



Sermon – 07/16/2017

John 11:1 – 44

Well so much for being the most eloquent opening to a sermon of all time. Told Bethany I was debating on the way over here a couple ways to open and the Lord just solved that one for us. So we're going to do our best for me to work with a hand held mic, which is not my natural, but we're going to go with it. You be in prayer for our pastor. He is headed up to Southwestern Seminary this week to teach for the next two weeks a class. He'll be here next Sunday, but he is teaching a class and you can be in prayer for him for wisdom to teach, but especially for those young men that he is teaching that they would be receptive of the wisdom he would give them. They have, they are going to preaching through what he's preaching through on Sunday mornings. So they need to pay attention.

My name is Wes Wilkinson. I'm the college pastor here if you're one of our visitors here today. If you've got your Bible I want you to turn to John 11. And I, this week, there was a wrestling at the beginning of the week, just praying with the Lord where God wanted us to be here, be this Sunday, where he wanted us to hit in his word. And initially I went somewhere else, but just could not get away from the Spirit's tug to be at this passage which, in a way, frightened me because there is a story for me that ties into this passage; that makes this passage just even more real in my life in a powerful way. The story starts back almost 10 years ago; December 9, 2007. I was with my peers in the dorm room in college. It was our first week of finals, Sunday in between finals week, we were doing what most freshmen guys do which is procrastinate from studying for finals. So we're hanging out. It's about 9:30 or 10:00 at night. And my phone rings. I answered the phone. It's mom and all she says is, "Wes, I'm at the dorm. Come outside." And I proceed to walk out into the hall and as I turned, the RA's coming back to get me. He's got a concerned look on his face and it was a somber walk as I walked out knowing somebody has died. I don't know who. I don't know what. Something's wrong. And so I get down in the dorm lobby and I will never forget, just seared in my memory, Mom grabbing me by the hands, looking me in the eyes, and trying to get through her words and say, "Wes, Mimi W was murdered at the front door tonight." And I could not even wrap my mind around it. Tried to figure out what to do. Decided that I would go pack a bag and I would head over to the house; that's where Dad was, it's where my Grandfather was, it's where several others were. And so I drove over and that night saw things and heard things that I would never, never wish upon my worst enemy. My grandmother had been murdered. As time would go on we'd find out she was murdered by a hit man who went to the wrong house. How do you wrap your mind around it? It sounds like something out of a movie. And you're watching things flash on the TV and it hit me

and hit my family at the perfect moment. So many of you showered us with love and affection. The problem was we weren't here to be surrounded by it 24/7. We were in a place where nobody knew us. Mom and Dad were at a new church. I was in college. And frankly that kind of heaviness and that kind of weight of life is the last thing on most college students' minds. And so I began to walk this path of sorrow, this path of grief, this path that was just covered in death. And wrestling with the Lord and walking with the Lord; how do you walk through this path?

What is the Lord's response to this? How does the Lord move in this? And that's where we find ourselves in the passage today; John chapter 11. Jesus has just gone out East. He had made some blasphemous statements to the Jews. They tried to stone him in chapter 10. And now we arrive at chapter 11 and this is what it says:

¹Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother, Lazarus, who was sick. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, the one whom you love is sick." ⁴When Jesus heard it he said, "This sickness will not hint in death. But it is for the glory of God, so that that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵Now Jesus loved Martha, he loved her sister, and he loved Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was.

You come into this text and you see several things right off the bat. There is an emphasis, what's happened is Lazarus, this family that Jesus loves, Lazarus is sick, something's going on. They send word to Jesus out East. Jesus, the one whom you love is sick. And there's a repetition throughout here. And the repetition is emphasizing the fact that Jesus absolutely loves this family. There is no lack of love in Jesus' heart for them. Two different words for love are used. Likely saying the same thing. But if we were to even look at the differences what you have here is Jesus loves this family unconditionally out of the sheer goodness of who he is. He loves them with the love of God. But there is also a love inside of that that he has affection for this family. He enjoys this family. These people are dear to his heart. The text is clear. Jesus hears this sickness, he loves this family, and he makes a statement. He says, "All that is going to happen is for the glory of God." You see that Jesus' clear commitment, as you see throughout his whole life, Jesus in his love for us was always first and foremost committed to doing what the Father said when the Father said to do it, how the Father said to do it. And it was always about seeing the Father glorified. Seeing God revealed to be God. And he says specifically that not only is this about the glory of the Father, but through this, through what is going to happen, the Son of God will be glorified. And we'll see that as we come to the end of the chapter. There is a commitment to the glory of God. Here's what's interesting. He loves this family. What's happening is going to happen for the glory of God. But it says in verse 6 when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he remained.

