. It promises that it's all about grace and love, and then yet, we talk, well, about obeying Jesus.

Well, I think today's message will be really helpful, if that's what we think. Maybe you're here as a visitor. It's true. Following Jesus does involve, yeah, following him.

[7:17] But, I hope we can see more why. Now, what are we doing? At the moment, we're doing a sermon series about, well, we call it the wonderful work of God. We're looking at the storyline of the Bible.

How the world, how everything went wrong because of us, God, but now, God is making everything right again, and basically, the story of how he's doing that. If you haven't been here, we have, God appeared to this man called Abraham, made a great promise to, yeah, that his descendants would be his people, and last week, we saw God starting to fulfill that promise.

He rescued his people from Egypt, from slavery, so that they were free to be with him, and then today, well, God is making another covenant. Sometimes we call it the law.

We've been singing about the law this morning. People also, sometimes call it the Mosaic covenant, the covenant with Moses, because Moses is the hero at the moment.

And it's huge. I mean, this covenant, it takes up the next three and a half books of the Bible, right? That's how big this is. This, it's basically, it governs the rest of the Old Testament, all the way until, yeah, the end of the Old Testament.

[8:38] And so, if we are reading the Bible, you want to understand the Old Testament, basically, we need to understand what is the relationship that God has with the people of Israel. And what is it about?

Well, first, a privileged relationship with God. The first thing we see here, you know, it's a really privileged relationship, because that was the whole promise, right?

Here's Abraham's descendants. They're going to the promised land. But what is the heart of, what is so wonderful, is that they have this relationship. And today, it's a little bit like a, it's like a marriage, right?

God makes this proposal, hey, you're going to be my special people. And Israel says, yes, we do. And then they have a ceremony, and they have a banquet, and they move in together, if you read on, right?

It's like a wedding. It's like a marriage, right? They are going to have a relationship with this awesome God of power and love, who just rescued them from Egypt.

[9:37] And that should be just so wonderful, right? And he's not going to just stay up in heaven. He's going to come and live with them. They're in a desert, living in tents, and they're going to build a special tent in the middle of the camp where God is going to live with them.

Can you imagine? They are so close to this amazing God. How does he call it? You're going to be my, my treasured possession, verse five.

You know, the word is, you know, you have this crown full of jewels, but in the front, there's this one big, beautiful gemstone. And that is what you guys are going to be to me.

That is what God promises, which is, sounds wonderful. And not just, you know, a special relationship. They're going to have a special role. Because God had promised, actually, it's not just about Abraham and his family.

Through him, the whole world will be blessed. And that is here as well, because God keeps saying, well, the whole earth is mine. It's for all nations. What are they going to do?

You're going to be to me, verse six, a kingdom of priests. You're going to be priests. I mean, what, what does a priest do? Well, two things. Well, on one hand, they have a very special relationship with God, right?

They can go into his presence. They can get close to him. But at the same time, there's a, there's a purpose, right? They are like an intermediary. They can connect God with the people.

And Israel's there to connect God with the rest of the world. How is that happening? Well, through the law. Uh, we see that, uh, these verses are clearer.

They're from Deuteronomy. Uh, later on, uh, this is what God's, this is God's plan. Uh, yeah, Deuteronomy four, it's on the screen. See, I have taught you statutes and rules as the Lord, my God commanded me.

That's Moses. Uh, do you, you, that you should do them in the lands that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them for that will be your wisdom and your understanding.

[11:38] In the sight of the peoples who, when they hear all these statutes will say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord, our God is to us whenever we call upon him. And what great nation is there that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I said before you today.

Right. God's plan is that, you know, the rest of the world, they will see Israel. They will see what an amazing relationship with God they have. What, what a wonderful society of love and justice and righteousness.

And that they just think, wow, I want that. I want to be one of God's people. Right. That is how God's going to bless the world. It's actually still the plan. Right. In the new Testament, you know, this is how everyone will know that you're my disciples.

