

To Bring Us Eternal Life

1 John 1:1-4

Pastor John Miller

This morning if you have your Bible with you, I'd like you to open it to 1 John, chapter 1. The First Epistle of John, chapter 1. We begin a Christmas series. We're going to take a break from the Gospel of Mark, we'll come back to that after the first of the year. And we're going to look at the reasons Christ came. I always find that at Christmastime, to get the full blessing and benefit Christmas, I like to think deeply about Christmas. Not just sentimentally, but to think theologically and deeply about the significance of the Incarnation. Why would God become a man? Why did God send his son to Earth and why did God become a man? What's the purpose and meaning and significance of Christmas? And is it really an Incarnation? Who was Jesus Christ? I don't know if you saw Time magazine this week, again, cover story, "Jesus Christ and Who is He?" And this time of the year people think about Jesus and what is Christmas all about? So if anyone is going to think about Jesus at Christmas, it should be Christians, right?

I remember last year, there was a lawsuit against Walmart because they dared at Christmas to play Christmas music in their stores. The audacity of them. That they would actually play Christmas music in their stores at Christmas. And there was actually a lawsuit against that, that they would play music that actually sang about Jesus at Christmastime. So we want to put Christ where he belongs, at the center of our Christmas this year, amen?

So we're going to do that. And so my first message this morning is that he came to bring us eternal life. And all these sermons are going to be brought right out of 1 John. And we're going to look at why he was manifested. And the first message is he came to bring us eternal life. 1 John, chapter 1, verses 1-4. With your Bibles open, let's pray.

Father, thank you for your Word. We pray that you will speak today through what you've spoken. Your word is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it's able to pierce the dividing of the joint and marrow and to discern the thoughts and intents of our heart. I pray that if there are any here this morning that do not know you, Lord Jesus, as their personal savior, that they would come to know you, the giver of eternal life. The source of eternal life. And that they would find that joy in knowing Jesus. That they would know eternal life and life more abundantly. So Lord, speak now, we pray, and we'll give you thanks and we'll give you praise. We ask it in Jesus' name, and everyone, agreeing, said amen.

I want you to follow me in your Bible, beginning in verse 1. John says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, which our hands have handled, of the Word of life;" One of John's favorite phrases for Jesus Christ, the Word of life. "For the life was manifested," there's our word, "and we have seen it, and we bear witness, and we show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and again was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship," the Greek word is koinonia, "with us. And truly our fellowship," our

koinonia, "is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. These things write we unto you that your joy may be full."

Well it's pretty obvious that it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, right? And what a blessing that is, but with Christmas comes busy-ness. We begin to bake, we begin to decorate. My wife decorates the inside, I decorate the outside. She gets done first, take me a while. The older I get, the harder it gets to get on the ladder to put up the lights, you know, and you're always competing with the neighbors, you know. They got Santa Claus coming out of the chimney, and flying an airplane and everything. And my lights are from the 1960s, you know, and they're burnt out and I haven't replaced them. And I just kind of throw them up. And, but, you know, you're working to decorate the house and you cook and you bake. And everybody's favorite, shopping. Going to the mall. Seems like every mall I go to I can see the sign over the door, "Abandon all hope ye who enter here."

I remember my little boy Jerrod [phonetic], when my wife used to shop and take him to the malls, and he would cry, and just cry, "Do I have to? Do I have to go? Do I have to go?" You know? And I mean, I do the same thing and I'm a grown man. "Do I have to go? Do I have to go?" And my wife will say, "If you're good I'll buy you a sucker." Getting dragged around the mall and trying to find a parking spot. And, you know, Christmas gets busy, but the thing we need to stop and ask is, "Why did Jesus come at Christmas? What is the true meaning of Christmas?"

And in 1 John, chapter 1, we find here in verse 2 that "The life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness. And we show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." I propose to you that God sent his son into the world that we might have eternal life. That eternal life is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. We're familiar with John 3:16, which is the Bible in one verse. "For God so loved the world," right? "That he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him would never perish, but have everlasting life." There's that phrase.

Why did God send his son, his only begotten son into to world at Christmas? The answer: that we might have everlasting, or eternal, life. Now we need to understand what we mean by eternal life. By eternal life, Biblically, we're not talking about eternal existence, we're not talking about quantity of time, we're talking about quality of life. It's not just living forever, it's a new dimension, it's a new quality of life.

