

# Real Love Serves

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 October 2021

Preacher: Jesse Kincer

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] All right, thanks Lisa, appreciate that. Hey, good morning everyone, how you doing? Good, good, good. It's good to see you. And yeah, we're going to jump right into it in a moment here. Just a quick hello to all those listening online that can't be here.
- Just thinking all of our Marines that are out there serving our country in various ways. Thinking about the kids ministry folks that are serving our kids right now in kids ministry. They might be listening to this later online this week.
- So just so thankful for all that you guys do in serving others. And to those of you who are new to us, man, so glad that you are here. And we are just starting off, or we're actually in our second part of our Ruth series.
- And so if you have your Bibles, you can turn to Ruth chapter 1, verses 19. And this Ruth series, we're calling it Real Love because that's what it is. It's a story that shows us what real love looks like.
- The Hebrew word, actually, that we see here is the word hesed, which is a rich, deep, beautiful word. And it often talks about God. He is hesed love. He is steadfast love. He is faithful love. He is committed love.
- [ 1 : 1 9 ] And, you know, we're doing this because, you know, it's sometimes hard to see God's love in our lives. Because our lives are filled with counterfeit loves where we grow up in a society where the individual is supreme.
- And it's everyone's job to serve me so I can achieve my dreams and desires. But that's just not the way of real love. Real love serves. And today, that's what we're going to look at, how real love serves.
- And before we get into it, just a quick recap. This is part two of a bigger story. And so part one was last week. And so what we covered is Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, they leave with their two sons.
- They leave Bethlehem, and they're leaving during a time of famine. And what they do is they go and they live in Moab for 10 years. And during those 10 years, good things are happening. It seems like everything's going well. Their two sons grow up a little bit more.
- They get married to some Moabite gals, Orpah and Ruth. And that's when things start sliding downhill very quickly for Naomi. First, her husband dies, which is, man, devastating.
- [ 2 : 2 9 ] And then her two sons die as well. And so we see Ruth in this foreign land all alone except for her two daughters-in-law. And in the midst of her pain, she hears that God has broke the famine in Bethlehem.
- Before she heads home, she tries to convince her daughters to stay in Moab and remarry and get their lives back on track, which honestly was a nice thing for them to do. It's like, man, it's better for you to stay here.
- You're young enough. You can find a Moabite dude that'll marry you. Settle down. It'll be good. Because she knows, going back to Bethlehem where she's going to land, she has nothing to offer them.

There is a bleak future ahead of Naomi. And so she says, my daughters, please stay. Now, Orpah, she listens. But Ruth, she clings to Naomi.

She won't let her go at any cost. She loves Naomi more than her own life. And so what we see and where we landed at last week, these two ladies start their journey toward Bethlehem.

[ 3 : 27 ] Penniless, powerless, and with very little prospect. They aren't going into Bethlehem triumphant. They're coming in humiliated, broken, grieving. And so this is where we pick up the story, right here in verse 19.

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And so you know, back in those days, like towns, Israelite towns, they were gated. They had walls around them.

And to get into the town, you had to pass through these gates. And these gates were like the marketplace, the courthouse, and the water cooler all wrapped up into one. There was just like hustle and bustle.

All of the town's central activity was happening in that place. And so they weren't like sneaking in unnoticed. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them.

And the woman said, is this Naomi? She said to them, do not call me Naomi, call me Mara. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty.

[ 4 : 27 ] Why call me Naomi when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth, the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned from the country of Moab.

And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth, the Moabite, said to Naomi, let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him, in whose sight I shall find favor.

And she said to her, go, my daughter. So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

This is God's word. So we see this not-so-great homecoming happen. Naomi's back, and her coming back is this big news, right?

Now, remember, they didn't have, like, the internet or smartphones to keep them entertained. Like, these types of reunions were a big deal back in the day. And so it says the whole town of Bethlehem was stirred at their arrival, which is a way of saying this moment was electric and very public.

[ 5 : 43 ] News spread far and fast. But it's not just the news that Naomi's back. Naomi's different. Something about her is almost unrecognizable.