If you love one another, again, it's our community life that shows God to the world. And how that feels exciting. I hope you, I'm excited.

[12:42] Right. I hope if you're a visitor, you know, this should be so amazing that God is not distant, but he wants this amazing relationship. However, and that is the thing.

If you've heard the reading, verse five has this dreaded words. Right. Now, therefore, if, if you will indeed obey my voice, if you obey, if you keep my covenant, which if you were here two weeks ago is quite a change, right?

Because God had said to Abraham, Hey, I'm going to do this myself. That was kind of one way, but this is, this is two way. This is conditional. If you obey.

And you can see that, right. We've heard the reading, lots of instructions about, okay, keep your distance and cleanse yourself. And because God is going to come. And, uh, we skipped over the 10 commandments.

Many of us know it well, but yeah, uh, commandments, right? This is really real because this is a relationship. Well, that requires God to be at the center.

[13:45] It requires God at the center. I mean, those 10 commandments, they are not arbitrary. It just, it basically, it puts God at the center of life. I mean, that's what it does, right?

The very first commandment, you shall have no other gods before me, right? I'm, I should be number one, no one else, but, but it's not just that. It's not just worship, right?

He talks about government and authority and life and death and marriage and property and truth and justice. And all of that has to be God's way. All of that, you know, should be according to God.

Um, even our heart, right? Most people in the world don't think, care about what you think or what you do in your heart. It doesn't matter, right? That's yours. Uh, not for God, right?

You shall not covet the last commandments. Actually, even in your heart, God says, I should be number one. I think it should be my way. Uh, and then the other 600 commandments, they just show that in detail.

[14:42] Uh, God requires, yeah, that he's at the center. Uh, just to say, we shouldn't miss. This comes in a context of grace, right?

Uh, it's not that the Israelites, they were in Egypt and God says, okay, here's the deal. If you obey me and do all this, then I'll rescue you. Now he has already rescued them, right?

Commandment number zero. Uh, I am the Lord, your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. I've rescued you. And now you shall have no other God, right?

It's grace. Even the law. I mean, more than half the law is about sacrifices and priests because it's about forgiveness and atonement and those kind of things.

Yet, there is still a real requirement to obey. And it's really not optional. It's not that God is just a bit sad when you don't, right?

Because as you read on, especially maybe near the end of the law, there were really serious consequences. Uh, yeah, on your bulletin, I've printed a Leviticus 26, which is kind of the, the, the blessings and curses at the end.

We're not going to, we don't have time to read much of it, but God promises. Yeah, if you obey, you'll be wonderfully blessed, right? You'll have peace and abundance and everything. But, uh, Leviticus 26, verse 14.

But if you will not listen to me, I will not do all these commandments, I will not do all these commandments. If you spurn my statutes and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, then I will do this to you.

I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain for your enemy shall eat it.

I will set my face against you and you shall be struck down before your enemies. All right? God really means it. And, uh, verse 18. If in spite of this, you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again, sevenfold for your sins.

[16:49] And I will break the pride of your power. I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze and so on. Right? If you keep sinning, I will discipline you again. And if you keep on sinning, I will discipline you again.

And it gets worse and worse until, yeah, they lose the land. Verse 33. I will scatter you among the nations and I will unsheave the sword after you.

And your land shall be a desolation and your city shall be a waste. They, they lose everything. They lose the land. And yeah, they, they can be quite shocking verses that we, when they're in the Bible, so we should preach them.

But yeah, by the way, just to notice, you know, I hope you feel that this is really a rejection of God. Right? If you spurn my statutes, if your soul abhors my rules, God is not like an Asian tiger parent.

Right? You work really hard, but you only get 99%. And God says, no. Right? It's not like that. This is really, you know, deliberately failing your exams when your parents have give you everything.

[17:53] That's what it's like. But it's real. And, and it's discipline. You know, God says, you know, discipline is to bring people back. It's to train them.

