

The Mission Of The Church

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It is good to be with you this morning. I'm so thankful that you've given Matthew some time off.

Matthew and I have really developed a great friendship. We get together about once a month or so at his other office away from here. If you don't know where that is, I can't tell you. A particular coffee shop where he tends to hang out.

And so we get together for mutual encouragement. And it's just been such a joy for me to meet with him and to pray for you and to pray for your church.

And so thank you for giving him the time off because, you know, preaching is central to the life of the church. And it takes a lot of work to be prepared well. And so especially if he's going to go through the book of Romans, to have just a week to get, you know, figure out where he's going is critical.

So thank you for that. And also, thank you for your partnership with Mission to the World and other missions in taking the gospel to the nations. It's just so appreciated you hearing in the prayers.

[1 : 03] In fact, just a couple of months ago in January, my wife and some others from Rocky Mountain region were visiting. And I can't say their names because of security concerns, nor can I say where they are.

We'll just say T and E. And we were visiting them in the Middle East, and they are doing phenomenal work with their team. They're there with T and E, or they're with J and E and R and M. And they're all doing some amazing work with the gospel in an area that can be, that is quite, quite challenging. I mean, God has just put E in a position of influence in an educational institution, which is phenomenal.

T is involved in some language work that is just opening all kinds of doors. And so to see it firsthand was just amazing. So where they are, and I'll just say this, they're in the Middle East.

And when they first arrived in this country in the Middle East where they are now serving, when they first arrived, movies were banned. Music was not allowed at all.

[2 : 15] And if you were walking down the street during the five calls of prayer and you were not going to prayer, the religious police would beat you with a stick. Today, there are movie theaters in the malls.

You hear music playing all sorts of places. They've had concerts from everybody from Mariah Carey to Metallica. During the five calls of prayer, we were walking down the street and there were no religious police around.

And so it's opened up tremendously. Yet, still in this country, evangelism is strictly forbidden. Missionary activity is forbidden. And conversion from Islam to Christianity is legally punishable by death.

And so it is a place where there are very, very few Christians, at least, who are natives to that city. In fact, this city is probably about twice the size of Denver. And if you were to gather all the indigenous Christians in that region, in that city, into this building, they would not fill up this room. In fact, it would be fewer people than are here today. That's how few Christians there are in this area. These people believe that Jesus lived. They believe that Jesus was a prophet. They believe that he was a good man.

[3 : 24] They do not believe that Jesus died on the cross. They do not believe that he rose again from the dead. They do not believe he made atonement for sins. And so because of this, they are looking at their own good works as a way to earn their way to heaven and goodness before God.

They are lost. And there are few people there that tell them the good news, which means overwhelming majority of the people, overwhelming majority of the people will be born, live their

entire lives, and die without ever hearing about the hope of Jesus Christ.

Now, you may be thinking, that's interesting. But what does that have to do with us? After all, that's the Middle East. We are here in Colorado.

How does that have a direct bearing on our lives? How does that impact us? Well, in fact, you might even say, as many people have said to me as I've talked about these things, they say, you know, Mark, there are so many needs in our own city.

Why are we concerned about what God is going on around the world? And the answer to that is, yes, there are tremendous needs in our city. But thank God, look at all the people we've got here serving already.

[4 : 33] I mean, you add up all the Christians in Colorado Springs, there are quite a few. We can address the needs in our own city. But in other places in the world, there are people there to meet these needs.

And the other thing that we see is that when we become Christians, we not only join the family of God, we join the family business.

And God has given a mission to his church. And we're going to look at what that mission is and what our role is in this mission. You know the difference between a vision and a mission? You know how a lot of companies and even churches have vision statements and mission statements, right? You know, vision is where are you going. A mission is how are you going to get there. Vision is where are you going.

Mission is how are you going to get there. We're going to look at all of Scripture. We're going to go from the beginning to the end very quickly in certain spots to look at this. But we see in the Bible, we don't have to invent the vision of the church.