If you want to take any guesses what that word, he remained, means in the Greek it means; he remained. He did nothing. And a heart full of affection and love for one who is suffering, for people that he cares for, Jesus does absolutely nothing when he hears the crying. He doesn't do

anything. And so he picks up in verse 7 and tells the disciples, “Let’s go to Judea again.” And they have this back and forth conversation that we’re going to skip over. But the basic crux of the conversation is that they’re saying, “Jesus you want to go back there? Back there is where everyone wants to stone you. It’s dangerous.” And Jesus is just fearless in the face of it because his point is, “My time hasn’t come. God’s got a purpose. God’s got a path. And we’ve got to go there and do what the Lord says to do. So we’re going.” But he does make an interesting statement in verse 14. He says to them

¹⁴plainly, “Lazarus has died, ¹⁵and I rejoice for you that I wasn’t there, so that you may believe.

In all the narrative that follows there is a rejoicing in Christ that even though there has been sorrow and what has happened is bad, he rejoices so that his disciples, these 12 men, that they would walk away from this believing. That they would walk away from this believing and knowing who he is and who he reveals himself to be. So pick up in verse 17:

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days.

Now there’s a significance. Mary’s going to, or Martha’s going to mention at the end of the text once again that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days. There is likely a, there’s decent evidence that there was a belief held in ancient Jews that when a person died the soul would hover over the body for three days. And on the fourth day when the soul saw that the body began to decompose the soul would then move on to the afterlife. So significance of four days is, this is not just that someone has died, but there is absolutely no hope for any kind of miracle of anything happening. This person is fully and completely dead. It is irreversible. Jesus showing up four days later means that Jesus shows up when there is absolutely no hope. And so he arrives. Bethany’s near Jerusalem. You can go there today. It’s literally just across the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives. It’s less than two miles. It says:

¹⁹many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

You have many people coming out of Jerusalem, coming up into Bethany to be with them, to mourn with them, to weep with them, to console them.

²⁰As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”

Now we need to be careful. When you read this to not read this like a 21st century American. Because the statement here is not an accusation against Jesus. “If you would have been here, Lord, if you would have gotten here, he wouldn’t have died.” That’s not what she’s saying. What she’s saying is a statement of faith. “Lord I know that had you been here he wouldn’t have died. I know that you possess the power to keep that.” What she did not know was the fullness of who Jesus is. It’s what she’s going to see. But here statement’s one of faith and she reiterates

it by saying, “Even now, even though he’s died, I know that the Father hears you. I know that the Father hears what she’s saying.”

²³And so Jesus looks back at her and he says, “Your brother will rise again.”

Now Martha takes it, verse 24, and says, “Oh yeah, on the last day he’ll rise again.” Then Jesus does something. This is one of five I Am statements in the gospel of John. John uses these statements of Jesus to demonstrate that Jesus is the I Am. He is God. He is the one who appeared to Moses in the Bush, Exodus 3, and this is what Jesus says, verse 25:

²⁵“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live, ²⁶everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

His statement is profound because her focus is on something that’s out in the future, that’s distant and abstract to her, and he turns her and he says, “No, the resurrection is not something coming. I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, the one who rests in me, the one who places their faith in me, that one, even if he dies, that one will live. And the one who lives and believes in me will never die.” And so he turns it to her and he calls her to really a response of personal faith in him. She’s at a place apparently in her grief, she’s at a place where she can have this conversation with Christ. And what Christ does is take her focus and faith off of the future and puts it on himself in the present. And he makes a bold statement. He’s not just, that he has power, but he is the resurrection. He is life. We see that in the rest of scripture. And so they have this conversation and Martha goes back in verse 28 and she pulls Mary aside privately in the house. You can picture a house crowded full of people. She pulls Mary aside privately and tells Mary, verse 30, verse 29:

²⁸The teacher is here and he’s calling for you. He’s summoning you. ²⁹So as soon as Mary hears this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰And Jesus was still in the same place where he was when Martha had met with him.

