

# Thanksgiving 1 - The Source of Thanksgiving

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     So just to give you a sense of where we're going to be the next couple of weeks, we're putting Acts on ice for the rest of this year until next year, partly because we're getting into Christmas season now and there's a bunch of different things happening, and there were a couple of things happening in the next few weeks that also sort of disrupted that.

So we will pick up Acts again in the new year. But what we're going to do for the next few weeks is in three weeks' time, it's already Advent season, the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, and so we'll do an Advent series at that point, looking mainly in the Old Testament for that.

But what we're doing this week and next week is next week is our Thanksgiving Sunday. We have a Thanksgiving Sunday once a year. It's where we take a special offering that we use to a specific purpose, designated purpose, it's not part of our general giving.

We ask people to consider giving over and above what they would normally give in their normal monthly general giving, and then we designate it to a special purpose. We're looking at, we're still discussing, we've got an elders meeting on Tuesday night to discuss that further, but we're looking at doing something pertaining to the building, just because there's still a lot that we need to be doing in this space to try and make it better for people on Sunday mornings.

But because we've got that Thanksgiving service next week, I thought I'd spend two weeks talking about Thanksgiving. So we'll do this week and next week, thinking about the subject of Thanksgiving, and then we will be able to celebrate and give thanks for so many different things that we have in the life of our church next week in that formal service.

[ 1 : 2 7 ]     But we thought we'd get going early on that subject this week. So that's why we're in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, that passage we just read. And what I want to talk about this morning is the source of our Thanksgiving. Next week I'll talk about a place, a wrong place that we look to for Thanksgiving and how we can look to the right place.

But this week I want to talk about the source of Thanksgiving for the Christian. Now if you think about the whole concept of just giving thanks for something, we give thanks when we know that we've been the recipients of an incredible gift.

That's generally when you give thanks in life. The way that you live a life then of perpetual Thanksgiving is to live with a constant tangible sense of that gift, of how precious the gift is, how costly the gift is, how undeserving you might be of the gift, how good the gift giver is, all those sort of things.

The more you have a tangible sense of those things, the more you will be thankful in your disposition. Now as the Apostle Paul closes out this letter that we just read from 1 Thessalonians, he makes some final remarks, and in that group of final remarks, verse 18 he says this, he says, give thanks in all circumstances.

And so what I want to do is I want us to consider that command within the context of the verses around it and see if we can figure out through that what this source of Thanksgiving is. G.K. Chesterton famously said, we are perishing for want of wonder, not for want of wonders.

- [ 3 : 06 ] That is to say there's a lot out there in the world that is wonderful. And that should be a source of Thanksgiving. But we always want more. We always seem to want more.
- We're never ultimately satisfied in our quest for wonder as we go out into this world and we see beautiful and wonderful things. Now if you're a Christian, then you probably know what the Sunday school answer is. You know in your head at least the textbook answer to satisfying this thirst for wonder is to delight in God above all.
- You're like, okay, well that seems pretty standard. Worship Him above everything and that's where you're going to find your ultimate sense of satisfaction and wonder and awe and glory. If God exists, I mean it's pretty logical, if God exists, He created this world, like the Bible says, then there can be nothing more awe-inspiring than Him.
- Maybe you're going to go out today into this weather and look at the mountains or the beaches and the sea and you're going to go, well, if God created that, can you imagine what He must be like?
- Knowing and having a relationship with Him would surely be sufficient to produce a life of constant thanksgiving. I mean every single piece of beauty that we have in this world has its origin in Him.
- [ 4 : 24 ] Every experience of love has its source in Him. All that depth, the astounding complexity you might see as you go out into nature, that is all conceived in His mind.
- There can be nothing more worthy of worship, more deserving of awe and wonder than God. And therefore, there can be no greater gift than relationship with Him.
- Now, here is the age-old problem for questions because all of you were probably not along to what I just said there, but how do I, how do I get that piece of logical truth to be my experience?
- All day, every day. If I believe this truth about God, if I believe relationship with Him is the gift of gifts, like better than anything you're going to get under the tree at the end of the year, then why don't I wake up kind of glowing every single morning with my heart bursting in thanksgiving, like skipping on the way to brush my teeth in the morning?
- Why don't I wake up just like, oh, seeking the Lord's presence with all my might, just wanting to obey Him all of the time with everything that I have? Why am I so often cold towards Him?
- [ 5 : 45 ] How do I fixate so much upon the grace of God, the worship of God, the glory of God, to the point that it kind of produces this deep, consistent sense of thanksgiving in me?
- Two things I think you need that we're going to see in our passage. Number one, I think you need to trust the object of power of God. You need to trust the object of power of God, and then number two, you need to be open to the subject of power of God.
- You need to trust the object of power of God, and you need to be open to the subject of power of God. Let me give you a little bit of background to this book in 1 Thessalonians. So Paul planted this church in the ancient Macedonian city of Thessalonica, around about the middle of the first century, AD 50.
- You can go back to the book of Acts, Acts chapter 17. We'll get there at some point in our series, although most of you have gray hair and long in the tooth by the time we get to Acts 17, based on our current speed.
- But you can read about it there, and it seems he spent a really short time with this church, planted it, and then had to leave. At most, he spent about two months teaching the people about Jesus, and then he had to flee because of persecution.
- [ 6 : 51 ] He fled to Athens, and he sent his colleague, Timothy, back to say, go and see if the church even made it. Did they carry on going after we left? He then goes to Corinth, and Timothy does a round trip and comes back and meets with him and brings a really good report about the Thessalonians, saying they're still going.