Before we come to know Jesus Christ, the Bible says we are dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians, chapter 2. "Wherein we walked according to the course of this world. But when we came to know Jesus Christ we were given new life. We were regenerated, made alive in Christ." That is eternal life. So eternal life begins the moment we are born again, or saved. And so it's life in a new dimension, it's life with a new quality. It's life that is eternal, and it begins the moment that you are saved.

John 17, Jesus, in what is his great high priestly prayer. He opens that prayer in saying, "Father, I will that thou will give me those that you have given me, that they be with me, that one day

they may see my glory. The glory I had with you before the word was." And he says, "And this life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and he whom thou hast sent." Life eternal is knowing God and knowing his son Jesus Christ, the one whom he has sent. So eternal life is a person, it's Jesus Christ. It's a relationship with Jesus Christ, and it's life that is abundant, it's spiritual life, it's life that is on a new level, life that is on a new plane.

So Christmas is a story of God giving his son that we might have eternal life, a life that is not just quantity, but a quality of life. Now I want to, in this text, show you three things about eternal life. The first is the source of eternal life, in verse 1. Notice in verse 1. John says, "that which was from the beginning." Now "that which was from the beginning" is a reference to Jesus Christ himself. John is big on beginnings. And there are three big beginnings in the Bible. The first is Genesis, Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, writing the book of Genesis. Genesis 1:1, right? The great beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God," what? "...created the heavens and the earth." And we know from Colossians that that Creator God, Genesis 1:1, was none other than Jesus Christ. By him were all things created, and without him was nothing created. So Jesus is the Creator. He's also the sustainer, and he's the goal of creation. So he's the source of creation, he's the sustainer of creation, and he's the one that creation is going to, he's the goal of creation.

And then the second beginning in the Bible is John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 1. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God," or God was the Word. So you have the eternal Word, you have the personal Word, "The Word was with God," face to face, and you have the divine Word, "And the Word was God."

And then the third great beginning is our text, 1 John 1:1, "That which was from the beginning." Now some scholars say that this beginning is a beginning of his ministry, or the beginning of the Gospel. But I think that it fits the context better to see John again here speaking of the eternity, or the fact that Jesus Christ is the eternal God. I think that John opens this book up speaking of the fact that Jesus is the eternal God. Let's not forget at Christmas that the baby born in the Bethlehem manger was none other than the eternal God. I never grow tired or weary of thinking of the truth that the baby born in Bethlehem was God manifested in the flesh. God contracted to expand, incomprehensibly made man. What a mind blowing thought. That God would condescend to Earth and be born a little baby.

Now this God is eternal. You ever have your kids ask you where God came from? And you go, "He didn't come from anyone." They look at you like you're stupid. How can something not come from anyone? Who made the guy who made the guy who made the guy who made God? Where did God come from? And you go, "He didn't come from... God always has been. God is eternal." Now I know that we can't wrap our minds around that, but no big deal, there's a lot of things I can't get my mind around. If God was small enough for me to get my mind around he wouldn't be big enough for my needs, right? I don't understand cell phones.

It was just a few months ago that I finally got an iPhone. I'm getting emails on my phone. Freak out time. I have all these emails unanswered on my phone. If you email me on my phone, forget

it, you'll never hear from me. I got an email on my phone from Australia. They will never hear from me. I just look at it and think, "Oh what a sad thing. They emailed me. They'll never hear from me." I don't know how that works, I don't know how to communicate, I don't know what to do with it. It looks cool. But I don't know how to use it. And how does your voice go through nothing? How does a cordless cell phone, how does your voice just float around in space and then go into that cell phone in their ear? I don't know how that works. I don't know how an image is transmitted through space and comes onto a screen. I just...I don't know how that works, but it works.

And just the wonder of wonders that God is eternal. That God always has existed. There never was a time when God was not. That's amazing. Eternal God. And God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Dwelling in eternity past. And then God the Son submitting to the purpose and plans of redemption came down to Earth. Some verses to support this. Micah, chapter 5, verse 2. You'll see it on Christmas cards. "And now Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little amazing the nations, yet of thee shall come forth he, who shall be ruler of my people, whose goings forth have been from old, even from everlasting. Jesus Christ, whose rulings have been from everlasting, came to Bethlehem." Micah 5, verse 2. Colossians chapter 1, verse 17. "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." Now that Colossians verse supports the fact that he pre-existed before Bethlehem. Doesn't necessarily indicate he is eternal, but he did exist before Bethlehem. And then I said John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word." Keep your place here 1 John 1:1, and turn with me to 1 John, chapter 5, verse 20.

