

The Lord is Wonderful

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By Steve Harness

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Wilton Baptist Church

755 Saratoga Road

Wilton, NY 12831

Website: www.wiltonbaptistchurch.com

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/wiltonbaptist

You can think of that song as you live to love him more this year, bow the knee and serve the Lord each day. Thank you for that.

Isaiah 25, Isaiah chapter 25, an Old Testament book the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 25.

Welcome to all those visiting here this morning. You are a special guest. We are glad you are here this morning and I hope you benefit and enjoy the fellowship and the service together today.

Thank you to all those who have given us cards and Christmas gifts and I know we had a good Christmas, hoping you did, as well. And thank you for the gift from the church and from each of you. We sure do appreciate everyone here and we are glad that God has called us to be a part of this work here in Wilton, New York.

Isaiah 25.

There is a young fellow who once said to his girlfriend, he said, "I dreamed about you last night."

Naturally, she was intrigued and wanted to know more about it.

He said, "I dreamed that I proposed to you. I wonder what it means."

She said, "It means that you have more sense when you are asleep than when you are awake."

Whatever this year holds for you, no matter what happens in your life, if you are a believer, you will have a happy ending. You will have a happy ending. Being with Jesus Christ forever we will live happily ever after with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Much of the book of Isaiah has to do with the Messiah and a lot of it also has to do with the millennium, the millennial kingdom. It is described as well and the rapture and it

describes some of these events that are futuristic from our standpoint and certainly in the future from Isaiah's standpoint.

Now notice what the Bible says. I will read the whole chapter, just 12 verses. Isaiah chapter 25 beginning in verse one.

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.¹

The Lord gives Isaiah this message. It is a futuristic message. It is something that will happen one day. Chapters 24 through 27 are described, many people call it Isaiah's apocalypse, the 10 times type things. And so he is speaking about some things that will happen in what we know as of the tribulation, a time when God is judging a Jesus rejecting world. And then it is also describing a time when God will set up his people once again and he will reign. That is called the millennial kingdom, the 1000 year reign.

So chapters 24, if you would look at them all together one day, 24 through 27 it describes a 1007, at least 1007 year period. That is the time frame in which it takes place.

¹ Isaiah 25:1-12.

When does it happen? Well, some time in the future. It hasn't happened yet and it will happen one day. You can know that. We can believe that.

So here in chapter 25, after describing the tribulation, after describing some of the judgment of the wrath of the Lord on a Jesus rejecting world, he then says:

“O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things.”²

And the work of God is described as wonderful.

“...thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.”³

And then he describes some more of the judgment and how God blesses and loves his people and sets up a feast. It is a wonderful thing.

So the Lord is wonderful in the day of the Lord, which is what this is called, the day of the Lord. Believer, you won't you have to go through the day of the Lord, that is the judgment of God on this earth. You won't have to endure that. We get to experience the day of Christ. That is in heaven. That takes place at the same time as the day of Christ is for believers after the rapture takes place. Then all these things will take place on the earth, all this... all the bloodshed and all the death and all the incredible disasters that will take place that the book of Revelation gives us an insight to. All of that is described in a way in these passages of Scripture before us, Isaiah 24 through 27. But in spite of all of those things, Isaiah said back then and we can say today and whenever it is going on, the Lord is wonderful. He has done wonderful works.

I am standing before you today to tell you that the Word of God is wonderful. God is wonderful in giving us this book. The will of God is wonderful. These things have yet to take place, but it is the will of God and it will happen and it is the wonderful will of God.

And the work of God is a wonderful thing and you can just look back at 2011 and what God has done in your life and you can say, “Wow, God was wonderful. He delivered me. He helped me there.” And what a blessing it is to know Jesus Christ.” You could say amen to that. God is wonderful.

Now, no matter what happens in 2012, we will probably all write 2011 for a while, don't we? We write the wrong date. Whatever happens in 2012, we can know this. Our God is wonderful. Our God is a wonderful God.

I am glad we do not have to go through this day of the Lord, this description that is given to us here in this passage, but no matter what happens in our lives, we can know that our God is wonderful.

² Isaiah 25:1.

³ Ibid.

The Jewish people are given an opportunity to know and serve the Lord again. We see a restoration take place in this passage.

Now, no matter what happens, the Lord is wonderful. That is the theme of this year. That is the theme of our message here for today. And I want you to know he is wonderful all the time, all the time. In times where things are, what we would say, wonderful, it is good. Everything is all right. And times when it doesn't seem like it is that wonderful, God is still wonderful. He is our wonderful God.