They know very little. Like their elders are, have been elders for like two weeks, but they're going, and they're doing it. And so, hearing this encouraging news, Paul then, wanting to just keep encouraging them, keep strengthening them, writes this letter back to them.

Have a look, and so we're looking at the very end of the letter where he closes off with his final greetings, but have a look at verse 16. He says this. He says rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

So there are three things that he instructs. Rejoice, pray, be thankful. And they're all connected to each other. And notice what follows each verb there. So rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances.

So what he doesn't say is he doesn't say rejoice when you're happy. Pray when you feel like it. Give thanks when things are going well for you. He says do these things regardless.

[ 8 : 14 ] Now as we've already said at the beginning, we normally need motivation to do these sorts of things, right? I don't rejoice unless something prompts me to rejoice. I don't pray unless I need something, and I don't give thanks unless I get something.

And Paul says, no, no, no, no, no, no, that's not how this works. Do these things regardless, and then he gives the reason. This is God's will for you in Christ Jesus, he says.

Now this verse on the surface, just a kind of straightforward reading, seems to justify the picture of God that a lot of people, and even I think a lot of Christians have in their minds. So this is all-powerful, all-knowing God who sets out these really over-the-top demands for us, like rejoice when you're miserable, pray at five o'clock in the morning when you're flat-out exhausted, and give thanks when your life is falling apart.

How do these commands, when you look at them, not produce feelings of guilt or inadequacy? How do they not crush us on face value?

How do you not look at these and not either end up feeling dejected, really dejected, like God is constantly unhappy with you because you're not doing these things, your sub-power performance, or just ending up then going the other way and dismissing religion altogether because who wants to worship a God under that kind of a burden?

[ 9 : 35 ] How is it going to be life-giving? I think a lot of people carry that sort of burden in them when they read the demands of God in the Bible. But I think that misses the unburdening grace of these instructions that Paul actually gives.

So think carefully about these instructions for a second. Move beyond just the surface reading of what's going on here. He says, rejoice always. In other words, I want you to have a deep-seated joy that is a settled contentment and delight in your life that you draw strength from somehow when your emotions are even going up and down.

I want you to have that. Then he says, pray always. Now just hearing that come on might make you a little bit tired because praying is hard work.

Praying is not easy. Anyone who thinks praying is easy is not trying to pray a lot. Praying is hard work. But what is prayer? Prayer, more than any activity in the Bible, is the dethroning of yourself.

It is to hold up your hands and basically say, Lord, I'm not in control of my life, God. You are. I'm not in control. You are in control. See, prayer is acknowledging your utter, utter dependence upon God because if you could make everything that you need to happen happen through your own abilities and strength or through your networks and support structures, well then you wouldn't pray, would you?

[ 11 : 11 ] Prayer is basically saying, I'm clearly not God of my life. You are God of my life. And so when Paul says pray continually, he's basically saying dethrone yourself continually.