[5 : 30] We don't have to think, what's God's vision for the church? He tells us, right? Right? God's vision for the church and for the world is revealed in the prophets, but then comes to its consummation at the very end of the Bible in the book of Revelation.

Here's the vision. The vision is that there is this holy Jerusalem that is a temple to the Lord in heaven that will one day come down to earth and it will fill the whole earth so that the whole earth is a temple to the Lord.

That's the vision. That's where we're going. That's what's going to happen. So that's the vision. So we've gone to the end of the Bible. What's the mission? What's the mission? The mission is how you get there.

And so to understand the mission, we're going to have to look at the beginning of the Bible and we're going to go through from Genesis 1 and primarily Matthew 28, looking at this mission, how we get there.

And what we're going to see is that while the church does many things, while we're engaged in many, many things, the church only has one mission. And this mission is given to us by God.

[6 : 28] So what's the mission? Well, we read moments ago, Genesis 1, about when God created Adam and Eve and humanity. And when God created the world, what we see is the world was ordered to some degree, but the only place on earth that could truly be called paradise was the Garden of Eden.

And God creates humanity, creates Adam, and he puts him in the Garden of Eden, and he commissions him. And when God commissions him, here's the commission we read moments ago. Here's the commission God gives to Adam and Eve, humanity.

He says you are to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and rule over it. That's the mission. Now, God had given the mission to other creatures to be fruitful and multiply, but it's only to humanity that he gives this mission to rule or to exercise dominion over all the earth.

Now, why? What makes us special? What's different about us? Well, the difference is, as we see in that commissioning, is God created humanity in his own image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them.

That we are made in the image of God. We are his image bearers. And so, in the ancient world, when a king wanted to show that he was ruling over a particular land, he would put up images of himself throughout the land.

[7 : 45] So that wherever you look, you knew who the king was. That's what God is doing here. He creates Adam and Eve, and he says, you're in my image. You're my image bearers, and I want you to exercise dominion as my image bearers.

You're reflecting my rule over all creation. And so, that's the mission God gives to them. Not just to garden the garden, not just to cultivate there, but to fill the whole earth, to exercise dominion over all the earth.

And Genesis chapter 2, then, fills this out a little bit more. In Genesis chapter 2, verse 15, God places Adam in the Garden of Eden, and he tells him to work it and to keep it.

To work it and to keep it. Now, those two words, when they are used together, have a special meaning. In fact, later on, they're used to describe the work of the priest in the temple, or in the tabernacle.

And so, what he's saying to Adam here is he puts him in the Garden of Eden, that you're to work and to cultivate it, not just to keep it. You're not just to cultivate it. Rather, you're to work as a priest in the temple.

[8 : 49] So, the Garden of Eden is a temple to the Lord. Adam is the high priest. He is to serve as the high priest there in the temple, and he's to fill the whole earth so that the whole earth is a temple to the Lord.

And so, that's the mission that Adam is given. And so, that mission is given to him and to his posterity. Now, God only put one stipulation on Adam and Eve.

Remember this? Puts them in the Garden of Eden. Says, you can eat of any tree that you want. Eat any fruit that you want. But, for what? Tree at the center.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He says, you must not eat of the fruit of that tree. And of course, what did Adam and Eve do? They ate of the fruit of the tree.

And death enters the world. Now, you may be thinking, okay, they disobeyed. What's so bad about this? They stole an apple. I mean, is that really a capital offense to steal a piece of fruit or something like this?

[9 : 47] Well, remember what the tree was called. It's not just called a fruit tree. It's called the tree of what? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What Adam and Eve are doing in this is they're not just disobeying God's command, which they certainly are doing.

They are rejecting his rule over their lives. What they're saying is, I want to decide what is good and evil for myself. I don't want you to tell me what's good and evil. I want to decide what is good and evil.