Like, the women in the town look at her, and they've known her, and they said, man, I know 10 years has passed, but my goodness, it looks like you have changed so much. Is this Naomi, is what they're saying.

And now, Naomi's name means pleasant. And there's a little play on words happening here the storyteller is giving us. And he's literally saying the women are thinking to themselves, is this the one whose name was pleasant?

Is this the one who went away so sweet and pleasant? In other words, they're asking her, Naomi, what's happened to you? It looks a lot like you, sounds a lot like you, but the sweetness seems to have drained away.

And they're quick to realize that these last 10 years haven't been kind. But make no mistake, they're not stepping in and judging Naomi at all. That's not what they're doing. That is not what they're doing.

[ 6 : 45 ] This isn't like gossip and, oh my gosh, you're not going to believe what I heard about Naomi. No. They are asking Naomi to invite her into, to invite them into her pain, which is what real love does.

Real love serves others by entering into their pain. Now, the ancient world was good at this. The ancient world was much more comfortable and realistic about suffering than we are today.

Right? Pain and sorrow were an expected reality of life. Now, in our modern times, on the other hand, we despise that. Right? We despise being in a place of vulnerability or in a place of weakness.

We live to avoid suffering and sorrow at all costs. We do whatever we can to insure ourselves against disaster. Right? We have insurance for our cars.

We have insurance for our homes. We have insurance for our insurance. Right? There's like, there's like levels to everything that we do. That's why there's, Aflac is a thing. And we, we become really good at insuring ourselves and protecting ourselves from any kind of problem befalling us.

[ 7 : 51 ] But as much as that's true for our possessions, I do have to say this. We are really good about doing that with our own hearts as well. We don't like to be vulnerable with our hearts.

We don't like to be in that place of weakness. And by, by doing that, we become shallow in our love because we not only protect ourselves from sorrow and suffering, we also protect ourselves from other people's sorrow and suffering.

I remember a friend of mine, Patrick Keneally, he, he was a center at UNC back in the 90s. And, and then one day he blew his knee out.

And I was asking, I was like, man, what was that like? Did your teammates rally around you? And they were like, no, man, actually, like the way, the way that works at that competitive level in college is like everyone pulls away from you because it's like you have bad mojo and we don't want that.

Right? Right? That's like, man, in his greatest pain and suffering, they didn't move toward him to support him. They were like, no way, man, we're getting away from you. And we can be a lot like that.

[ 8 : 55 ] Listen to Naomi's lament again. And imagine this is somebody, you know, saying this. Verse 20, she says to them, do not call me Naomi.

Do not call me that. Call me Mara. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. Mara means bitter. I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty.

Why call me Naomi when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me? People that know the Hebrew language better than I do say that Naomi's inflection here is growing in intensity as she laments.

She's getting louder and louder as she goes on. Now, imagine a friend or a community group member saying that.

How would you and I deal with that, right? How would you and I deal with that honesty? What would we say? And Naomi, she is giving it to us honest.

[ 10 : 00 ] Are you comfortable with the way she talks about God? Well, I'll tell you what. I had a hard time with it. Like, reading through this, I'm like, surely she has overstepped some boundaries here, right?

This is not cool, some of the stuff she is saying. I want to judge Naomi. I want to step back. I don't want to really, like, move towards her and try to get in her mindset. I want to step back and say, like, man, you have so little faith, Naomi.

Man, your mind is too small and too selfish. I want to go in and I want to fix her theology. Can't she see the bigger picture here of what's going on? Doesn't she know that God is good all the time and all the time God is good, right?

And we often try to serve people in pain with those kind of statements of optimism, which actually, in the end, doesn't really serve them at all. It's about as helpful as the two men who walked around the beaten man in the tale of the Good Samaritan.

It is a way of actually pretending we're helping, but we're pushing away. We're going around. We're avoiding. Simple statements of optimism are dismissive of people's pain.

[ 11 : 06 ] It gives the veneer of being helpful, but really we're keeping our distance. We're protecting our own hearts from feeling their grief and entering into their grief, joining them in their suffering.

And so what we end up doing, we end up avoiding really loving them. But notice in this story that nobody corrects Naomi, right? The author, the storyteller, he doesn't write an editorial in there that suggests that somehow Naomi got it wrong.