Keep on doing that. Don't slip into the delusion or the grand delusion of the fact that you think you've got control of your life and you can control everything that's going on.

Let God be God of your life. And then the third instruction that directly touches on what we're talking about this morning, give thanks always. Now how do you do that?

How do you give thanks when situations are so volatile? You lose your job. An intimate relationship that you are involved in breaks up or becomes really strange. You lose money. You experience the loss of something valuable to you.

You experience the loss of someone valuable to you. How do you give thanks in those sorts of circumstances? How do you give thanks when tragedy strikes? It can't be, I don't think, it can't be that God is calling on you to give thanks for the tragedy itself in some sort of masochistic way.

[ 12 : 22 ] We're never to delight in sin or evil or the misery that accompanies this fallen world. So we're not giving thanks necessarily for the tragedy itself in which case we must be giving thanks for something else.

We must be giving thanks for something that sits above our present experiences and then that colors and gives context and shape to all of those experiences.

Something bigger. Something that can't be lost. Something that can't be taken away. Something that can't be destroyed. Something eternal. Something precious. Only if we have something like that will we genuinely then be able to give thanks in all circumstances.

So now you look back at those three instructions. They're not actually laborious demands placed upon you by a cruel, judgmental God. They're graces.

They are turning you away from yourself over and over again. continually turning you away from yourself and your present circumstances to something bigger.

[ 13 : 35 ] That's what they're doing. Something objective. Something that is concrete over and against your turbulent life. They're turning you towards the objective power of God to satisfy you, to meet your needs, to save you.

In our world of pain and uncertainty that surely can be the only true source of thanksgiving.

The God of the Bible exists and He alone can truly satisfy you. He alone can truly meet your needs and He alone can truly save you. And He has done that.

He's done all of that. Paul doesn't just say it's God's will for you to do these things. He says it's God's will for you to do these things in Christ Jesus. There is an objective reality that proves God's power to satisfy, to meet needs and ultimately to save and that is the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

You see because Jesus has died and risen again to beat death, to forgive sin, to make the new heavens and the new earth possible, because He's done that well you rejoice. Because He's done that you depend on Him completely in prayer.

[ 14 : 51 ] Because He's done that you give thanks in every circumstance. If you're a Christian and you have trusted in the objective reality of Christ on the cross for your salvation then you have all of that.

It's yours. It's given to you. It's in your storeroom already. It's not waiting to be had. You have it. No wayward emotion can make that objective reality of Jesus go away.

No matter what you're feeling. No depth of despair can keep Jesus in the tomb. No loss of material wealth or status or relationship can remove the fact that Jesus has forgiven your sins.

No failure even on your part. To be moral or just or kind-hearted can undo Jesus' selfless act. His selfless sacrifice for you on the cross.

Do you see that this morning? Do you see that? Because if you see that you have an objective source for eternal thanksgiving. These instructions that Paul gives us here, they're not here to weigh us down and make us feel burdened and miserable as impossible demands.

[ 16 : 06 ] They're there to get you to plunge deeper and deeper into grace. To let go of holding on to managing your own life and to plunge deeper and deeper into grace.

To put your hands up and say I can't run my life. I can't fix myself. I can't manipulate my circumstances. You've got to do it Lord. I can't do any of that stuff but I have Jesus.

I have Jesus. You'll never live a life of constant thanksgiving. You'll never have that sense of awe and wonder of the majesty of God until you begin to trust in the objective power of God that is displayed in Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

That's a starting point. And I want to say this to you because I think we talk about this and you go you think Stephen that would be really nice to have that and to feel that I have that but it feels like out there maybe for super holy people and I want to say to you I think this is not a pipe dream.

I don't think it's an unattainable pipe dream that's only for super spiritual Christians. I have met older saints who have spent decades trusting in the objective power of the gospel.

[ 17 : 19 ] The awe and the wonder is there when you see them. It's in their eyes. It's in their speech. It's in their deep contentment and joy. It's in their disciplined prayer lives.

Most of all it's in their ongoing thankful disposition even though their kind of physical bodies are wasting away and they've had to live through all sorts of difficulty and hardship. I think one of the most powerful illustrations and you might say well this person is a super Christian.