And essentially what they're saying is, Lord, I don't trust your word to guide me. I want to make my own decisions. I want to be autonomous to myself. I want to be my own ruler. And I'm going to decide because I don't trust you.

I'm going to look out for me. And I'll decide what's right and wrong for myself. See what they're doing? They're not just rejecting God's rule. They're rejecting God's love.

They're saying, we don't trust you. We don't trust you to decide what's best for us. They're rejecting God's love. And this act of disobedience is really an act of a lack of trust in God.

[10 : 47] By the way, this is what we do every time we sin. Every time you and I sin, what we do is we take God's command.

He says, here's what you're supposed to do. And we evaluate the command. And we'll decide what's good and evil for ourselves. We'll say, well, Lord, I know you say it's wrong to do this. But I don't think that applies to me in this situation.

I think it is my best interest to disregard your law. And what you're saying is, God, I don't trust you. I don't want you to make decisions for me. I think I know what's best for me. You see what you're doing?

You're not just rejecting his rule. You're not just rejecting God's authority. You're saying, God, I don't trust you. I don't think you have my best interest at heart. I don't know if you love me. And so I'm going to go out on my own, and I'm going to act independently.

Every single time we disregard the law of God, that's what we're doing. Well, Adam and Eve broke faith with God. And because they broke faith with God, they can no longer be priests in the temple of God.

[11 : 49] They're expelled from the temple. They're expelled from the Garden of Eden. They are sent east of Eden. And it looks like this project where God is going to fill the whole earth and make the whole earth a temple to the Lord has now come to naught.

But God does not neglect his mission. So you can skip ahead to Genesis chapter 12. And in Genesis chapter 12, we meet a man named Abram, which means father of many, and his name is

changed later on to Abraham, which means the father of many nations.

Abram is living in the east. He is living in Ur of Chaldees, which is now in southern Iraq. And God comes to Abram, and he calls him, and he says, I want you to go back to the west.

By the way, do you notice that west is always good in the Bible? You know, the west is good. East is bad, right? You know, east coast, terrible. West coast, glory. So they're called back to the west. And they're called to this particular land, the land of Canaan. And you may be thinking, why this particular land? What's so significant about this? And this, I think, is rather interesting. What makes this land special, if you look in Genesis chapter 2, verses 10 to 14, we have the boundaries for the Garden of Eden.

[13:02] And the boundaries for the Garden of Eden are these four rivers, the Pishon, the Gihon, which are associated with the land in northern Egypt, and the Tigris and the Euphrates, which, of course, we know is in Assyria.

Well, in Genesis chapter 15, we find that the boundaries of the promised land are the rivers of Egypt and the Euphrates, the same boundaries.

So what God is doing, he's calling, God sent Adam out to the east. He calls him back to the west. What he's doing is he's rebooting the mission. Abram, in a sense, is starting over this whole project that God began with Adam and Eve.

And so he's there back in the land. And by the way, we see this in other indications also that, you know, what we see is the Garden of Eden is originally called a temple, the holy mountain of the Lord in Ezekiel.

And so he's calling him back there to this land, the very place that was the center of God's kingdom activity at the dawn of humanity becomes the center once again. And just as God had commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and to multiply, what does God say to Abram?

[14:09] He says, you're going to be the father of many. In fact, you're going to be the father of many nations. Just as he calls Adam and Eve to subdue the whole earth, what does he say to Abram? He doesn't just say, I'm going to bless you and your descendants.

He doesn't just say, I've chosen you to bless. Rather, what we see is he says to them, I will bless those who bless you. I'll curse anyone who treats you with contempt. And all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.

God is saying through Abram, see, God does not choose Israel instead of the other nations. God chooses Israel for the sake of the other nations. And he's saying through you, I'm going to bless the whole earth.

God's vision is not limited here. It's still for the whole earth. And so, again, it's not a new mission. It's a reboot of what we see in Genesis chapter 1. And so what happens?