She sinned against God when she said that. Now, Naomi, she puts her grief out on the open, out into the open for everyone to see and hear, and it's neither despised nor judged.

Now, to be fair, it doesn't seem like anyone says anything, right? It seems like a little too quiet from the townspeople's side. Like, you're kind of like, okay, somebody want to say anything to Naomi here?

She just like laid it all out there. Anybody want to be like, love you, Naomi? Sorry. And this is where it's helpful to know how Hebrew storytelling is done. We don't know what happened, but the way that Hebrews tell stories is there's just a lot of cultural assumptions, and so they don't get into details about every little thing, especially when the audience they're writing to would already know what would have happened.

[ 12 : 24 ] And so they don't always fill in the gaps. What most likely would have happened here in response to Naomi is that people would have stopped, and they would have grieved with her, right? They would have supported her and her grief with tears and not words.

The book of Job is a whole book about three men joining Job in his grief, and at the beginning of Job, they're actually silent. They're letting Job lament, and they're just listening and listening and listening.

They're doing a good job. It's actually when they start speaking is when they get themselves into trouble, right? But lamenting is a good thing, and lamenting, I want to say, is a community project, right?

And that's the beauty and the importance of being in a church. We're all going to go through suffering. We're all going to go through pain. We're all going to go through hard times. And when we do that, we need to lament those things.

But, man, if you bought into rugged individualism, and you're saying, I'm going to face this alone. I'm going to do it myself. You are missing out on a big aspect of the beauty of community.

[ 13 : 21 ] Community calls us into lament together, to call people in, to join in your suffering, and sit in your suffering, and just weep with you, right? The Bible says we should mourn. We should weep with those who weep.

That's one way we serve each other as Christians. It tells you that you're not called to face your pain alone. Now, consider how beautiful a picture that is.

As people would put their life on hold, they would push pause to sit with someone and just cry. It doesn't sound very efficient.

It doesn't sound like a very efficient way to spend your time, does it? But real love isn't very efficient. It's effective, but it's going to cost you time.

It's going to cost you rearranging your calendar. It's going to cost you interruption. This lamenting was a beautiful thing.

[ 14 : 20 ] It was a sacrificial art of serving someone with patient presence. And guys, we can do that today. We can still do that today. We can still sacrificially serve people with just our patient presence.

We often don't do that. We often don't move toward the hurting because we feel like we don't have the answers that they need. That's one of the reasons maybe that we don't do that, right? It's like, man, how can I fix their problem?

Now, having an answer may be helpful, but being present is always essential. Being present is always an essential thing. And being with people in their pain can be hard, right?

Because pain can make people prickly. I know it makes me prickly, right? When I'm hurting or I'm suffering or feeling depressed or sorrowful or despairing, I really do.

I get caught up in myself. I get mad. I get angry. I get harsh. And I often don't take my complaint to God. I tend to turn my guns toward those closest to me, right? My wife and my kids and my friends or people in the church.

[ 15 : 24 ] That's what I tend to do. And I either attack or retreat. And that's kind of the two ways we all deal with pain in our lives. We either attack or we retreat. We lash out to hurt with our words or actions, or we tend to withdraw and withhold and sulk.

But both of those things, that's not real love. That's not taking the path of real love, which is sacrificial. Rather, it's a grab for power. It's a grab for power when we feel powerless.

Naomi's lament here has some of that unhealthy attack in it, right? They say, hey, Naomi, don't call me Naomi. She's vulnerable. She's honest, but she's got her spikes out too.

Now, lament is good, but too much for too long isn't a healthy thing either. It can lead to bitterness, and it can darken your life to where that is all you can see. Paul Miller says, suffering can narrow your life.

The pain can be so intense that you become your pain. It doesn't have to, but pain can easily define you, right? It is like the temptation for anybody, like addicts or people that are struggling with any type of difficulty in their life.

[ 16 : 41 ] They say like, man, this is who I am. This is who I've become. And Naomi is on this slippery slope too. When Naomi says, don't call me Naomi, call me Mara, what she is doing, she's coming close to allowing her pain to define her, right?