But you’ve got a bunch of Jews, verse 31, who see Mary get up and leave and they assume she’s going to the tomb to morn so they follow her. Now verse 32:

³²As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, and she says the same as Martha, “Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her were weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled.

You have Mary show up. Mary makes a similar statement. It’s not a statement of indictment against Jesus, it’s a statement of faith. But Mary’s not quite in the same place as Martha. So Mary falls at his feet. The word for weeping there is the kind of weeping that is outwardly demonstrated by tears and wailing and moaning. It can be everything from just a natural response all the way to a professional mourners that were employed in Jewish times. She is, she is beside herself. She is in pain. She is in grief. And here is the one whom she knows loves her and she comes out and meets him and it causes her to just collapse. She falls at his feet and Jesus sees her crying and it says that He, your translation will probably say he was deeply moved in his

spirit. That word, it's interesting what you do, kind of study in there, German that you translated it different than you do in English. Most English translations do deeply moved. The word really means, though, indignation. Indignation is anger at something that is unjust and wrong. So what happens is Jesus sees the people mourning. He sees Mary, the one whom he loves, grieving and he becomes indignant. There is an anger that arouses in him; inside his deepest being, inside his spirit, and he's troubled. That word troubled is visibly he's shaken. There is something that is causing a violent and a strong reaction inside of him. I have to ask the question, what is it? You go through the text, seems to be that what Jesus is indignant at is the impact and the effects of death on the people that he loves on his very creation. Jesus hates death. Jesus did not create, Jesus is, he's already said, I am the life. Death is the opposite of life. Sin is the opposite of a holy, holy, holy God. Death is the child of sin. Jesus is fundamentally opposed to the imposter and the destroyer that is death. And he is indignant at the affects that it has caused. And so when he sees this, it moves him. And he asks this question, "Where have you put him?" And they told him, "Come and see." And then they arrive at what is every fourth graders favorite Bible verse because they think it's so funny it's two words. But the weight of it, Jesus wept. Now it's a different word for weeping. It's not the word of wailing and of screaming out, but it's the word for shedding of tears. You have Jesus angered by what death has done, what death has caused. He sees those whom he loves grieving. And his response is not to grab them and say, "Hey! Everybody suck it up, dry up your tears, we're going to go over here, we're going to raise, we're going to pull Lazarus out of the grave." His response is to shed tears with them. This is the heart of the Savior who truly understands how to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. Not that grief is a weakness, but that we are prone to the, we are weak, we are weak people, we are prone to the effects of decay and death. Hebrews 4 says he's able to sympathize, to suffer, with. Isaiah 53 says that Jesus is a man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief. And this is the picture you see here in how he treats Mary. Verse 38. So Jesus, they move from this scene, and it says:

³⁸Jesus, indignant again, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone lying against it.

³⁹And Jesus commands, "Remove the stone, pull the stone out."

Now Martha, who's had this conversation and encounter with Christ earlier, but hasn't totally gotten it, she kind of rebuttles him and she says, "Lord, there's already a stench because he's dead four days. And Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" And belief there, just as a reminder, belief there is simply the verbal form of faith. So this is not, if you wishfully think something would happen, then you're going to see the glory of God. No, this is you resting upon that which is absolutely fact even if you don't see it in front of you. Every one of you is exercising faith and I'm not. You're exercising faith that that chair possesses the ability to hold your body up off the ground. And so you're doing absolutely nothing to keep yourself up. That is what faith is. It is complete and total trust and rest. And he is saying, "If you have truly faith, if you truly believed, did I not tell you you would see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone and then Jesus prays and his pray is a prayer demonstrating that the Father hears him, but we're going to jump down to 43. And after he prays he shouts, he literally screams, "Lazarus! Come out!" And the most anticlimactic, one verse, is given to us. The most shocking moment that any of these people have ever seen:

⁴⁴The dead man came out, bound hand and foot with linen strips, and with his face wrapped in a cloth. And Jesus said to him, “Unwrap him, and let him go.”