And with this in mind, let's look at this passage after our word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you that you are our wonderful God. And now we ask that you would turn our attention to this passage, that you would teach us by your Spirit, that you would challenge our hearts, that we would recognize you as being our wonderful God and the good times we face and in the bad times that we will go through. Lord challenge each heart, each need of each one here today we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Lord is wonderful all the time. All the time our God is wonderful. Now notice, if you would, in verse three, even in a time of strength... Now this would be obvious, so when somebody is strong and everything seems good, well, God is wonderful then. In verse three:

“Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.”⁴

There is a change. Here are some people that are lifted up with their own pride, with their own arrogance, with their perceived own ability. And they are strong, but they are not ones who are giving the credit to God. They are not the ones who are recognizing the time of their strength is because of the Lord.

Verse two and verse three describe them. And then also in verse 10, look at how they can be brought low.

“For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride.”⁵

A proud people can be brought low. Listen to this, church, this morning. A person may be strong and because of their strength they are proud. And in that time of strength they may not recognize their God as being wonderful. Here are some people in this passage. They did not recognize God at all as being wonderful or otherwise. And so they were brought down low.

⁴ Isaiah 25:3.

⁵ Isaiah 25:10-11.

We find the word “strong” in verse two and verse three. It means vehement, harsh, fierce, grieving, mighty powerful or rough. Walled cities will not help a person escape the wrath of God. And, believe me, during the time of the tribulation, during the day of the Lord, God’s judgment on a Jesus rejecting world, people will get into their defensive cities. They will get into places where they will try to find protection and safety. People will be hiding from the terror of the Lord raining his wrath upon this earth. It is a day of judgment. And people will recognize that the judgment of God and they will be fearful of God just like the passage says.

In verse 11:

“And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.”⁶

They will have all these things, but it will be not good enough.

“And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.”⁷

We have nations in this world today that are all lifted up with pride. We would say, “Oh, Russia, they are lifted up with pride. You know, they are kind of rebuilding all their army and everything. Iran is trying to get that nuclear bomb. And all these other countries like China. They are lifted up with pride.”

Listen. The biggest one with pride is the United States of America.

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”⁸

We have been lifted up with pride and we are not recognizing that our God is wonderful. He is the one who is responsible for anything that any nation has ever had. And the Bible says:

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”⁹

And thank God that for a long time it was that God was the Lord of America. But we are going to have some troublesome times because we are walking away from recognizing that our God is wonderful. And we may have all this capability and thank God for all the navy men here today and all those who served in our military in different ways, but that is not where the power or any power comes from. It is all from God. We wouldn’t have all the best weapons in the world. And, by the way, during the tribulation antichrist will get

⁶ Isaiah 25:11.

⁷ Isaiah 25:12.

⁸ Luke 12:48.

⁹ Psalms 33:12.

all the people together to get all the best weapons they can muster up and they will point them all at God and all of them will fail.

There will be that great battle of Armageddon. And all the nations, all the nations are described here will be brought low. We will not find armed cities or fortifications that can keep us away from the wrath of our God.

By the way, I already mentioned, believer, you won't be here for that. That is a wonderful thing. That goes back to the will of God. It is a wonderful thing that you will not have to be here during that time.

But he can make low the proud. Verse three, verse five. This passage clearly indicates that the Bible tells us that, that those who are proud, they will be brought low.

One person commented by saying, "The ultimate victory is not for the powerful and for the mighty, but for the poor and needy who look to the Lord and recognize their need for him."

Well, if you want to recognize that God is wonderful and you might say, "Well, in times of strength that is easy. It is easy to do be lifted up with pride and say it is just my strength."

Now, let's look at the other side of this, those who are humble. The Lord can give strength to the humble, those who are meek and lowly of heart.

Now the word "strength" that is used in verse four is a word which means a fortified place, a defense, a fortress, a rock, to strengthen. It is a stronghold. That is what is described. Notice what the Bible says.

"For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."¹⁰

The Lord is wonderful. He can give strength to those who are humble, those poor in their poverty. God can lift them up and encourage them. As you know, a person for in their poverty, they can be the happiest person in the earth, simply because they know that their God is their wonderful God. They know him. They know him.

How about those who are poor or needy in distress? There will be moments in our life in 2012 where there is some need. There will be some distresses. And we don't know where to turn or what to do. The Lord is right there. He is our wonderful God.

There will be storms. Jesus Christ is the refuge in a storm. We will talk about the storms of life in just a moment. There will be the shadow. He will be the shadow from the heat. Even when confronted by evil people and persecution has increased and will continue to

¹⁰ Isaiah 25:4.

increase, no, not in China. In America. Yeah, here. There will be more persecution. Yes, in China, as well. But we think of poorer nations, don't we, that there is persecution, intense hatred against Christianity and against Jesus Christ.

