

A Spirit of Generosity

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Alex. Good morning, everybody. Y'all doing well? I just want to quickly, before we get into the sermon, double tap on one of the announcements. She had said, not that you didn't do a good job, Alex.

You did a great job. But the seeing Jesus together thing, really what that is about, our mission is making disciples and pushing back darkness. This is really leaning into the making disciples part. And one of the things of following Jesus is being a people that are in his word and that are praying. It's stoking that relationship with him. And it's super important.

And community is important as well. And so seeing Jesus, what it does, it brings all those disciplines together in one place. It is reading your word and praying back out of that, having that word inform your prayers.

But you're doing it in community. You're doing it with other people. And so it is a really fabulous way to get into the word, to stoke your prayer life and do it with others. And so I can't commend you enough, like to sign up and be a part of that.

[1 : 04] And so it's one of those things, like we highly value, like walking with God in integrity, walking in integrity with yourself and with other people, because those things, if you don't have integrity, you're not gonna get intimacy.

And so these things are super important. And being in the word and being in prayer and being in community, those fuel that, it cultivates that integrity and that intimacy with God and with other people.

It's so important. So I couldn't more highly recommend you, that class that we're gonna do for you to sign up and be a part of that this coming Saturday. So, all right, having said that, that was my big pitch on that.

If you got your Bible, go ahead and turn to Nehemiah 5, we're continuing, chapter 5, we're continuing in our series. And if you were here last week, if you weren't, no worries, but I'll tell you part of the story.

We just had read about God's people really making some progress on the walls of Jerusalem. And in light of that, God's enemies started to push back against that.

[2 : 05] They're making some advancements, and so God's people are being attacked in several different ways. And we saw how they became resilient to stand up against that. And that's what renewal requires.

It requires resilient disciples who fight for one another, but they also step into living by faith and trusting in a God who fights for them as well.

And so, today, we're gonna see more opposition, but it comes from an unlikely place. It actually comes from inside the camp, so to speak. What we're gonna see is we're gonna see God's people mistreating each other.

Now, in one sense, we can read the passage we're about to read and kind of wrap it up and just say, hey, the lesson we learn is just be nice to one another already, and that's it, right? We can go home. But that is just a little too reductive.

I wish we could just say that and go home because, you know, service would be a lot shorter, and we'd get to, you know, eat in Bojangles or Baker's Kitchen or whatever afterwards as soon as possible.

[3 : 07] But we have to be able to expose ourselves to why we fail at being nice in the first place. I mean, it would be nice if it was just like, okay, we got the thing, and let's go home, and we got this, but it's hard.

It's hard to live in that. It takes some humility, something that we're not very good at. It takes some humility that we look at ourselves and we're honest with ourselves. And like I was talking about earlier, the more we walk in integrity, the more we become people who are quick to repent and turn from our sin.

And that's the kind of humility you and I need as we walk with Jesus, as we do this work of renewal together. You and I have to live this out, and we have to live this out with each other in community because we will sin against one another.

And so as we read this part of the Nehemiah story, find yourself in the different players, not just the good ones, but the bad ones too. And let's learn some lessons that will bring us into more of the fullness of God's redemptive potential, both personally, but also as a community of faith.

So Nehemiah chapter five, verse one, it says this. Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. For there were those who said, with our sons and our daughters, we are many, so let us go get grain that we may eat and keep alive.

[4 : 29] There were also those who said, we are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine. And there were those who said, we have borrowed money from the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards.

Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers. Our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves. And some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it for other men have our fields and our vineyards.

And I, Nehemiah is speaking here, I was very angry when I heard their outcry in these words. I took counsel with myself and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. And I said to them, you are exacting interest each from his brother.

And I held a great assembly against them and said to them, we, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers so that they may be sold to us.

They were silent and could not find a word to say. So I said, the thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations of our enemies?

[5 : 44] Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. Return them this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards and their houses and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.

Then they said, we will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say. And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised.

I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, so may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied.

And all the assembly said, amen, and praise the Lord. And the people did as they promised.

Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the 20th year to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, the king, 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor.