It's not like vengeance, but it's real. And that's a real change compared to what came before. And with Abraham, he sinned and God just ignored it.

But now, this is real. But why? Right? It's just, just annoying small print. Maybe it feels like that, right? God promises this wonderful grace.

And now he kind of spoils it. And maybe you thought, well, that promise to Abraham, that was just too good to be true. Wasn't it? Well, why is God doing this?

That is what I want us to think about. That is, I think what's at the heart of this. The thing is, that is reality. I don't know how sure, how to put this, but this is reality.

[18:50] This is who God is. This is who we are. This is what the world is like. This is just reality. This is creation. Right? Because God shows, look, you need to just know who I am.

And so, the Israelites don't know him, so God is going to show himself. And they get this, we've read it, right? This awesome vision where God reveals himself on Mount Sinai.

Again, on the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings, 19 verse 16, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended on it in fire.

The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. You know, it's this awesome vision. I mean, it shows that, it shows awesome holiness, right?

[19:56] God is so different from us. He is so separate from us. That's why, keep your distance, and cleanse yourself. God is so separate. But, what is that separation?

It's not just that he is perfect and pure. Right? He is the creator, and we are creatures. I mean, that is why the whole creation is just shaking, and burning.

It's like, you know, God who is outside creation, you know, normally he's out there, but when he enters creation, everything just starts to creak and break, because creation just can't handle it.

Right? The mountain that looks so firm, it's shaking. You know, the creator is here. And, if that is the God you relate to, the creator, well, it should be obvious, right, that he should be at the center of life.

Right? If this is his world that he made, and we are made by him, yeah, no wonder that he is at the center. That's just who he is. That's what the world is like. Right?

[21:00] No wonder we should have no other gods, because you read this, there is no other gods, right? There can't be any others if this is the real God. So, you know, living God's way, doing, having him at the center, I hope you see that that's just reality, that is creation.

I think that this, you know, this challenges us. How do we, you know, this is more than just a personal relationship. It's more than just, you know, I love Jesus, and I want to please him.

I mean, that's a good thing. But I don't know, let me illustrate it. You know, when I got married, you probably don't know this about me, but my favorite music is techno music, especially, you know, the kind of German music trends from the early 90s.

And for some unexplainable reason, my wife doesn't like it. I don't know why. But so, when we got married, and we lived in a small flat, well, I wouldn't play it, because she didn't like it, right?

This is, this is before Bluetooth headphones, and mobile devices, and stuff. Yeah, we, it makes sense, right? And at some point, we needed money, so I just sold my 150 CDs.

Yeah, that's fine, because I loved her. I was so amazed that she wanted to marry me. Yeah. But the thing is, that's just love, right?

If I didn't love her, I wouldn't have done that. It's just a preference, right? It's just subjective. If I know, I love Jesus, and he's done so much for me, so I want to please him.

Well, if you don't love Jesus, does that mean you don't need to do what he says? No, right? This is something objective. Sin is, sin is wrong, right? This is something true.

Or, think of a nut allergy. It's not just a preference, right? Some people, you know, they can't be with nuts. And so you, okay? And sometimes we explain the gospel like that, right?

That, you know, God, he loves you, and he wants to be with you, but yeah, you have sin, and so you can't be with him. But thankfully, Jesus came, and he died, and everything is okay now. Now, that's true, but it really misses something, right?

[23:15] It misses that sin is just wrong, and that even after we're forgiven, it's still a problem. It's wrong. It's against reality, right? God is the creator.

He is the center of the universe, so he ought to be the center of our lives. It's essential, and that is what God is communicating. And we've been thinking in this series, okay, the Bible is about the kingdom of God.

God's people in God's place, under God's rule, experiencing God's blessing. And two weeks ago, I talked a lot about place, and people, and blessing, because God didn't mention God's rule.