Yes in a sense looking back but we don't know what this person's life was like beforehand but one of the most powerful stories of this is the story of Corrie and Betsy in Boehm.

If you've ever read the book The Hiding Place they were basically hiding Jews from the Nazis during World War II in Holland got caught and got put in a concentration camp in Ravensbrook and in the book The Hiding Place Corrie and Boehm writes about her interactions in the concentration camp particularly with her sister Betsy who died in the concentration camp but one of the most interesting stories and it's kind of humorously written when you get to it in the section is that they get into one of these cramped quarters where they're all sleeping where you can't even sit up in your bed because you hit your head in the slats and when she gets into the bed Corrie and Boehm she gets bitten by something and discovers that the place is infested with fleas it's like the worst imaginable situation you can think of and she's like what am I going to do with this and her sister Betsy is like well we give thanks for it and she's like what do you mean how do we deal with this she said no remember in our Bible reading and she goes to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 give thanks in all circumstances this is all circumstances being in this concentration camp in this cramped little space with our life on the line being bitten by fleas this is all circumstances give thanks for it and so she's like how do

I give thanks for it well she says a bunch of things she says well we managed to sneak our Bible in here and not get caught by the prison guards give thanks for that she's like I can give thanks for that she's like what about the fact that we're together they haven't separated us we can give thanks for that so she's like okay I can give thanks for that but then she says but the fleas I can't give thanks for the fleas and Betsy's like no you've got to give thanks even for that and then the story kind of ends there and you find out later on that the reason they were able to hold Bible studies is because because of the fleas the prison guards never came in and they stayed out and God preserved them they could give thanks for that it's an incredible story go read that book if you get a chance but I say this to say to you guys this is not an unattainable pipe dream it's not out there for super Christians it's for us for you and me this morning that we hold on we cling to that objective truth of God in the gospel that's the source of our thanksgiving now you need to be you need to also be open to the subject of power of the gospel of God have a look at verse 19

[ 20 : 37 ] Paul says do not quench the spirit do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all hold on to what is good reject every kind of evil in the early church particularly at this early stage in 8050 or so they wouldn't have had complete Bibles like we have we were able to just whip out our Bible on our phone and read it towards the end of that century they would obviously be passing around these letters from the apostles they would have started to have some of the gospels like Matthew and Mark and passing that around but it's only really late second century that you get kind of what we would have now today in a complete New Testament they would have the Old Testament obviously but so what would often happen was you'd have these traveling prophets then going from church to church sharing words of encouragement coming along and meeting with the group and sharing words of encouragement and then we saw this when we did our series on the church often the elders would get together and weigh up these prophecies to say are they legit or not but they would travel around and there's a lot of debate about whether or not these New Testament prophets carried the same sort of authority as the Old Testament prophets as a guy like

Isaiah or Ezekiel where when those guys said thus saith the Lord we wrote it down in the Bible and it was like binding on everybody and so there's debate about these prophets did they speak with the same level of authority or did they just kind of bring general kind of ideas and that from God and help people and I don't want to try and resolve that for you it's a much bigger more complex thing but I want us to see what Paul is doing here with this particular discussion on prophecy what he's pushing his readers to see about the Spirit's work in their lives as a congregation he says up front verse 19 don't quench the Spirit don't put out the fire and the specific example he gives is prophetic utterances I think he could have given a range of examples of where the Spirit empowers us to do different things to encourage and build each other up but he talks about prophetic utterances here there's probably a bit of a back story to that so a significant part you'll know if you go and read 1 Thessalonians a significant part of 1 Thessalonians is centered on the second return of Christ what essentially happened was