The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration 40 shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people, but I did not do so because of the fear of God.

[7 : 05] I also persevered in the work on this wall and we acquired no land and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us.

Now, what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds. And every 10 days, all kinds of wine in abundance.

Yet for all this, I did not demand the food allowance of the governor because the service was too heavy on this people. Remember for my good, oh my God, all that I have done for this people.

This is God's word, amen. So this is an interesting part of the tale, right? We're seeing two opposing realities.

We see nobles acting a certain way and juxtaposed to that, we see Nehemiah acting a certain way. But underneath that, what we need to realize is there are two things. There's a spirit of selfishness and there's a spirit of generosity.

[8 : 14] And the two are opposed to one another. So the question for us and what I want to put forward to us today in the rest of this talk is looking at a spirit of generosity and what that means.

How do you and I move from selfishness and grow in generosity? And what we learn from the text is that it starts with accepting this universal truth that runs through the heart of every human being, every single one of us.

We all have the capacity to take advantage of others to benefit ourselves, all right? Like it's a fancy way to say we're selfish at our heart.

That runs through all of us. You might think you would never sell out a friend or brother or neighbor like what we see in this story. But we do that every time we lie, every time we gossip, every time we slander one another.

That's selling people out just in a less obvious way. That's seeking to gain advantage of them for your behalf.

[9 : 18] We may not exact interest, but we don't mind heaping heavy burdens on people, taking advantage of them, looking out for ourselves, not caring how they are doing.

I mean, this is what, here's the irony. This is what Pharaoh did to Israel all those years back in Egypt. He put them in forced labor. And then when Moses and Aaron came and told Pharaoh, hey, God said, let my people go, Pharaoh didn't respond by saying, yeah, that's okay.

He responded by making their job harder. He said, I'm gonna provide you, I'm not gonna, the bricks I had you make and the quota that I had you make it on, you still gotta keep that quota, but you're not gonna get strong anymore.

I'm gonna make it more impossible for you. You're gonna have to work extra hard now. And here you have, in this story, fast forward hundreds of years later, you have God's people building Jerusalem together under the threat of attack from enemies from the outside.

The burden is heavy, and yet they are being mistreated by their own people. Their cry goes up and reaches Nehemiah's ears, which again is a lot like Exodus.

[10 : 30] Check this out in chapter six of Exodus verse five. Moreover, God says, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel, whom the Egyptians hold as slaves and I've remembered my covenant.

Say therefore to the people of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will deliver you from slavery to them and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

This is like a, this is a pivotal part of Jewish history. This is something that the people that are doing this, that are working on the wall together, this would have been like tattooed into their hearts.

They would have known this stuff. And yet, even though they know it, they drifted into this sense of being willing to cast heavy burdens on their fellow Jews and heap impossible burdens on them.

And when you and I, when we place burdens on one another, when we mistreat one another, when you and I leverage power and privilege that we have at the expense of others, we are putting on the spirit of Pharaoh and abusing God's people.

[11 : 39] And at the heart of all this, whether or not we are going to follow Jesus, is whether or not we're gonna follow Jesus' example. Right? And be a servant.

Or are we going to sin and be selfish? Selfish people live like people owe them something. They do what these nobles did, the exact interest from people.

God doesn't want relationships like that among his people. He doesn't want us walking around saying, oh, I did this for you, now you owe me. That is not covenantal, that's not how covenant works.

That's not how covenant relationship works. We don't live to put one another in each other's debt. In fact, what these guys were doing, this exacting of interest goes, it violates the law of God.

When God brought his people out, he actually says this in the book of Leviticus. It's a commandment that he gives to them in verse 25. If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner and he shall live with you.

[12 : 48] Take no interest from him or profit off of his calamity or the position that he's in, his position of being poor.

But fear your God that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest nor give him your food for profit. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of

Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

God is saying, again, don't live putting people in your debt. And if you lend, if you give somebody more than what they deserve out of your excess and that could be monetarily, that could be in service to them, whatever, you give it and you expect nothing in return.

If you serve them, you go above and beyond and you don't keep a relational ledger. All right? I did this for this person. Where's my pound of flesh?