But now he puts that very big on the table. No, that one also needs to be there. You know, it's not just the other three. God's rule needs to be there as well. If you want to go back to the Garden of Eden, if you want things to be restored, if you want the world to be as it was, God's rule needs to be there, right?

It's like the key to the other three. Without it, you can't have anything else. Right? Think of Adam and Eve. Where did it all go wrong? It went wrong because they rejected God.

[24:27] And that is when they lost the place, and their people, and their blessing, right? God's rule is the key. It's obvious, right?

I mean, the world is God's world. Everything is his. If we reject him, well, we lose everything. I mean, we think of a teenager running away from home, breaking off all communication with his parents.

Well, yeah, he's not going to have a nice warm room and free meals a day. But it's not because the parents are mean. It's just, yeah, if you walk out on your parents, you don't have what they give you, right?

God's rule is central. And so, yeah, we talk about the cause of the fall and the consequences. The cause is our rejection of God, and the consequences are, well, are the blessings and everything.

And in this covenant, you know, God has promised, I will deal with the consequences of the fall. But now God says, but the cause also needs to be dealt with. If the world is to be right, I need to be at the center again.

[25:31] Because I am, because I'm God. I don't know, how do you think about the world? Right? We think of the world. And, and, you know, think about your life.

How do you make your life right? What's wrong with your life? And there's so many things, right? Maybe we're lonely, and we're hurt, and we're frustrated. Yeah, that are all real problems.

But surely the biggest problem is our sin, right? Or think about the world out there. What's wrong with the world? Well, there's war, and oppression, and injustice, and sickness, and natural disasters.

That's all wrong with the world. But the biggest thing that's wrong with the world is that there's seven billion people who are ignoring their creator, right? Seven billion people who are pretending to be God themselves.

That is the real problem. And even if we solve everything, right? If we have world peace, and we cure every sickness, and, you know, everyone has enough food, is that a perfect world?

[26:32] This passage says no. Without God, without God at the center, it's still not the Garden of Eden. And to be honest, actually, you know, without God's rule, it can never be the Garden of Eden, right?

We know, because God's rule is good. You know, His law is, is a blessing, right? You know, if everyone in the world kept the Ten Commandments truly and fully, the world would be a lot better.

We know that, right? You know, Israel was supposed to be attractive. If they lived God's way, everyone would think, wow, I want that. My own country is a dystopian mess, but actually, wow, God's way is, is attractive, is great, is perfect.

I want that. So God makes it clear. A perfect world, yeah, it must have Him at the center. And as you can imagine, yeah, that's good, but it's a problem.

It's a problem because we aren't very good at obeying. And as you read on, yeah, that's Israel's problem, right, today. They try to obey, but actually, they don't, and they reject God, and they rebel, and we get a lot of punishment.

Yeah. That's not where I'm going today, but yeah, that's the problem, right? So we're getting, we're focusing in now. Well, what is the, how can the world be restored?

Well, we need to do something about our sin. Of course, God's promise hasn't changed. At the end of Leviticus, at the end of all the curses, God still mentions it, Leviticus 26, verse 40, but if they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, you know, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac, my covenant with Abraham, and I'll remember the land.

God's promise stands. He will make things right. The question is, how can these people stop sinning? But, that's not really where I want to go.

That's for later weeks. I think for now, what should be our response? I hope we see that what God really wants is that we have this vision, right?

That we see who He is. I mean, we're looking at the big story of the Bible, so we need to kind of, you know, stand back and appreciate the whole story. What I don't want you to do is tomorrow think, okay, I need to keep all these rules, right?

[28:57] So I need to do this and this, and otherwise, I will lose my donkey and my vineyard. You know, this comes in a certain cultural context. What is God teaching us about Himself, about the world?

Because even though the details have changed, of course, God hasn't changed, right? Sin is still a big problem, and if we reject God, yeah, there will be, well, not curses like this, but ultimately, the Bible says, well, there's hell, and a million, yeah, a million times worse than what you read here.