Well, Israel lives faithfully to God. And the promise is this, that God says to them, he says, I'm going to bless you and prosper you, but you're to remain faithful to me. And as Israel lives faithfully under God's law, God's smile would be upon them in such a way that the nations would be drawn to them.

[15:19] They were to be a light to the nations. And so when Israel is living in obedience to God, they experience incredible prosperity. We see this under King David and the later under King Solomon, that they become incredibly prosperous.

In fact, here's what we read in 1 Kings chapter 4. Judah and Israel lived in safety from Dan even to Beersheba. That's from coast to coast, east to west.

Every man under his vine and under his fig tree all the days of Solomon. And you're thinking, wow, everybody had their own vine and fig tree. That's exciting. What that's saying is everybody's rich. There's peace. There's prosperity. Everybody is doing great. And this becomes so fantastic that the other nations do notice this. And that's why we have this interesting story just a few chapters later after this, where you remember the Queen of Sheba?

There's this African queen, and she hears about Solomon's wisdom and how he's ruling with such wisdom that they have all this prosperity and all this peace. She has to see it for herself.

[16:25] And she goes up there, and she looks, and she leaves praising God, praising the Lord for what she sees there. The nations are being drawn to God because of what they see as Israel lives faithfully to God.

Well, did that last? It didn't last long, did it? Because right after Solomon, things begin to really, under Solomon, it begins to fall apart.

But certainly after Solomon, it becomes to fall apart even worse. And it's this downhill slide. You have a civil war. We have a northern kingdom called Israel, a southern kingdom called Judah. Northern kingdom goes corrupt right away, is destroyed. Southern kingdom is corrupt off and on and ends up being fully corrupt and is taken into captivity into Babylon. Just as Adam and Eve were expelled from the temple in the Garden of Eden, Israel expelled from the temple from the promised land there in Canaan. And once again, it looks like the mission of God has failed. But then we come to the New Testament, to the coming of Jesus. And we see again that God reboots the mission for the final time.

[17 : 32] We saw both with Adam and Eve, as well as the nation of Israel, that one has to be faithful to God to live in his temple. In the Psalms, it says this, Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord?

And it says, He who has a pure heart and clean hands. And so to live in the presence of God, to live in the temple without being expelled, you have to live faithfully to God. And immediately, we ought to see a problem here.

Adam and Eve couldn't do it. Israel couldn't do it. What makes us think we can do it? Right? I mean, do we really think that we are better than Adam?

Do we really think we would be more faithful than Israel? And so here's the problem. We're not able to live faithfully to God. We think about the way we, too, have disobeyed God's commands.

We, too, have failed to trust Him. We all have done things that leave us feeling guilty and ashamed. But that's why Jesus came. Jesus came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

[18 : 35] He comes as the second Adam to do what the first Adam could not do. He comes as the true Israel to do what Israel could not do. And He comes and He does it on our behalf.

How does He do it on our behalf? Well, Jesus comes, and Jesus is faithful. He obeys the law of God perfectly. He honors God.

He doesn't sin at all. And yet, even though Jesus never sinned, we find that He is cast out of the holy city of Jerusalem. He is taken outside.

And the question is, why, if Jesus was faithful, was He cast out like Adam? Was He cast out like Israel? And the answer is, was that He was cast out so that we could be let in.

He was forsaken so that we could be forgiven. And here's how the Bible describes it. It describes it as, as someone called it, this great exchange. And Paul puts it this way.

[19 : 30] He says, for our sakes, He made Him, that is, Jesus, to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. What he's saying is, something that Paul talks about throughout his letters, is when a person becomes a Christian, you become so united to Christ that everything Jesus did is now yours, and everything that you have done is now His.

And so we have this exchange. So your sin now has become His sin. And because Jesus died on the cross, He's paid the penalty for your sin in full. And not only that, but as Paul says, we now are the righteousness of God.

His goodness, His righteousness comes to us. Here's the good news. If you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you're so united to Christ that your sin is gone because Jesus has paid for it, and His righteousness is yours.