That's not how the kingdom of God is meant to work. God's people are called to live free. We don't owe one another anything.

[13:56] In fact, in Christ, in the new covenant, it goes even further than this. Romans 13, 8 says this, owe no one anything except to love one another.

The only debt you and I have towards one another, the only debt we can incur to one another is loving one another. That's a debt we get to make good on all the time.

We get to pay out all the time. Owe one another nothing except to love one another. And think about this, the only person as followers of Jesus, the only person we truly owe is Jesus because he gave his life for you and me to give us life.

And all God's kids need to know that and live out of that truth. Galatians 2, 19 says, the life that I now live, Paul's talking about himself, the life that you live in your body, you live by faith in Jesus who loved you and gave himself for you.

That's the debt we owe to one another, the love that we live out. We live towards for the sake of Christ, out of faith in him and what he's done for us.

[15:15] And that's its own kind of humbling, right? That really, what it starts to get at, it starts to get at our sense of pride and entitlement and self-righteousness.

It goes after that and it kills it and it kills it and it kills it. But it requires that you and I recognize first and foremost that I belong to Jesus. You belong to Jesus.

We belong to Jesus. And that, and if that isn't your identity, if you're not in that place, if you don't stay in that place, you will end up belonging to somebody besides Jesus.

Or you will end up taking advantage of somebody. That is what happens. But when we are rooted in that, in that we belong to Jesus who loved us and died for us, then we are all equals.

Nobody is greater than anyone else. Nobody owes somebody more than it. Their relational ledgers go away. We realize, hey, we're all in this together, called by Christ.

[16:16] We're all in this beautiful covenant relationship with him and with each other. We don't owe each other anything except love and we all owe him, Jesus, everything. That is how we fight selfishness.

Realizing how generous God has been toward you and all his people and generosity pours out blessing rather than hoarding it. All those nobles and their officials, they were all about greed and looking out for themselves.

Have you noticed by the time kids are 12, their natural bent is toward discouraging their peers, especially their siblings.

It's more natural for them to commend themselves against their peers. To try to say like, oh man, I did this better than that person. Did you see what I did? And maybe it's just my kids, all right?

But it just tends to be a natural thing. We naturally do this and then we grow up in that. We have this natural bent and then life keeps reinforcing that natural bent.

[17:18] We grow up contending with one another for the same jobs and salaries and homes and attention and praise and power and position and we fight for our rights.

We fight to get our way at the expense of others so often. And we can live that way. We can say, well that's the natural way of the world. It's a dog-eat-dog world.

I just gotta do what's best for me. But again, if that's all you're gonna live for, what you're gonna end up doing is just building your own pseudo-Jerusalem, a false kingdom of self rather than God's kingdom.

But in Christ we can be set free of that. When we know that Christ has won everything, you really, you can realize you don't need to live that way anymore. In fact, it takes us in the opposite direction. You become comfortable with losing, with getting lower, with serving, right? Just like Jesus did, man.

[18:19] We were praying this morning before the service and Bob Bangle, he just said like, man, isn't it amazing? Like the last hours of Jesus' life.

How would you and I spend our last hours? We just like, do you try to get everything off our bucket list done, right? How did Jesus spend his last hours? One of them was washing his disciples' feet. that's the way of renewal. It is the way of generosity, getting lower, being willing to get underneath people and serve them so they could be built up, they could be exalted, just like Jesus did. One of my favorite Bible stories is the story of Ruth in the book of Ruth. And we see Ruth and Naomi, they are in a terrible position. Like economically, like they are like the lowest of the low. They are impoverished. They are in the low strata of society, outcasts and full of shame. And Boaz is this rich guy and he could have taken advantage of Ruth and Naomi and their position. [19 : 23] He could have taken their land and made them his servants but what he does again and again, he pours out blessing on them. He even goes into his own savings and pours abundance on them.

Boaz didn't hoard, he poured out. Jesus did not hoard, he poured out. And that is at the heart of God's love. That is God generosity. And when we live in his generosity, when we live in his love, it makes us generous.

We don't hoard, we pour out. We pour out what he's poured into us and we can never outgive this God who pours into us.