I want to show you an amazing verse. We'll come back to chapter 1, but look at verse 20 of 1 John 5:20. Notice John says, "And we know that the son of God is come." So here's our Christmas message. "And have given to us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ this is the..." What? This is the what? True God and what? Amazing. Jesus Christ, "the true God and eternal life." Says it in the Word of God. And yet you'll run into people that say, "Well, you know, Jesus never claimed to be God." Or, "The Bible doesn't teach that he's God."

Not only did Jesus claim to be divine, the Bible declares him to be divine. Both Old Testament and New Testament. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." When Moses was at the burning bush and he said, "Who am I going to tell the children of Israel I'm being sent by?" A voice from the bush came back and said, "You tell them I am hath sent you." Every time Jesus used the I am statements, "I am the way," "I am the truth," "I am the door," "I am the bread of God," "Before Abraham was, I am." Ego eimi. He was the voice speaking to Moses from the burning bush. "I am." He is Jehovah, he is Yahweh. He is the God from all eternity past.

And this God, this eternal God, came down to Earth and was born in a manger. A manger is a little feeding trough that animals would eat out of. Mary and Joseph had to clean out it, put some fresh straw in it, and lay their little baby in this manger. What a humble beginning that God would come and be born in a manger. So he is the source of eternal life because he is eternal himself.

I want you to see secondly in verse 2, go back with me to chapter 1 of 1 John if you haven't turned back. I want you to see in chapter 1, verse 2 the manifestation of eternal life. So the source of eternal life is Jesus Christ, because he is the eternal God. But the manifestation of eternal life, which really is the Christmas story, is, in verse 2, it says there, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it. And we bear witness, and we show it you that eternal life which was with the Father, and it was manifested unto us." So John says, "We've seen it. It was manifested to us. He was with the Father, and he condescended down to us and was manifested unto us."

Now John uses this word manifested to us, but it was more than what we would think of as just a manifestation. He didn't just appear and then just vanish and disappear. It is what we call an Incarnation. He appeared, so it's a manifestation, but when God came to Earth, it was an Incarnation. And I don't use those to just try to impress you that I know big words. I use those words because they're important. That word means becoming flesh. And it's an important word. Jesus was God incarnate, God become flesh. And the word conveys the idea that he had full, underline the word full, human nature. He was fully human. Not sinful. You and I are fully sinful human. Do I get an amen?

Some of you are like, "Not me brotha. You're talking about my husband but not me." All of us. All have sinned, all have come short of the glory of God. God only has one son without sin, and that's Jesus Christ. By the way he has none without sorrow. All of God's children have sorrow. And Jesus came with a full human nature, but it wasn't sinful. Because there in the womb of a virgin named Mary, she conceived, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It was an immaculate conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The power of God came upon her. And that which was conceived in her womb was the work of the Holy Spirit. What a miracle was the conception of God in her womb. Now the baby grew and the baby developed like any other pregnancy. The baby had to grow and develop. She probably had morning sickness, she probably made Joseph go get bagels with ice cream on them at midnight, you know. And she probably went to all the other things that a normal pregnant woman would. And the baby was born like a normal baby and everything was normal. But the conception was miraculous. And the child was the son of God.

And he was fully man and fully God in one person, Jesus Christ. Now no one ever before had ever been a God man, and no one after would ever be a God man. So he is the only savior of the world. No prophet, no priest, no king, no guru, no holy man, no one has ever been a God man. So Jesus is perfectly suited, and the only one ever suited to redeem man, to save man from sin. That's why we worship him. He's the savior of the world. He's the only one that can save us. He can place his hand on man because he was a man, and he can place his hand on God because he was a God, he's the perfect bridge builder between God and man.

So here we have his humanity. First his deity, he's the source of eternal life. Now his humanity. In 1 Timothy, chapter 3, verse 16, "Great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifested in the flesh." And so this Word of life, this eternal life, became a man. John says in his gospel, chapter 1, verse 14, "The Word became flesh." Actually it's, "He pitched his tent among us."

That's literally what it means in the Greek. John, chapter 1, verse 14. "He pitched his tent among us." God pitched his tent and lived among us. And John wants to make it very clear, notice back in verse 1, where John says there, he says, "which we have heard," verse 1, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and which our hands have handled of the Word of life." So four things. We heard him, we saw him, we looked upon him, we touched him.