Now, that last phrase is important. Oftentimes we think that Jesus died so that we could be forgiven. And we sing about, we are forgiven of our sins. That is true, but that's only half of it.

You're not only forgiven, you are robed in the righteousness of Christ. And so when God looks at you, Christian, if you have your faith in Him, if you have been united to Christ, when God looks at you, He doesn't see a sinner.

[20 : 50] He knows your sin. It's not that He's ignorant. He doesn't see your sin. He doesn't even see a pardoned sinner. That's not all that He sees. He sees someone robed in the beauty and the righteousness of Christ.

The closest illustration I have of this is, you know, my own experience. I go to a lot of weddings. It's just one of the things we do as ministers, and it's a great joy.

In fact, I think as a minister, I have the best spot in the house for a wedding. Because I get to stand right here, I'm standing next to the groom, and we get to see the bride for the first time coming through that door.

And it is so great, because I'll see the bride, and I always, I'll look at the groom to watch his face. And he's looking back at her, and he's going, wow.

I mean, I've never seen a groom going, I'm so disappointed, you know. That has never happened. Never happened. It's always, wow.

[21 : 53] And he's thinking, I can't believe she's marrying me. And I look at him and go, I can't believe she's marrying you, you know. I mean, we're both stunned at this. Think of how the groom looks at the bride.

That is how the father looks at you in Christ Jesus. And many of us forget that. You know why we forget that? It's because we are living as if we relate to God based on our works rather than based on Christ.

Walter Marshall, the old Puritan, said, your heart is addicted to salvation by works. And what I mean by that is, is when you think about how God thinks of you, you're not looking at Christ. You're not looking at your union with Christ.

You're not believing that you're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone. What you're doing is, how have I done this week? How have I performed? Have I been good? Have I read my Bible? Well, at least I'm in church.

That's got to count. You know, you begin to look at your performance instead of looking at Christ's performance. God does not judge you based on your performance. He judges you based on Christ's performance.

[22 : 51] Christ took the judgment for your performance. And that's the gospel truth. And so that's what Jesus has come to do. He's made it so that now we can live in the temple of God. We can go into the garden without fear of being expelled.

We can go into the holy land without fear of banishment. We can stand before the holy temple of God without fear of being cast out. Jesus was cast out. You will never be cast out.

That's the gospel. But that gospel is not just for you and for me. That gospel is for the world.

Remember, Genesis chapter 1, what was the mission? The whole earth will be a temple to the Lord.

Genesis chapter 12 to Abraham, what's the mission? All the families, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Revelation chapter, at the end of the book, chapter 21, 22, what's the vision?

That the temple of the Lord comes down and fills the whole earth and there are people there from every tribe, nation, and tongue. That's the mission. That's the vision. And then what we see then is Jesus then recommissions the church for the mission given to Adam and Eve.

[23 : 56] And so we read it moments ago where we see the mission of the church. And let's look at it again, Matthew 28. In Matthew 28, Jesus is risen from the dead after his crucifixion.

He's there with his disciples and he says to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And notice something very important. What's the mission of the church? The mission of the church is not to make disciples. The mission of the church is not to make disciples.

The mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations. And if you leave out that prepositional phrase, you change the meaning of the whole text. It is not merely to make disciples.

It is to make disciples of all nations, of all ethnicities, we might even say. And so the other place we find that Jesus is commissioning his church after the resurrection.

[25 : 06] By the way, if you go through each gospel and the book of Acts, after the resurrection, we see Jesus giving the same mission in different words. Every single gospel, obviously this is important.

But in Acts 1-8, he says to the church, he says, you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Now, notice the scope. He doesn't say, I want you to make disciples where you are. That's not what he says. He says you're to make disciples where? To the ends of the earth. So let's put all this together, and we summarize these different mission statements together.

Here's the mission of the church. It is to make disciples of all people in all places till all the earth is a temple to the Lord. That's the mission.