And then presumably they go home and have dinner that night. What a crazy dinner. Because Lazarus isn't going to look decayed. Because not only did Jesus just call a dead man out of the tomb, but he just called a man who had the physical effects of decay on his body and he didn't call out a man who was decayed. He called out a man who was fully healed. This is the story you see the glory of God demonstrated. Jesus has now shown, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He makes a bold claim that's worthless if he doesn't back it up. But he's just backed it up. And it says in the next verse:

⁴⁵Many Jews will believe in him.

And as you see this and they believe. But even bigger than this he said this would lead to the glory of God. It is this miracle if you go on and read the rest of John, this miracle is the very thing that drives the Pharisees. The Pharisees walk away from this determined to kill Jesus. This miracle leads into chapter 12 where Mary, out of this, comes and she anoints the feet of Jesus with perfume. And that hacks off Judas which leads Judas to go and betray Christ to the Pharisees. Jesus is supremely glorified because he went to the cross. He died. He took the wrath of God. He rose from the grave. This is what it says in Philippians 2:5 – 8. And it's this very miracle that leads to all of that coming to take place. God's glory is renowned out of this. This whole text centers around the claim that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. And as such he is the only solution to and the only victor over the problem and enemy of death. He and he alone.

So that means a few things for you and I. One, like Paul cries out in Philippians 3, you and I need to know the power of his resurrection. Philippians 3: Paul's soul cries that he may know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. That being conformed to the image of Christ and the likeness of his death that he would know the resurrection of God from the dead. This becomes the driving force for you and I to know the power of the resurrection and the fullness of Jesus' life. This starts in salvation. You can't know the power of the resurrection in your life if you are not in Christ. And it needs to be clear. You are not a Christian because you are born into a Christian family. You're not a Christian because you go to church. You're not a Christian because you serve. You're not a Christian because you read your Bible. There is no amount of Godly things you can do to save yourself. There is one way and one way alone to be saved. There's one way and one way alone to be raised up from what Ephesians said is dead in trespasses and sins. And that is by the grace of God through faith. So if you're in this place today and you have never been touched by the conviction of the Holy Spirit to where you know you stand guilty before a holy and righteous God and that there is no amount that you can do to ever move from that position, but you hear the sweet words of the gospel, which is but God who was rich and great in his mercy, sends Christ who in his love goes to the cross, bears the punishment that you and I deserve, dies, rises from the grave, and can now save sinners. Then you respond in repentance and faith. May today be that day because you cannot know the power of the resurrection outside of faith in Christ. But the power of the resurrection is not limited to salvation. He says I am the resurrection and the life. I am the eternal life. I am true life. True life is only found in Christ which means the Christian life is the only true life there is. Which

says something about sin. It means every time you and I indulge in sin. When I share the story of Mimi's murder, it's heinous, it's awful, it's terrible, but it is the same sin and death and murder that it is in lust. Different consequences here, but the same result for you and I. Sin is death. Life is only found in Christ. But when you are in Christ the power of the resurrection means there is victory over sin. It means you possess the ability to walk in submission, to walk in the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit of God indwells you. To live out the holiness God has given you. Scripture says that Satan holds the fear of death over those who don't believe. So not only are you and I able to live out the Christian life, but we do not have to live in fear and in constant state of fear in panic at death.