Now why is John emphasizing in verse 1 so much? We heard him, we saw him, we looked upon him, we touched him. The reason John is emphasizing this so much is because there were false teachers who were beginning to come on the scene at this time known as Gnostics. It was known as the Gnostic Heresy. The word Gnostic comes from the word to know, ginosko. And they claimed a deeper knowledge than anyone else. And basically Gnosticism taught that matter was evil and only spirit was good. Now I don't have the time to go into great detail on the Gnostic Heresy, but it was on the scene by the time John wrote this letter, and it on the scene with us today in modern days. It's called dualism. Matter is evil, only spirit is good. The implications are quite prevalent.

Now since matter is evil and only spirit is good, they believe that Jesus did not have an actual physical body. It was a branch of Gnosticism known as Cerinthianism, and they taught that Jesus was just a phantom or a ghost. That he wasn't God incarnate. It was kind of like Casper the friendly ghost. How many of you are old enough to remember Casper the friendly ghost? All you old people raise your hand. Remember those old Casper the friendly ghost cartoons? And if you reached out to touch Casper, if you reach out to shake his hand your hand would just go right through Casper the friendly ghost. And that's what they taught. Jesus, when he walked along the beach, he wouldn't leave footprints. Because he wasn't a real man, he didn't have a real body.

Listen very carefully. We don't often think about this. To deny the full humanity of Jesus Christ is just as heretical as to deny his full deity. To deny the full humanity or diminish his humanity is just as heretical as to deny his deity. Today you hear a lot about his deity, but it is just as unscriptural to deny his humanity. Jesus was tired, Jesus was thirsty, Jesus wept, Jesus went through all the human emotions that we do. He was fully man. He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. He was fully man and fully God, one person, Jesus Christ. He was perfectly suited to be our redeemer.

Notice John emphasizes to come against the Gnostic Heresy. "We heard him, we saw him, we looked upon him, we touched him." This phrase "we heard him" in the Greek means "we're still hearing him." So in the present tense. His voice is ringing still in our ears. "We saw him." Notice what he says, "with our eyes." Well John, how else do you see but with your eyes? You know, when we want to really emphasize something we say, "I saw it with my own two eyes." Like as though we had three or four eyes? "I saw it with my own two eyes." Funny figure of speech, right? What do we have, three eyes or something? And then notice the next phrase he used, "And we looked upon him." So he goes from "saw him," to "looked upon him." That little phrase in the Greek, looked upon him, we get our theater from. It doesn't mean just a casual

glance or look at, it means an intense intentional stare or gaze upon.

I can imagine that often the disciples found themselves just staring and gawking at Jesus. Just like, "Whoa, dude, who are you?" I mean, when he stood up in the boat and he told the wind, "Be muzzled. "Peace, be still!" And the waves and the wind just phew, stopped. And all of a sudden there was a great calm. They just like looked at him, like, "Whoa, get down Jesus." I've been out in a boat on a boat on a fishing trip or a surf trip on a boat, and the waves are splashing. It's like, "I wish Jesus were here right now." He just stood up and said, "Peace, be still." He actually said, "Be muzzled," to the wind. And just, phew, stopped. And the ocean just went, the sea just went into a calm.

They must have just stared at him. And I think sometimes when they were sleeping around him, they'd wake up and they'd just roll over and just look at him. Jesus must have woken up and they're all staring right at him. Like, "What's you guys doing?" And then notice the next phrase. "We touched him." And again, the very Greek phrased used there, it doesn't mean that we just bumped into him or just slapped him on the back, "Hey Jesus, how are you doing?" It means that we reached out with an intentional purpose to touch him. We touched him, we took hold of him.

I think of doubting Thomas after the resurrection. And Jesus was in his glorified body, and Jesus said, "Thomas, be not unbelieving, but believing. Reach hither your hand and touch me and see that it is I. A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have." Thomas reached out and touched him. And then Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." He confessed Jesus to be who he was, his Lord and his God. And by the way, Jesus didn't rebuke Thomas for that statement. He is Thomas's lord and his God.

So John wants to make it very clear that this eternal life was manifested. I believe that we can experience the Christ of Christmas. That we can hear him, see him, look upon him, and touch him, and be touched by him. I don't know about you, but this Christmas, as every Christmas, my prayer is that we see Jesus, that we touch Jesus, that we hear Jesus, amen?