That's the mission Christ has given to his church. All people, all places, so that all the earth is a mission to the Lord. Now, of course, we begin right where we are, right?

[26 : 10] I mean, if you consider that Acts 1-8, you know, Jerusalem, Judea, to the ends of the earth, that command from a first-century Christian's perspective, Colorado is the ends of the earth, right?

We are, I mean, we're a long way from Jerusalem. We are the ends of the earth. And so certainly we begin here. We begin where we live, work, and play. You know, you are in your neighborhood and at your workplace, not by chance.

You're placed there by the providence of God. And so you're there to be a witness for him right where you are. But the mission, though, is bigger than this. And as a body, as the church, we can't lose sight of the mission is not just to make disciples of Colorado Springs.

The mission is the whole world, the whole earth, to be a temple to the Lord. And so while the church does many things, it has only one mission. Now, in the church, we worship, we disciple our children, we care for one another, we study the Bible, we sing.

There's so many things that we do. But these are not separate missions. They're all components of the one mission that Christ has given to his church. In many ways, the church is like the military.

[27 : 27] And Army people, forgive me for a minute. I'm going to use an Air Force example. So please be patient. But, you know, it's like the Air Force.

You know, the Air Force, there are people in the Air Force who do a lot of different things. But the Air Force has one mission. I was talking to some cadets one time and asked them, what's the mission? And some duly stood at attention and shouted out the mission.

It's to fly, fight, win, anytime, anywhere. Air power, anytime, anywhere. Fly, fight, win, air power, anytime, anywhere. That's the mission of the Air Force. Now, living around here, we know lots of Air Force people.

One of my neighbors across the street, not across the street, elsewhere in the neighborhood, was an elite athlete. He was a captain of the Air Force, and he trained for the Olympics.

That was his full-time job. Know people who are in the Air Force. They're in the Air Force van. I know other people in the Air Force who are IT. I know people in the Air Force who are accountants. I know people in the Air Force who do logistics.

[28 : 26] I've known some pilots, but most people I know in the Air Force don't fly, fight, win. Right? They don't fly. You know? They've been on airplanes, but that's about it. But they're part of that mission, right?

I have a son-in-law who's training to be a doctor in the Air Force. Now, the mission of the Air Force is not to give good medical care. That's not the mission. But if the Air Force is going to fly, fight, win, air power, anytime, anywhere, you better take care of your people, right?

And if the mission of the Air Force is to fly, fight, win, then you need some good accounting because they're dealing with billions of dollars, right? I mean, that's critical. If the mission of the Air Force is to fly, fight, win, you need people to understand logistics.

And the mission of the Air Force is to fly, fight, win. You better have good athletes and music for some reason. I'm not sure why. So, but it's important, right? There's one mission.

The mission is not to make music. The mission is fly, fight, win. The mission of the church, the mission of the church is to make disciples of all people in all places so that all the earth is a temple to the Lord.

[29 : 34] That's our mission. And it means we all have different roles in coming together to be part of that mission. You know, it doesn't mean that all of us should go.

Just not like everyone in the Air Force should be a pilot. Not everyone in the church is going to go places like where T and E are serving. But some should go. And oftentimes in talking to people like this, I'll talk to people and say, well, I don't really feel called.

And my question would be, how would you know? How would you know what God's calling you to? You know, you feel like you're called to something. Did you have the Holy Spirit come down upon you one day and say, say, Johnny, I've called you to be a real estate agent?

Well, it probably didn't happen that way. What'd you do? You looked at your gifts and your interests and your abilities. And so, looking at calling, you know, we can look at, you know, God's priorities in the world, our gifts and abilities, and where we fit in.

As an early American pastor said, you know, we should look at the world and say, what good can I do? And oftentimes people say, well, I don't feel called to missions. And I say, well, how would you know if you've never actually considered it?

[30 : 49] Have you ever prayed about it? Have you ever looked into it? You know, I just look at the needs around the world and how, you know, rabbit trail, pardon me for a moment.