She's saying, let's throw away my old identity of pleasant. I want to embrace this new one, which is called bitter. Call me that. That's who I am. And she says that she's come back with nothing.

In her bitterness, in her pain, in her anger, she says this statement, the Lord has brought me back empty. And Ruth is standing right next to her, right?

I mean, that is an awkward statement. This is the danger of counterfeit love. When pain enters our life, it moves us towards such isolation, and it can.

It can move us towards such isolation and bitterness that we end up taking people for granted. And in her pain, Naomi lost sight of Ruth. That's what's happening here.

[ 17 : 46 ] Naomi is in danger of moving toward isolation and letting bitterness take hold. Now, Ruth is also suffering, right? She's not entering to Bethlehem and being like, oh, all that hard stuff is behind me now, doing good.

Now she's suffering too. But Ruth hasn't lost sight of Naomi. In this moment, in this homecoming, Naomi forsook Ruth, but Ruth has not forsaken Naomi.

Ruth, again, is this sterling example of real love. And real love shows us that something. Real love isn't often, or sorry, real love is often uneven and unfair.

Ruth doesn't hear Naomi say that. I've come back empty. She's not like over there going, over here. Like, remember me? I'm over. She listens.

She lets Naomi just gush with her pain and lament. And she loves Naomi as she is. Not as she wants her to be. And Ruth is dealing with her own pain and sorrow, which has another layer.

[ 18 : 52 ] Ruth's pain and sorrow has another layer, which verse 22 points out. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab, and they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Now, what I want to draw our attention to is, for the first time, the author says, not just Ruth, but he says, Ruth the Moabite. Ruth, and he includes it at this point for obvious reasons.

He's drawing our attention back to Ruth and the precariousness of her position. She's a penniless widow, like Naomi, but she's a foreigner, unlike Naomi.

Naomi, though grieving, does experience a reunion of sorts. It's people see her and are actually glad to see her. They are glad to have her back in the community.

You didn't hear anything say, nothing is said about Ruth, right? There was no rolling out the red carpet for Ruth at all in this. She's a stranger in a strange land.

[ 19 : 57 ] She's a nobody. She's overlooked by Naomi, and she's overlooked by all the people in Bethlehem. She hasn't chosen to be alone in her pain. No one knew her, and no one reached out to her.

But here's the thing, she never complains. She doesn't turn back, you know, go back to Moab. She just keeps on faithfully loving Naomi.

There's no thank you, no recognition of the sacrifice Ruth has made, and that's real love. Real love often feels uneven.

It often feels like you give a lot more than you get. And this is hard for us because we live in a world that values fairness above all things, right? I remember, I mean, this is a big irony because it was a love song back in the 90s when I was a teenager.

It was a long time ago, yes. There's this love song, and the line, the chorus line was, If you do for me, I'll do for you. Wow.

[ 21 : 01 ] Imagine living in that relationship. But here's the thing, and it sold a lot of records. It was a hit for like, you know, on the charts for weeks and weeks on end. It makes sense to our minds.

Yeah, if you do for me, I'll do for you. We keep track of things. We keep records. And that's the way of the world. The way of the world is keeping records, right? I notice when I've filled up the Keurig like three times in a row at home, and I'm wondering, when, oh, when will my wife do it, right?

By everyone's laugh, I'm guessing I'm not alone. But that's a, I mean, that's a silly, stupid example, but it's true. We keep records to serve ourselves, and we don't forget when somebody owes us.

And we get pretty good about knowing the right time to collect on that debt. But that's counterfeit love. That's what counterfeit love does. It stops serving when things are uneven.

It prefers to be in balance. It prefers things to be in balance or even better when things are tipped in our favor. See, Ruth is showing us something better, something more beautiful.

[ 22 : 15 ] She isn't keeping record of Naomi's failures. She isn't judging her motives and her actions. She loves Naomi, despite how far the scales have tipped unfairly.

Paul Miller says this in his commentary on Ruth. Ruth's walk through the city gates, ignored and unthanked, vividly portrays the cost of love. Ruth bears the weight of Naomi's life.

We usually recoil from the cost of love, thinking it is an alien substance, but it is the essence of love. This is strangely encouraging because when the pressure of love builds, we think somehow that we showed up for the wrong life.