Nehemiah, he's an important man. We see from this story, he says like, hey, I have a governor's stipend. Okay? He's a somebody. The king of Persia is bankrolling him as a governor, giving him money, right?

Giving him lots of food. He's stocked with like the best food and the best wine to feed his cabinet and to be able to host any dignitaries that come to him from time to time that he needs to entertain. [20 : 32] Nehemiah says, his entourage entourage is 150 dudes. Like Drake's entourage has nothing on Nehemiah. Okay? But Nehemiah, he doesn't choose to live in the privilege he's been given.

He chooses to pour out blessing rather than say like, well, I'm governor and this is just the way things work. I'm gonna hoard these things for myself. He doesn't do that. It's at his own cost. He is not going to be drinking Cristal when the workers are drinking LaCroix. It's basically what's going on here. He's not willing to do that. And that's acting like Jesus who left heaven to come among us, who forsook the benefit to bring the blessing.

And that kind of, that kind of generosity we have to realize somebody's lost. All right. That kind of generosity, that like willingness to pour out at that level and sacrifice at that level, that is unnatural. It is supernatural. And so what do you and I need to do to live that out? Well, one, we definitely need God's help. Like we cannot do this without him coming in, invading our lives and changing us radically.

[21 : 47] And there are a couple of things that we see because of that that we can pull from the text that help us out. First, we need a better vision of what to live for. Nehemiah was not about living his best life for himself.

He was about building Jerusalem, God's city. And so he could forego the privilege for the bigger purpose, which was for all of God's people to be blessed. Remember, this wasn't just about building a city because Jerusalem was in disarray.

God's people, it said at the beginning, we opened up, the book of Nehemiah opens up with this. Because the wall and Jerusalem were destroyed, God's people were in trouble and shame. That's what they were walking around with.

And all the rebuilding, all that's going on is connected to that. It's for the benefit of God's people. It's God pouring out a blessing and seeing this renewal happen so his people could flourish once again. And that's the big vision that Nehemiah has.

That's the vision you and I have to catch. But underneath that bigger vision was something that Nehemiah had that we also all need. In verse 15, he says, the former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration 40 shekels of silver. [22 : 59] Even their servants lorded it over the people, but I did not do so. Why? Because of the fear of the Lord. Because of the fear of God.

Generosity grows as you and I walk in the fear of the Lord. But what is that? What is the fear of the Lord? Is that like being so afraid of God that we're running the opposite direction?

Not at all. It's actually what happens to us. It's the outflow when we behold God for who he truly is.

We are filled with reverence. We are filled with awe and a God who is almighty and indestructible and righteous and just and merciful and unchanging. And we need this full picture of who he is. We need a full picture of who Jesus is. He is the good shepherd who cares for us. Yes, he is that and he's more. He is the savior who died on the cross in our place. Yes, he is that and he's more. [24 : 00] John the apostle who walked with Jesus when Jesus was on earth. He has this vision of the resurrected Jesus and he writes it out in a book called Revelation. And he sees this resurrected Jesus and he doesn't run and give Jesus a hug like he's an old friend.

Look what happens when he sees this resurrected Jesus. Then I turned, I, John, turned to see the voice that was speaking to me and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands one like the Son of Man clothed with a robe, a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The hairs of his head were white like white wool like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he yelled seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. What a beautiful picture of Jesus and when I saw him I ran to him and gave him a hug.

I fell at his feet as though dead. This is the same apostle who leaned on Jesus' chest at the communion table.

[25 : 12] who knew his Savior intimately and he sees the resurrected king and he falls at his feet as though dead. The fear of the Lord works in us as we get a glimpse of who he truly is in his glory.

And we need to hold that vision of Jesus along with the rest that we have. He is the good shepherd. He is the comforter. He is the prince of peace.

He is the Savior who died for us and yet he's this person that in heaven everybody is bowing down before and worshiping him. Holy, holy, holy.

And we have to have that otherwise we can get a little too chummy and familiar where Jesus we start to treat him more like a peer on the playground. Someone who's on our level that we get to have fun with during recess every once in a while.