But, you know, out of every dollar that we give, as Christians give away, every dollar that we give away, 95% of it, 95 cents, goes right here to the U.S.

5% goes to the rest of the world, and part of that, even only a small part of that, goes to unreached places where people like TN are serving. I'm thinking, God's given us the resources. And so shouldn't we be looking at the needs?

And if this is the mission saying, you know, shouldn't we be, some be considering going? Now, so my challenge is for some of you to pray about it, to look at it, to explore it.

How do you know where God's calling you if you've never even inquired? Now, for the rest of us, and I include me in this, our job in the family business is not to go, but we still have a role.

[31 : 50] Our role is to pray diligently. And, you know, Scott talked about this earlier. You know, we're in spiritual warfare, and we need to be praying for our people.

It's very, very hard where many of our people are serving. And if they're going to go, we can pray, and we can give generously. If they're going to leave family and friends, then we certainly can lower our lifestyle so that they can have their needs met.

And we can encourage persistently. And, you know, like the accountants and IT professionals to support the personnel in the Air Force, our job is to support those who are out there doing the work. And we do this not out of a sense of duty. Oh, certainly we have that. But out of our love for the one who took away our guilt and shame. It's out of knowing that the Father delights in us, and we want others to know that same delight.

In a moment, I'm going to ask you to pray a prayer. And here's the prayer. It's simply this. Lord, I will go wherever you want me to go. I will give whatever you want me to give.

[32 : 53] I will do whatever you want me to do. Here's the prayer. I'll go wherever you want me to go. I'll give whatever you want me to give. I'll do whatever you want me to do. I was talking to a woman one time, and she said, I'm not praying that.

And she said, why not? She said, actually, someone else told her. She was telling me the story later. She said, I was afraid if I did that, that God might actually take me up on this, right? But let's think about that for a moment.

It is funny, and I imagine many of us have thought this way. But what's wrong with the thinking there? I'm saying, if I offer my life to God, say, God, use me however you will, he's going to use me. And we use the use in an exploitive sense. Is our Father exploitive? Is the God who sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for you, is he looking at this opportunity to use you in a malicious sense? He's your Father. Jesus said this, if a son were to go to his father and ask for a loaf of bread, the father would not give him a stone, would he? And if the father, he asked for a fish, he would not give him a serpent, would he?

[33 : 56] And if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your father, your children, how much more does the heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask of him? Do you believe the Father will give good gifts to you if you pray?

Do you believe that? Well, if that's who he is, then we can pray, knowing he's going to give a good gift. I will go wherever you want me to go. I will do whatever you want me to do, and I will give whatever you want me to give.

Because, Lord, I trust you. I trust you, and I want to be part of your mission. Let's pray. Father, we do thank you that you are trustworthy. You have shown that you are faithful even when we are faithless.

When we have not been true to you, you've always been true to us. And so, Lord, forgive us for doubting that. And forgive us for just the many acts of disobedience, which are done out of a lack of faith, out of thinking that you really don't love us, that we know what's best.

Forgive us for that autonomous spirit that wants to go our own way and doesn't trust you enough to obey. And so, Father, we also say, take our lives, Lord.

[35 : 09] We believe you love us. We trust you. And, Lord, we pray this in faith. Even though our faith is always mixed with some doubt, our knees may be shaking, but at the core of our being, we

believe that Jesus died for us.

We believe that you love us. And because we believe that you love us, Lord, here's what we're going to pray. Lord, I will go wherever you want me to go. Lord, I mean that.

As fearful as I may be, I trust you. And, Lord, I will give whatever you want me to give. You have blessed us. And so, Lord, I don't need it.

I can lower my lifestyle. Just tell me what you want me to do, Lord. I will give whatever you want me to give. In fact, Lord, I will do whatever it is you want me to do because I believe you delight in me and you love me because of what Christ has done for me.

And we pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[36 : 09] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.