And so if you're, by the way, not a visitor, don't think, please, okay, I should start obeying God. It would be great if you could. The problem is, we can't, right?

Come and talk to me. Well, you need Jesus. You need His death for you. You need forgiveness. But again, that's not the main direction I want to go. God's aim is just that we have this real vision for who He is, and therefore, that life should have Him at the center.

Exodus 20, at the end of the Ten Commandments, there's this interesting verse where the people, they're so terrified. 20 verse 20, Moses said to the people, do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin.

[30:17] That is what God wants. It sounds contradictory, don't fear, but at the fear of Him. But what that means, don't be afraid, right? God loves you, He's rescued you, but you should be in awe of Him.

Right? You should treat Him rightly. And if you know who He is, you will respect Him. And that you may not sin, not because you're afraid of punishment, but because you're in awe of God and you see who He is.

And that is God's purpose, I think, here. We, that we want God's rule in our heart, that we want to know God and hence live His way in every area of our life. That that's the driving force for what we do.

And I think that challenges us often in, yeah, in why we do things, right? This is not just on the level of how, what we do, right? Don't sin, do what's right. It's about motivations. I mean, where does God come in your priority list?

Maybe tomorrow, at work, you are tempted to cheat. And what kind of goes into your mind? What keeps you from cheating? I mean, all kinds of things, right? Maybe, you know, what will my colleagues think?

[31:23] And maybe they won't come to church anymore. And I'm a bad witness. It's a good reason. But is that a real reason? You know, what will my wife think? You know, what will my small group think?

I know I might lose my job. Yeah? You know, maybe. If that keeps you from sinning, great. But all of those are very small reasons, right? How about the big reason that God is God and He made you and you're His?

And He made the world to run on truth and justice and that's how we live. That's much bigger, right? That's much bigger than your job and what other people think. That's the thing, right?

It challenges us. Yeah, where is God in your priorities? Yes, so that is where basically I want to finish. That is what God wants, that we have this great vision of Him, that we see Him as He is, the holy, awesome creator.

creator and so we want to live His way, have Him at the center of our lives, which means we turn to Him and we seek Him and we ask Him to change us.

[32:30] I mean, it would be great if we could just do this. Actually, God needs to do that in us because that's where this actually goes. I mean, here God gave them this great vision and He came down in fire and wind on Mount Sinai and gave them this law but the problem was this law was just external, right?

This law was on stone tablets. It didn't actually do anything inside them and that didn't work but after Jesus died and rose in Acts 2, again, God came down in fire and wind not on a mountain but on each believer.

God came down and took up residence, right? The Spirit was poured out to dwell in us and not to give us an external law but the Bible says to write the law on our hearts that changes from the inside because that is the only way it's going to work and so, yeah, this is what we want.

We want the Spirit to make God the center of our hearts, of our lives and so we should ask Him, right? Ask God, please buy your Spirit, you know, open the eyes of my heart, be the center of my life.

It's not about me and my promise and my problems and my blessings. This is about you and your glory and that is how it should be and that is wonderful. And so, shall we pray that?

[33:52] Maybe you're doing great. We can always have more. Maybe, actually, you feel like, yeah, that's right, I haven't been living this way. Well, God wants you to turn to Him and He forgives and He loves you and He wants to rescue you and have you back but back to live with Him again at the center of your life, how it should be, what is reality.

So, why don't we pray for that now? Just after 20 seconds of reflection. Our Father, You are King of kings and Lord of lords.

You made the heavens and the host of heaven. Your greatness is beyond imagining. Give us this vision of you. Would we see who you are and what this world is like and that we want you and that we want you to be at the center of our lives.

Lord, we know this is not what we are like. We are curved in on ourselves. We always have ourselves at the center. We don't want that. We see the damage it's doing.

Please, Lord, turn our hearts to you and open our eyes to see your glory and would it transform our lives, would it transform the world around us as people see how great you are through what you've done in our lives.

[35:43] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.