This isn't what we signed up for, but no. This is the divine path called love. Can you appreciate, and I hope we all can feel how challenging and impossible this is, this way of real love, this divine path of love?

It feels impossible, right? It is. For you and me, in our own strength, it is impossible. There is no way we do that without God's help changing our hearts and empowering us.

[ 23 : 30 ] And that's why Ruth can do it. She's not some, like, amazing person out there, this once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-a-generation kind of gal who's just able to pull this off. No.

She loves God. She loves Naomi. She loves Naomi's people. And so she hasn't kept any records. She rejects the narrative that love has to be even.

And this frees her to love and serve Naomi even more. Check out verse 1 of chapter 2. Now, Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

We're going to get more. Boaz shows up more in the story next week. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain.

After him, in whose sight I shall find favor. She doesn't wait for Naomi to ask. She sees the opportunity to serve and love her mother-in-law.

[ 24 : 35 ] And she takes it. Real love moves us to serve others unconditionally and sacrificially. Naomi is not in a place to serve Ruth at all.

But this doesn't stop Ruth from serving Naomi. Real love doesn't come with conditions. It doesn't stop for a cost-benefit analysis or calculate the potential ROI. You know, am I going to get back?

Now, Ruth's saying something different. And real love serves you because you are you and I love you and that's that. And this means that real love puts us in risky and vulnerable situations.

Ruth going to the fields wasn't just sacrificial because it was hard work, which it was, right? She's going to be out in the fields in the heat. It was hot. And that kind of work was back-breaking.

You were constantly having to bend over to grab sheaths of barley and how all that worked. It was actually men's work. Men worked in the fields.

[ 25 : 38 ] But if you were poor, you could come in behind and glean behind the reapers. So, yeah, in one sense, her serving is sacrificial in that way.

But it's sacrificial in another way. She's a single working woman, unattached, a foreigner, no husband or fathers or brothers to protect her. She is going to be the rare woman surrounded by a bunch of men.

Now, this means that there is a real possibility that she could be taken advantage of in the worst way without any type of recourse. And she knows that.

And still she goes. Real love pushes her forward in the face of danger. You know, centuries later, the apostle Paul spoke about this same motivation for his ministry.

He gave his life for the church, sacrifice and risk, and put himself in danger for her. And he tells us why. He says in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 13, If we are out of our mind, as some say, it is for God.

[ 26 : 45 ] If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all and therefore all died. And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

That's what happens when people see real love in our lives and see how real love serves others. They're going to stop and they're going to say, you are out of your flipping minds, right?

It looks crazy. It really does. It doesn't make sense. It's too costly. It's too impossible. It's too dangerous. But here's the thing. When Jesus has wrecked your heart, you can't live any other way.

Like the apostle Paul says, the love of Christ compels me. The love of Christ compels you and I. Now this part of the story ends with Ruth going out into the fields to serve sacrificially, not knowing what was to come, but trusting in God.

And we're going to find out what happens next. Next week. When you experience God's real love, it enables and empowers you to serve unconditionally and sacrificially.

[ 28 : 01 ] And in one sense, living a life of real love is uneven. It feels like we're emptying ourselves all the time and getting very little in return. But real love is uneven in another sense.

It does call you to empty yourself. But you don't live empty. Because real love has faith in a God that fills you to overflowing with this love. Naomi lamented about leaving full but coming home empty under the hand of God's punishment.

She is struggling because she is measuring God by the narrowness of her circumstances. That counterfeit love does that. It measures love moment by moment. But real love is different.

Real love is measured across years and generations. Look at what God says about himself in Deuteronomy 7 verse 9. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love, real love, has said love, with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

It seems like Ruth gets this about God. She's lost her husband. She's grieving. She's grieving. She's not in her homeland. She doesn't have any kind of security.

[ 29 : 22 ] But she is not empty. Her faith in God fills her with his love and lifts her above her circumstances. She then is able to take on the form of a servant to show Naomi and us what real love is.

God's real love. And Ruth points to another who emptied himself and took on the form of a servant to show us God's love. That was Jesus. Philippians 2 says, What real love does.