And that he touches us. That we experience Christ this Christmas. That we not just blast through this season all excited about the fun things that we do, but that we really see Jesus, that we really hear Jesus, that we really touch Jesus. Someone said he wrapped his love in flesh and blood, and sent him down to man. What a beautiful picture. God wrapped his love in flesh and blood and he sent him down to man. But there's a third point I want to make, verses 3 and 4.

Not only do we see the source of eternal life, and we see secondly the manifestation of eternal life, we see thirdly the declaration or proclamation of eternal life in verses three and four. In verse three and four we see the proclamation of eternal life. John says, "That which we have seen and heard we now declare unto you that you may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ. These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

Heard the story of a missionary group going into a ghetto and they were cooking meals. And they were in this mission compound, this mission base, and they were cooking a meal. And the windows had steamed up and there was a little boy who had come to look through the window and to see the hot meal that they cooked. And the little boy was looking through the window, and one of the missionaries had wiped away the steam and saw the little boy looking through the window. And he motioned to him to come on in, and the boy went around and came in, and they sat him down and put a big plate of food in front of the little boy.

His eyes got big with excitement as he sat in front of this meal. And then he burst into tears and began to cry. And they thought, "What's the matter? Why are you crying? Aren't you hungry?" He said, "Yeah, I'm hungry, but back in the ghetto that I live in, all my friends are real hungry. And they have nothing to eat. And I simply can't sit down and eat this meal and enjoy this meal without going back and getting my friends. And bringing them here, and having them come to enjoy this meal with me." You know, that's a picture of what we as Christians should be doing.

We've tasted of the Lord. We have the gospel blessings. We know the Lord, we've partaken of him. It's time for us to declare him to others and to share him with others, amen? To tell others what God has done in our life. And really Christmas is all about that. What an opportunity we have this Christmas. To be able to spread the declaration that God became a man to bring to us eternal life. This is the message of Christmas. Let's take advantage this year to spread the gospel, to spread the good news. To tell everyone that we meet the meaning of Christmas.

This is what John is doing in this verse. "We declare unto you that you may have fellowship." As I pointed out earlier, that word in the Greek is *koinonia*. It means joint participation or sharing in common together. Notice that we share together in the family of God with us. As a Christian, God is our father, and we are one in the family of God. When you're born again you become a child of God and you share with other believers in the family of God. And then we also share with the Father. Notice he says there in verse three, "and with the Father." And then thirdly in verse three, "with his son Jesus Christ." Christian fellowship is not a superficial social comraderie, but rather a spiritual fellowship with a father and with a son. Oh how pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity.

What a blessing to gather here this morning, and to lift our hearts and our hands. And to worship the Lord together with him. What a joy. We are so blessed to worship God together here. Don't ever take that for granted. And don't get so busy this Christmas. Don't get so busy this Christmas that you forget Christ. Don't get so busy with parties, baking, and shopping that you forget to be in fellowship with God and with other believers in the house of God. People get so busy at Christmas that sometimes church attendance drops in December. So busy with Christmas I don't have time for church. I'm too tired to go to church.

Let's keep Christ the center center of Christmas this year. Keep worshiping him, fellowshiping with others. With one another and with Jesus Christ. We're so blessed here. We have a blessed time of worship, time in his Word. And what a blessed time we could have this December if we keep the center of our Christmas. And verse 4, "These things write we unto you, that your,"

what? "Joy may be full." Christmas is a time of fullness of joy. Fullness of joy. Jesus came to bring us eternal life, which does result in joy.

The fruit of eternal life is joy. When you read all the narrative accounts of the Christmas story, you find everyone around the Christmas story experience great joy. Luke chapter 2, verse 10. "The angels said unto them, "Fear not. For behold, I bring you good tidings of," what? "Great joy." Not just joy, but "I bring you great joy." We sing at Christmastime, "Joy to the world," right? "The Lord has come, let earth receive her king." The believers experience joy because salvation brings us joy. The Bible says, "With joy will you draw water from the wells of salvation." The scriptures bring us joy. If you're a Christian, not only does salvation bring you joy, but you find great joy in reading the Word of God. Soul winning brings you joy. The Bible says, "With joy shall they return, bringing the sheaves with them." What a blessed thing [INAUDIBLE 00:36:47].