We can see his strength this year. If we are humble before our God we can recognize his strength in our lives. I look ahead and I think about our missions conference and I thank the Lord for our missions conference. The Lord can increase our faith. We can see additional missionaries go out into the mission field. And what a wonderful thing? New missionaries, faith promise, the missions conference. We can see the strength of the Lord in our lives. We can see his strength as we continue the building expansion as we finish this building. We have an activity field to put up for our activities outside. We will be putting that in this year. And that is something we can look forward to and recognize the strength of the Lord. We can have enhanced ministry and serving opportunities. I like that word "enhanced." Enhanced opportunities.

Wouldn't it be wonderful as we have these new classrooms up here to add three new classes to Sunday school? We could have a singles Sunday school. We could have... well, we already have a young adult. We have a young adult Sunday school class. We could have marriage and family one for those ... for who have children sixth grade and younger. We could have marriage and family two for those who have teenagers. We could see this happen this year. This is a time of strength. We can look ahead and see the wonderful hand of God in our lives.

The time of strength we can recognize our God is wonderful.

Number two, this morning in a time of storm our God is wonderful. In a time of storms.

In verse four I love the description. We have already highlighted a few of them. But Jesus Christ is our refuge from the storm. He is a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Now it could happen that this week when the temperature gets down to zero—it is supposed to—and a little bit of snow will actually come, maybe you think, wow, here comes a blizzard and a pipe freezes in my house. I need some refuge. This is cool even if something like that happens, God is wonderful. That is not the worst thing that could happen, by the way.

So our God is wonderful.

We will all face storms this year, whether it is a physical storm or not, the blast of the terrible ones can be harmful and can be discouraging and can hurt you. Persecution is on the rise and there will be difficulties for you at the work place. There will be difficulties for you in handing out tracts in your neighborhood. And it may be difficulties for you even just getting to church. Who knows what will happen? And in different things that will happen in our land and in our lives in this year.

Folks, there will be times of discouragement. There will be times of disappointment this year. There will be times where it seems like the storm is not rolling out. It is just staying right there and it is just keeping on raining down right where I am at. There may be times where it feels like that for you and in spite of that the Lord is wonderful. The Lord is wonderful.

There will be some missionaries who leave the field never to return this year. I have already talked to some. Bad health, poor health. They can't keep doing it. That is a storm, isn't it? That is a difficulty. There will be times in your life, perhaps this year that, you know, I can't do what I used to be able to do, or I have this disease or I have this sickness or it I something just overwhelming to my life and I encounter a storm. It is a storm in your life.

Perhaps you lose your job. Perhaps your finances will take another hit. Maybe there will be some help or some change in your life, something you could even plan or guess whatever happened. But it might happen and it is a storm in you life.

Let me tell you this. Know it. Our God is wonderful, even when those times come, our God is wonderful.

Number three this morning, times of satisfaction. In times of strength our God is wonderful. In times of storm our God is wonderful. And in time of satisfaction.

Now notice in verse six and verse seven the Lord throws a feast.

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”¹¹

Here is what all that is talking about: the best. That is... it is talking about that best. God wants what is best in our life and he can give us what is best. It talks about the marrow in a bone. It is talking about fullness. It is talking about something that is complete. It has what it has to have, what it needs. And God wants the best. And that is what it is talking about the wines and the lees and everything. It is well refined.

Notice in verse seven.

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.”¹²

The Lord is wonderful in a time of satisfaction.

¹¹ Isaiah 25:6.

¹² Isaiah 25:7.

Now when there is a feast thrown in the Bible, usually one of two things are happening. Either there is a wedding or there is a coronation service. That is usually when the feasts are being thrown and a big celebration, like a crowing or a coronation service.

Here is an example in 1 Kings 1:25.

“For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king’s sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.”¹³

They threw a face recognizing the new coronation of the new king.

I wonder if that is what this is talking about when it says the Lord throws a feast that his people will finally admit Jesus Christ is the King. Jesus Christ is the King. After all, one day every nation and every person, every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You could say amen to that. He is. He is the king, a coronation service.

The Jewish people will recognize as will all the nations of the earth that Jesus is king. He will reign in his millennial kingdom. Revelation 20 verse six.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”¹⁴

A 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth. But it doesn’t stop there because Jesus Christ will reign forever. In revelation chapter 11 verse 15 to 17.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”¹⁵

Like that song goes, “And he shall reign for ever and ever.” You know how it echoes like that. It is from this passage. Jesus Christ is the King, reigning forever.

It could also be referring to what will take place in heaven after the rapture, Revelation 19 or actually, yes, Revelation 19:9.