The visions of heaven captured in the Bible they just don't show us that. They show us something more grand and spectacular and majestic about this Savior who is seated on the throne and is ruling and raiding and everything is subjected under his feet.

[26 : 23] And the more you and I live in that reality the more you and I I heard a pastor say this recently the more you and I live in the manifest presence of God not just the omnipresence and there's a difference there the more you and I will understand and walk in the fear of the Lord.

C.S. Lewis' books his series The Chronicles of Narnia and they're about to meet Aslan for the first time in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and they find out that he's a lion and Susan says oh I thought he was I thought I thought he was a man.

Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. Safe said Mr. Beaver who said anything about safe of course he isn't safe but he's good.

He is the king I tell you. Jesus our king he is good but he isn't safe. He is the king and we you and I we need to walk in the fear of the Lord.

More falling down like we're dead sometimes that posture of humility that bowing low that sense of he is exalted and I am being brought low. May he increase and may I decrease.

[27 : 44] We need that greater picture of the fullness of the glory of God and that is how you and I grow in humility. We desperately need that and the more you and I walk in the fear of the Lord the more we will grow into being a humble people.

And friends let me tell you this humble people will do what these nobles did when they were confronted with their sin. In verse 9 so I said the thing you are doing is not good.

Right? He goes on to say man exacting this interest it's not good. And how did they respond? Verse 12 then they said we will restore these and require nothing from them.

We will do as you say. And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they promised. There it is. Renewal. They're moving back from selfishness into generosity and it's brought on by humility and repentance.

Humility and repentance encourages generosity. We have to get comfortable about giving and receiving correction. We have to get comfortable about stepping in and saying Lord examine my heart.

[28 : 58] Search me and find me. Expose those things in me that are false. Expose those things in me that are sinful. And you know what? He's gonna do that sometimes just between you and him and he also uses people to point it out as well.

So we have to be good at giving and receiving correction. And here's the thing. When feelings become elevated above holiness we start to slip into a dangerous place.

Nehemiah confronts sin at the risk of hurting those nobles feelings. But he did it because what they were doing was not good. Right?

It was sin. Sin leads to destruction and ultimately death. Rescuing someone from sin is a loving thing to do. Pointing out that what they're doing is wrong is a loving thing to do.

Even if it doesn't spare them from having feelings of negative emotions stir up inside of them. And I wanna say this to all of us. If you are on the side of receiving a rebuke for sin you are going to have your feelings hurt.

[30 : 11] I know this because I have been on that side of things. And typically all that is is pointing to your pride and self-righteousness taking a hit. And you gotta die to it.

Respond like the nobles. They didn't defend themselves. They didn't say like yeah, yeah, yeah but I have five reasons why we did this and they're really good. They're like if I just told you about it it would make sense to you Nehemiah.

They didn't defend themselves. They just stepped right into eating humble pie and owned up to their error. And they did that publicly in front of the assembly of people. You and I can fight to be right or we can fight for righteousness.

And we have to realize often those two aren't on the same side so we gotta choose what we're gonna fight for. We often fight to be right no matter what. Or we fight for our perceived rights.

And so often in that fight what we lose sight of is what the righteous thing to do is. We lose sight of what God's righteousness is. And God is always moving his people to live toward his righteousness.

[31 : 21] To live toward his truth. To live toward his standard of love. And he's revealed all these things in his word in the Bible and we see in Jesus' life Jesus manifested how to live that out.

so we're without excuse. Maintaining ignorance saying like oh I just didn't know. Okay cool that works for some time. But if you're choosing to live willingly ignorant of those things that isn't gonna let you off the hook.

When you and I are humble it makes us able to hear correction even when it stings. And we can hear it without falling apart.

And you know what? If somebody comes to you and I've had to do this many times. Somebody has people have come to me and said Jesse you're this and da da da da da da da and I'm just like gosh man I don't think that's right.

And I think that's really unfair. And I want to go into I want to go into lawyer mode for myself. But you know what? I have to receive those things and I have to go to God in prayer and I say Lord I'm gonna bring these to you.