Joy is something the world doesn't have. It has pleasure, it can have happiness. Happiness is based on happenings. Circumstances. Joy is a fruit of the spirit. Everything can be going wrong, all your circumstances can be adverse and difficult and bad, but joy is a fruit of the spirit. It's like an artesian well springing up within your soul, amen? It doesn't matter what's going on around you. Paul can be in a prison in Philippi, his feet and hands fast in stock at midnight. And he turns to Silas and he says, "Let's sing to the Lord." They start singing and rejoicing in the Lord, because they have the joy of the spirit. Silas says the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, and peace. If you're lacking joy this morning, you need the Holy Spirit in your life. If you're lacking peace, you need the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is life eternal. And that life eternal brings you love, it brings you joy, it brings you peace. All these things we talk about at Christmastime are found in Jesus Christ. The gift is eternal life, the package is his son, Jesus Christ. The only way to get the gift is to receive the package, Jesus Christ.

Now I got one last verse I want you to look at. I want you to turn with me to chapter 5, and I'll wrap this up. Chapter 5 of 1 John. And I want to read verse 11 to 13. Marvelous summary of how God has given to us, in his son, eternal life. And we can know that we have eternal life. 1 John 5, verse 11 to 13. John says, "This is the record that God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in," who? "His son. He that has his son has life. He that has not the son of God has not life. These things write I unto you, to believe on the name of the son of God. That you might know that you have eternal life." There are four things I want you to see. Eternal life is a gift of God, verse 11. "God has given unto us eternal life." You can't work for it, you can't earn it, you can't deserve it, you can't merit it. God wants to give it to you today as a free gift.

At Christmastime you get gifts. You don't get out your wallet after you've opened all your gifts and says, "Okay, can I pay you for the underwear? How much did the undies cost? How much did the socks cost you?" You know? And you don't pay for your gifts. They're gifts, right? They're given to you. Somebody else had to pay for them. Salvation is a free gift. It's not easy to receive gifts, it's a humbling thing. God wants to give you a free gift, it's eternal life. Second thing we learn from this verse is that that gift is found in Jesus Christ. Verse 11 and 12. This gift, this life, is in his son. "He that hath the son," verse 12, "has life. He that has not the son has not life." It is only found in Jesus Christ. It's found nowhere else.

Thirdly, it's through believing. It's through believing. That gift is received by trusting in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone, amen? It comes through faith. By grace are you saved through faith. And that not of yourself. It is a gift of God. Not of works. [INAUDIBLE 00:40:46]. Believing, trusting, and faith are all synonyms for the same concept. It's basically reaching out and receiving what God has given. Saying, "Lord, I believe. Lord, I receive. Lord, I trust you. I can't get to heaven on my own. I come to you by faith. I receive what Jesus did for me." Jesus died on the cross for your sins. He took your place on the cross. He died in your place. He was buried and he rose again.

Now God wants to offer you that salvation as a free gift, but you receive it by faith. If you reject that, you will die in your sin and spend eternity separated from God. If you received that, your sins will be forgiven, you will be given eternal life, and you will spend eternity with God in heaven. There's one last point I want to make. You can know. You can know. Verse 13 says, "These things write we unto you that believe in the name of the son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." John closes that verse by saying you can know that you have eternal life. You can know today, beyond any shadow of a doubt. No one has to leave here today without knowing that you have eternal life. I want to give you an opportunity today to invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart and to forgive your sins. To give you that gift of eternal life. You can know his joy, you can know his peace, you can know his love. Things that money can't buy.

All the gifts that you're hoping to get for Christmas can't bring you the joy and the love and the peace that Jesus can give. And when you die or when the Lord returns, you can know beyond any shadow of a doubt that you'll go to heaven for all eternity. And if you're here today, going to church won't make you a Christian, going to church won't save your soul. You, not your wife, not your husband, not your kids, not your parents, you must open the door of your heart and accept Jesus Christ as your savior. You must receive him and receive him into your heart in your life and your savior and lord. You must say, "Jesus, I'm sorry for my sins. I believe you died on that cross. I receive you today. Forgive me and give me eternal life." If you haven't made that commitment...Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door of your heart and I knock. And if you hear my voice and you open that door, I will come in. And I will have fellowship with you." I'm going to give you that opportunity today. I want every head bowed and every eye closed as we pray together.

Lord, I pray that you'll speak to every heart that's here today. And God, if there are any here that have not surrendered their life to you today, oh God, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ that they would surrender their heart and surrender their life to you, oh God. I pray that they would yield their lives to you today and say, "Lord, take my life. Come into my heart and be my savior and be my Lord."