Now there's a natural fear of death. There's a fear of death in the sense of I've never gone through it and I've never gotten to talk to anybody who has. So there's an intimidation there. And that's not wrong. But I do not have to live my life in a constant state of panic at death ending me. Because as a believer, knowing the power of his resurrection, Jesus makes it clear that the one who dies will live and the one who lives and believes in me will never die. Death is fundamentally altered for you and I as a believer. It does not end us. In fact I think and I speculate, we'll find out one day I guess, that there's going to come a moment where I will breath my last, where I will shut my eyes as if taking a nap, and then I will open my eyes and breath in celestial air and I will see the glory of God face to face. Death is the only pathway to get there. Death is transformed where I don't have to fear it ending me. But I can walk through it. Corrie ten Boom who many know had hidden Jews in the holocaust, her family was arrested, lost the majority of her family in concentration camps. When she heard the news of her father's death she thought back to memories as a child when she asked him, "How can I, what is it like to die?" And the story goes that he held his gaze with her the entire time and he said, he looked at her and he said, "When we go to Amsterdam when do I give you your ticket?" And she thought about it for a while and she looked back and she said, "Just before I get on the train." And so he looked at her and he said, "When your time comes your Heavenly Father will give you the strength you need." God's grace is sufficient for the moment; never before, never after, for the moment. And you and I can have hope in the face and the power of facing death because death does not end us because we are, we know the power of his resurrection. If you know the power of his resurrection, here's what's incredible though. The power of his resurrection doesn't mean that for you and I, who are here, who face the effects of death and are left behind, it doesn't negate our grief. It doesn't negate our grief. So it leads us to the second thing. We need to rest in his love and comfort. You see Mary three times in scripture. One time she's sitting at the feet of Jesus listening. In chapter 12 she'll be bowing at the feet of Jesus worshipping, and here in chapter 11 she's fallen at the feet of Jesus grieving. I know scripture says that Solomon's the wisest man that ever lives, but I jokingly wonder if he's only the wisest man because it seems like Mary's the wisest person. Because she's only ever at the feet of Jesus. In fact when you go back and you look at it and she says she came; one, Jesus summoned her. In the midst of you and I's grief, it's never Jesus backing off because he's scared and afraid of death and afraid of how to minister to us in the midst of it. He's not afraid of it. He's conquered it. And he calls us, he bids us come to him in the midst of our pain. He doesn't bid us come to him and push away our pain. He bids us come to him with our pain. And so Mary comes at his bidding and it says that she fell at his feet. That word fell there, if you go through and you track it down in all the dictionaries and all the lexicons, you go there and do it, it means to fall down in adoration and worship before one who is greater than you. In the midst of her pain Mary is wise because she

comes to the feet of the one whom she knows loves her. You and I can rest in his love and his comfort. God's love for us is sometimes hard to understand. Because we tend to think of love in the terms of I do what is what makes that person feel better. God's love is not meant to make you and I feel better. It's meant to make you and I good. And God's love is not to make it good now, God's love is to make it good for eternity because this will be a short blip in our life. Eternity is our home. It is where we are destined for. It is where my citizenship lies. And that is what he is working for out of his love because that is what is good. God's love is never to be questioned. He loves even if it brings us into circumstances that we don't understand. And so what we must do is to fall at his feet and here's what's interesting. You go through, there's an emphasis on the Jews consoling and comforting and caring for Mary and Martha. Which on a total side note, be a person who is bold like Christ to comfort those who are hurting. There's no magic words. You can't heal the person. Just don't neglect the person. Someone once told me, "I don't know what to say about your grandmother." And I said, "That's good because I don't know what to say either. I don't need you to say anything. It's just enough that you're here and you love me and you've made that clear." Don't avoid people who are hurting. Don't get caught up in your lack of what you have. You're right. You lack. God's grace is sufficient. So go in love and care. But for those of us who are hurting ultimately healing does not come in the presence of comforters around us. Healing can only come from the very hands of Christ. Revelation is clear. That on that day it will take his hand and he will wipe away the tears from my eyes. It's not my wife who wipes away the tears from my eyes. It's not you as a fellow church who wipes away the tears from my eyes. It's the hands where my name is engraven in the form of a permanent scar from the nails that pierced his hands that will reach on the eyes of my heart and will wash the scars away forever. And death and grief are no more. Revelation 21. You and I can only find healing and true comfort and rest when we come before the feet of Jesus and we can come confident that Jesus is not some coach who chews us out for feeling sorrowful. Grief is normal. It's natural. We grieve because we're separated from the one that we love. The early church father, John Chrysostom, says this: "He wept over Lazarus, that is Jesus, so should you and I; weep, but gently, but with decency, but with the fear of God. If you weep in this way, you do not do as disbelieving the resurrection, but as not enduring the separation." Thessalonians says we do not grieve as those without hope, but we grieve as those with hope. Grieving with hope doesn't mean you don't grieve. Doesn't mean you don't face times that are hurtful. It means you come and you bow before the feet of Jesus. For many years after my grandmother's murder I would grieve. I would weep at times. I would think I do well with grief, but what I did not realize is there was something I was constantly fighting truly going there, truly dealing with that place of hurt. And so what I would do indirectly is I would busy myself. I would busy myself with life. I would busy myself with ministering to everyone and finally, remember, God summons us, God's not going to let you get away from it long, God broke me. He put me in a situation where I overextended myself, I ended up in the ER twice because my body was breaking down. I had to pull out of some things to where all of a sudden now I lived by myself and I had a lot of time in the evenings. And when you're alone stuff starts to come up. And I set there one night in my living room and I told the Lord, "Lord I feel like I'm on the edge of a cliff. The grief is there and if I were to go down that cliff, I will go down and I will never come out." And that's when the Holy Spirit very quietly said to my heart, "No because I've already gone down in that pit and come out the other side. So you come with me." You and I can rest in his love and his comfort in the midst of our sorrow, in the midst of our hurt, and allow him to take his time to heal us. And it may take time. We won't understand all his ways. Surely