It doesn't hold on to power and glory. It chooses the lowest place. It chooses the form of a servant. Jesus entered into our pain and sorrow.

He didn't leave heaven so we could serve him. He came to serve us. While he was here, he washed stinky feet. He even cooked some meals for his disciples sometimes. He taught.

He healed. He did amazing stuff. But the ultimate measure that shows us his love is the cross. That's how we see his real love in serving us.



[ 30 : 57 ] Jesus chose the cross because he loves us and wants us to know his love. He died so we can be filled to overflowing with the Father's love. That's why he came.

That's why he died. And I want to say, man, your current circumstances might have you feeling empty today. But there is a steadfast love that fills, that satisfies, that strengthens, that gives hope.

You might have or you might be in uneven relationships where you are giving way more than you are receiving. But God's love means this for you.

You can never give more than his love. The scales are always tipped in your favor.

So how does God fill us with his love? Well, he does it by filling us with his Holy Spirit. Which means he fills us with himself. That's a good thing.

[ 31 : 59 ] You know, I enjoy my dad's phone calls. You know what's even better? Is when my dad's around and gives me a big hug. Right? When Jesus taught his disciples to ask, seek, and knock, it was actually he was pointing them to like, hey, you have a Father in heaven who loves to give good gifts.

He loves to give his children good things. And if you ask, seek, and knock, how much more will he give you the Holy Spirit? But this takes faith that God is a good Father.

He wants to fill you with his love. Now, Jesus on the cross is the evidence of that real love. The Holy Spirit is the experience. As the band comes up, I want us to consider how we can respond today.

If you're here and not a Christian, I want to say this to you. You cannot serve your way into earning God's love. It's not about serve, serve, serve, and then God accepts you.

No, it's the other way around. You have to know, you have to believe, and you have to receive God's love first for you. And that means putting your faith in him, putting your faith that Jesus died on the cross for your sins.

[ 33 : 12 ] It's having faith in that. It's repenting of your sins and turning to him and trusting him as your Lord and Savior. Jesus loved you first by taking the form of a servant and dying for you so that you could know the Father's love and the invitation for you today.

If that's you, man, simply call out to him and say, Lord, I believe. I repent. And you'll receive his love, and you'll know it. And for those in the room who are Christians, I want to ask us, are we serving to earn God's love?

Or are we serving from the place of knowing his love? When we're filled with his love, and we're filled with that real perfect love, we have all we need to live a life of sacrificial, unconditional service.

We stop keeping records. We don't mind when things are uneven. I'm going to have everyone stand as we respond. And this is what I want to do.

I just want to pray and just give us an opportunity to just receive the Father's love. I feel like, man, from the beginning of this service, the compassion of God has just really been evident in this room.

[ 34 : 33 ] In the songs that we sang, you could just sense it. You could feel it. And I feel like some of us have come in feeling empty.

And we feel like, man, I don't know what else I have to give. I feel like I'm just about done. I'm just about tapped out. If we can just close our eyes.

I just want to encourage you today, man, that you don't have to say the perfect thing for God to meet you where you're at. And you just got to take a posture of leaning in and crying out to him for his love.

Ask him for his love and he will fill you with his love. He's a good and gracious Father. He is not withholding. He wants to give it to you. He wants to pour himself into you and fill you.

The Holy Spirit is here to do that today. This experience of the love of the Father. Just posture yourselves to receive that.

[ 35 : 45 ] So these next few moments of just silence. Just ask God, man, Lord, I need to know. Father, I need your love once again. Thank you, Father, for your love.

Everything that you have begun doing, continue to do. In us and through us. Amen. We are going to move to taking communion.

If you got one of these little guys right here. We're going to take communion together. And this brings us back to the cross of Jesus.

This brings us back to the evidence of the Father's love for us. His real love. And it brings us back to the thing that we can look at and say, you know what? This can never be taken away.

The cross can never be undone. It is permanent. We can rest on that no matter what. It can't be refuted. And this also reminds us how uneven God's love is for us.

[ 37 : 23 ] The scales are tipped in our favor. We can never give more than we've already gotten. By Jesus serving us through death on the cross.