Paul's going guys Jesus is coming back then he gets whisked out of town he's not able to really develop all of his theology about that yet and so this church gets together and someone in the church dies and then another person dies and then another person dies and they're going Jesus isn't back yet and people are dying what is going on and so they've clearly misunderstood the whole how does Jesus come back and all of that if you're confused about that you can come tonight to the revelation class but they're confused and so some scholars think that what was happening was you would have prophets who would come and would say certain things like Jesus is going to come back next week but he doesn't and so then that makes them doubt prophecy as a whole oh hang on is this prophecy thing legit and so they become very skeptical of the subjective work of the spirit Paul's correcting that here he's pushing back it's if to kind of say look I know there were abusers of this prophetic that doesn't mean these prophetic utterances that all these ones that are coming into your church are all fraudulent test them rather you've got a mechanism test them don't put out the spirit's fire he may very well be speaking and encouraging this particular congregation test the prophecies so he's really kind of saying well what you need is you do need the subjective power of the spirit in you you need to be open to that reality that God is going to do things amongst you by his spirit you need to be receptive to that to this spirit of God breathing new life into you maybe one way to think about it is to think about marriage so in marriage you have an objective basis for a marriage especially in a

Christian marriage and that is you have a marriage covenant the foundation of a marriage is this covenant agreement that two people enter into so when I got married my wife Robin said these things to me she said I Robin take you Stephen I know you can't believe it but she did say these things to me to be my husband to have and to hold from this day forward for better for worse for richer for poorer in sickness and in health to love and to cherish till death us do part according to God's holy word and this is my solemn vow to you now when Robin says those words to me and I say those words back to her I have her objectively spiritually and legally binding herself to me the marriage covenant is the foundation and it's the driving force then of our shared life together without it there is no marriage it's a rock that you kind of hold on to and go back to when stuff is difficult it's a motivation to both of us to keep on investing into this marriage keep pursuing each other as long as we live and so the objective power of marriage lies in the objective marriage covenant the promises we make to each other but there's also something else in our marriage this one you might also not believe but this one still happens you see every now and again

Robin turns around to me and she says Stephen I love you and you're probably the best looking guy I know she doesn't say that last part but she says the first part and then she is subjectively in that moment she is subjectively expressing her love commitment to me that's what she's doing and when she does that it's like it breathes life new life into the objective marriage covenant new wind into the sails of that already agreed upon marriage covenant now the subjective work of the spirit in the life of a believer is a little bit like God whispering not literally but metaphorically whispering into your ear I love you you are mine I bought you at a price and I cherish you deeply see we need this friends because it's hard it's hard to keep looking back at an event 2000 years ago when Christ gave his life for you and then to stay fixated upon that event all the time it's hard to always keep that as the rock that informs and shapes your life of thanksgiving now your sense of God's presence now your motivation in obedience to his will now it's hard to keep doing that and so every now and then by his spirit

[ 27 : 09 ] God whispers in your ear I love you you are mine now Paul actually says this exact thing in another letter in the book of Romans Romans chapter 5 he says therefore since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand and we boast in the hope of the glory of God not only so but we also glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance perseverance character and character hope and hope does not put us to shame because here's the important part because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us see that last verse God pours the love of Christ into our hearts by his spirit that's not like

Pentecostal charismatic stuff that's down the line Presbyterian theology here's John Calvin about the most charismatic guy you'll find here's him talking on Romans chapter 5 verse 5 the knowledge the knowledge of divine love is instilled in our hearts by the spirit of God for the good things which God has prepared for his servants are hid from the ears and the eyes and the minds of men and the spirit alone is he who can reveal them the word poured is very emphatic for it means that the revelation of divine love towards us is so abounding that it fills all our hearts and being thus spread through every part of them it not only mitigates sorrow in adversities but also like a sweet seasoning it renders tribulations to be loved by us do you have that do you have God whispering that in your ear by his spirit I love you you're mine if you don't what can you do or if you have it in fleeting measure and you want more of it what can you do look at how Paul closes his letter verse 23 1 Thessalonians 5 23 may God himself the God of peace sanctify you through and through may your whole spirit soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ the one who calls you is faithful and he will do it it's a prayer it's a prayer for the Thessalonians may God himself sanctify you through and through that is may God make you holy and set apart for his good purposes