Mary and Martha didn't understand the reason for his delay. But it did not change the fact, the text is clear, that he loved them. There has never been a more perfect love than the love of God the Father for God the Son. And never did anyone suffer so greatly than God the Son. But, and this is the last thing and it's where we're going to wrap, God has glorified the Son and there is the hope for you and I. The last thing is simply if we know the power of his resurrection and we rest in the comfort of his love, then we hope to see his glory. And I don't mean hope by wishful thinking, but Biblical hope is when something is guaranteed to happen and so it changes the way you live now as you are awaiting it to happen. We hope to see his glory. What is his glory? At the end of the day for you and I, his glory will be to know him and to know him fully. It's dangerous to try to come up with reasons why the bad things happen. Sometimes there's reasons that seem to work out. Sometimes I'll never know the full reason why the Lord allowed a hit man to take the life of my grandmother that night. Job never got answers to any of his questions. But Job did get an encounter and revelation with God that could not be surpassed. If you will know the power of his resurrection and you will rest in his comfort, you will see his glory and it is guaranteed to be in the case of you knowing him deeper in a way that you would never have known before and it's impossible to know him if you don't walk through the valley of the shadow of death when he calls you to. Because Jesus is a man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief. But we can walk into it with the hope of knowing that we will see his glory.

Let's pray.

Father thank you for your word. Thank you that you are one who loves and cares for us. Thank you that you are one who is not uncomfortable and afraid of death. Thank you that though death would rob the glory of man because it ends us physically, it cannot take your glory because you have conquered death. So it doesn't end me. Lord very simply as we move into this time of invitation if there are any in this room who do not know you then, Holy Spirit, may they respond to the kindness of your conviction. If there are any in this room who need to join this church, who need to bring their lives here with their family, then may they be obedient to do so. Lord if there's any in this room who are hurting, who are mourning, that they need to come down for prayer, may they come down, that they may know your comfort, and what is the height, depth, breadth, and width of your love for them in Christ Jesus.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, as God moves on your heart today, the ministers and I will be down front. You come down and respond as the Lord moves.

Will you pray with me.

Heavenly Father, Lord I thank you for this morning, for this truth, for your truth. Thank you for Wes, thank you for his preparation, not just for this week, Lord, but in his life. To be here this morning to deliver this message. God we thank you for who you are and what you've done as you've gone before us. And now as you call us home, Lord, I thank you, thank you, thank you for loving me to bring me back to you. God I pray for the hearts of every person in this room as we walk out of here that we will stand for you in our hope as we walk through this Brazos Valley and we represent who you are, Lord. Thank you for this time, Lord, as we bring forth the offering. May I ask, Father, that as this church that we will use that wisely to further your kingdom. We love you. It's in Jesus name that we pray. Amen.