[32 : 31] These are the accusations that were made against me and some of these are really sinful and so search my heart if there is anything true in here please show them to me. And actually I can also go people who know me really well it's like hey are they right?

And if they're right guess what I'm doing? I'm repenting. I'm not defending myself. But that's the proper posture to take. That's humility you and I need to live out as the people of God.

And so often we get so defensive and stand up for ourselves and become the greatest litigators you've ever seen for our own righteousness sake. God's saying we gotta be willing to lay those things down.

And sometimes that's the hardest thing to do. I find it so easy to repent to God. Maybe you're this way. I find it very hard when God then says okay yeah but now you have to go make it right with that person.

Ah! Don't like that so much. These nobles did that. They said we're gonna restore. We're gonna stop doing the exacting of interest but we're gonna restore.

[33 : 43] Real repentance is God moving on your heart so much that you are convicted that you know what I need to run to whoever it is to make right what I've how I've harmed them and hurt them.

And this is what I've found. When I do that I thought I understood God's grace with just this when I repent to him but when I follow him in obedience and I step in and I repent to somebody horizontally that he's asked me to repent because he's shown me I was wrong there is another level of grace that you experience friends in that moment.

You are letting God into a place that brings a lot more healing than you realize. And so man I want to encourage all of us my goodness let's be quick to repent let's be quick to run to those we realize we have wrong because you know what what is on the line you experiencing the goodness and the love and the grace of God coming into places you didn't even know were issues that need to be dealt with deep in your heart.

I've lived in that I lived through that and it is a hard thing but you know what is a beautiful thing to walk through on the other side. And God really cares about our heart formation he really cares about how our hearts are doing because he's forming and shaping us he's doing this to make us more and more like the image of Christ.

We're becoming more like him and he deeply cares about that because renewal is about filling his kingdom with the holy people. You know increasing attendance in the church and not caring about holiness is not what we're doing here.

[35 : 35] We often leaders especially we get excited about quantity of people in the room but we kind of like lose sight of the quality the character the holiness the stuff that God really cares about but Jerusalem is God's city.

Jerusalem is called Zion. In the Old Testament it's the place where God's temple was the place where God's manifest presence was. It was a city set apart holy unto the Lord and the people in it were set apart holy unto the Lord and in the New Testament we the church we are the new temple we are the people of God we are the new Jerusalem and we have been set apart for holiness we have been brought into his kingdom for holiness we get to live in the manifest presence of God filled with the manifest presence of God called to walk in the fear of the Lord in humility in repentance we no longer live for ourselves but for the one who loved us and gave himself for us and so friends let's live generously toward one another.

Amen. As the band comes up and we respond I want to say to those in the room you're here not yet a follower of Jesus we all sin just like those nobles sin and our hope isn't to do better try harder if you sin against God God is going to confront you he's confronting you right now he's saying hey you're a sinner you've sinned you didn't sin against people you've sinned against him ultimately and he is calling you to confess your sin turn from it and believe on Jesus as your king and as your savior and there is no other way to be saved there is no other way to be saved in a moment there will be an opportunity to respond there will be a prayer up on the screen for you to pray and I would say man God is here and offering salvation to you today offering you repentance a way out from his wrath and his punishment towards sin take it if you're here and you're already a follower of Jesus in a moment we're going to take communion together but first we need to take time to examine our hearts as God has shown us in his word and disclosed things in us his word comes in and his word is meant to encourage convict admonish challenge all those things how is God calling us to respond to what he's been saying he cares about our holiness he cares about us being a holy people where do you and I need to confess where do we need to repent and trust in him again where maybe do we need to go to somebody and repent to them for something we've done you know

Jesus said man before you make your sacrifice on the altar if you have an offense against your brother if you know you've offended your brother you don't make the sacrifice you go and make right with him before you do that the time of examination allows us to go to God it allows us if we have stuff in the body that needs to be dealt with relationships schisms we go and we repent we make right with those things before we take the body and blood of Jesus so I'm going to give us time right now let's close our eyes I'm going to give you time right now to pray and to do business with God and then I'm going to end this time of examination with prayer and that will lead us into communion so go ahead and pray to God right now where you're at and