Paul prays that for the Thessalonians and that my friends is the only way the only way that you tap into the work of the spirit you cannot manipulate the spirit's work in your life there's no spell you can do we can't just sing songs here and get more and more and more intense and somehow will the spirit to come and do something here with us we can't repeat mantras over and over again and try and hope that about doing that the spirit is going to come the only way that you can engage with the spirit of God in scripture is by praying praying ask for him to work ask for him to do something the great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon when he was preaching on the subjective love of Christ I think he was actually also preaching on Romans 5 at this point the love that Christ pours into our hearts by his spirit he asked this question he asked why don't we experience that love sometimes and this was his answer his answer was may it not be brothers and sisters because we have restrained prayer the common sin of God's people is slackness in prayer if there is one sin that needs to be preached about more than another just now it is the sin of the omission of the secret dealings with God this is the secret of our spiritual leanness the secret of many of our trials of our lack of joy of our loss of confidence in God how can you expect to know much of the love of God if you will not go to him in prayer



Spurgeon's words are pretty similar to the hymn that I grew up singing in church do you remember this one what a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer anyone remember that one anyone sing that one in their childhood and in this part oh what peace we often forfeit oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer the way that you become more and more open to the subjective work of God's spirit and power in you is by it's by getting on your knees by getting on your face even if you need to there's no other way I don't have anything else to give you and offer you there is no other way now I know this might all sound a little bit cyclical but but it's it's going back to the objective reality of God's love and praying it without ceasing like Paul says until that objective becomes a subjective which in turn will produce deep thankfulness in your life and then drive you back to prayer to praying through the objective realities of the gospel it's going back and back and back and back into that process into that practice of dethroning yourself over and over and over again in prayer until Christ takes up that throne until you get off that throne we are stubborn creatures and we want to keep crawling back onto the throne and you've got to kind of go to war with your stubborn self and say get off

Jesus must be there you do that through prayer and it's at that point that your heart will burst forth in thanksgiving it sounds like hard work and it is hard work I'm not going to pretend that it's not it is hard work but the great comfort is that Paul says God will do it in you God will do it in you that's what he says at the end of the prayer the one who calls you is faithful and he will do it so you lift up your heart to heaven and dethrone yourself in prayer why?

[ 33 : 51 ] well because Christ already left the comfort of heaven he set aside his crown to be crucified to save you you get on your knees you get on your knees to seek out the love of Christ because Christ was already once on his knees for you being flogged by Roman soldiers you pray and you pray and you pray and you pray that you will hear that whisper from the spirit of God I love you because you know that Christ already on the cross out of breath whispered those words Father forgive them for they know not what they do the one who calls you is faithful and he will do it and how do you know he will do it well because in Jesus he has done it once before see this interplay between the subjective and the objective all the time it's kind of back and forth when that objective reality comes together with the subjective experience of God by his spirit that's when you will abound in thanksgiving and so I say to you this morning pursue Christ go after him go after him with everything that you've got work hard at that not to earn it but to take possession of what's already been given to you in Jesus Christ pursue him it'll cause more upheaval in your life than you can possibly imagine if you go after him like this but you won't regret it you won't regret it because you'll be getting something you will be getting something so powerful something so precious something so costly something so undeserved that you cannot but wake up every morning with a deep sense of gratitude in your heart when I think about pursuing God through both these objective and subjective means there's a line in the valley of vision that I've always kind of come back to several times over and it's an image of not letting go in this fight it says let me not lay my pipe too short of the fountain never touching the eternal spring never drawing down water from above

I guess it's my prayer for myself it's my prayer for you don't lay your pipe too short there is life giving water coming from God make sure you stick that pipe right up in the fountain and you get all of it work at that pursue God and then you will abound in thanksgiving let's pray our King and our Lord we want you by your spirit to take the objective truths of the gospel and to bury them in our hearts so that when you scratch down deep and you say what is really driving this person what is controlling this person what is motivating this person it is not our sinful selves but it is Christ and his love Father won't you do that for all of us this morning Lord because we are in all sorts of different spaces right now we are experiencing all sorts of different things and those things make us doubt that Christ is at the center of our lives those things make us doubt your love and your kindness and so I pray that your spirit would expel that doubt and fixate us upon Christ

Lord I pray for any person who is here this morning who has never trusted in the objective work of Jesus who has never seen that Jesus died on a cross 2000 years ago to save them from sin I pray that they would repent of their sin and trust in him this morning and find life but for us as a church Lord may we all encourage and help each other to keep circling back to these objective truths keep praying for each other praying with each other so that these truths might go deeper and deeper into our hearts and we ask this for Christ's sake and his glory Amen