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”¹⁶

¹³ 1 Kings 1:25.

¹⁴ Revelation 20:6.

¹⁵ Revelation 11:15.

¹⁶ Revelation 19:9.

Believer, when the rapture takes place, when you are escorted right into heaven, we meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord, when that takes place, sometime thereafter when we get to heaven there is what is called the marriage supper of the lamb. It is a great celebration.

It starts out what we call the day of Christ. That is all that is going on in heaven. On earth the judgment is taking place, the day of the Lord, some of what we have already described today. And the judgment is on a Jesus rejecting world. But we are celebrating because the Church is described as the bride of Christ, the bride of Christ. We get to go to heaven and celebrate in this wedding ceremony, the bride of Christ.

Like 2 Corinthians 11:2:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”¹⁷

That godly jealousy. God is jealous for you. Yes, he absolutely wants what is best for you and I. A godly jealousy. Who wants that in our lives?

And so in a time of satisfaction, a coronation, a crowning, this wedding and even seeing. Being able to see in verse seven.

“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.”¹⁸

How satisfying is it? Thank God if you have the ability to see. How satisfying is it to have your eyes closed and be able to open them up and to see? Isn't that a satisfying thing?

When you wake up in the morning and it is supposed to be light out and you know it and you see the light, that is a satisfying thing. A lot of times we don't acknowledge it, but it really is a satisfying thing to be able to open our eyes and see.

If we had blinders on our eyes we would say that it is dissatisfying or annoying. We don't want it. We would take them off so that we could see. That is what we would do. If you had your glasses and they get all fogged up, some of you know what I am talking about. They get fogged up and you have to move them off because you want to be able to see.

Jewish people have been blinded according to the Bible. Jewish people have been blinded and do you know who blinded them? Phenomenal. God did. God blinded his own people. Why would God do that?

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”¹⁹

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:2.

¹⁸ Isaiah 25:7.

¹⁹ Luke 12:48.

The Bible says:

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”²⁰

They said no. The Lord said, “All right. You said no? For a time we will go to the Gentile people. And we will have the church and now the church will be my representative to the nations and we will set Israel to the side.” And, you know, for a long time Israel didn’t even have their own land to call home. It is because they said no to Jesus Christ.

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”²¹

You say, “Is that really why they are blinded?”

Yes. In John 12 verse 40 the Bible says:

“He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”²²

It is speaking of the Jewish people.

In Isaiah 29:10.

“For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.”²³

That was even before and during when he covered their eyes, even before the time in which we live. But God covered their eyes, because they were given much, much was required.

But, folks, God will open their eyes one day. That is what it is talking about. The veil shall be spread over all nations. He is going to take it off. They will be able to see. They will recognize him as their King.

How about this? All people have been blinded. All people have been blinded. At one point you were blind, spiritually blind. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:4:

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”²⁴

²⁰ John 1:11.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Jon 12:40.

²³ Isaiah 29:10.

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:4.

That coworker who curses and says, “Let’s go to the party.” And he says, “Hey, you want a drink with me?” And that guy who has invited you to do some of those things and that person who is a relative and that neighbor across the street who yells at you for your dog getting out and curses at you about this, that and the other, whoever those people are, their eyes have been blinded to Christ.

Now it wasn’t God who did it this time. It was Satan. He is the god of this world. He is that lower g o d, the false god of this world.

By the way, you may be religious and be in church here this morning, but if you haven’t opened you eyes to see Christ for who he is, you are still blinded, still blinded. You need to confess Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, believe in what he did in dying on the cross for your sins.

All people have been blinded.

Do you know God is wonderful in his coronation service? He is wonderful in the weddings. He is wonderful in giving us the ability to see. He is also wonderful in verse eight in a time of sorrow. In a time of sorrow our God is wonderful.

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”²⁵

That rebuke has to do with that blind that we spoke about just a moment ago. A time of sorrow.

Death can become victory. In 1 Corinthians 15:55:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”²⁶

It could happen this year that some of us death will claim us, but if we are the believer, it is a thing of victory.

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”²⁷

Some among us may not be with us next year at this same time. We don’t know. Only those believers in Jesus Christ will have this type of victor.

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”²⁸

²⁵ Isaiah 25:8.

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:55.

²⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:8.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:55.

Death becomes victory. Tears become trials. I love what it is said.

“...the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces.”²⁹

It sounds a lot like Revelation 21:4, doesn't it? In Revelation 21:4 here is what the Bible says. And perhaps it is speaking about the same time.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”³⁰

When we face times of sorrow our God is wonderful. Death becomes victory. Tears become triumph. There will be troubles this year that you have never faced before. There will be times where tears will come to your eyes because of the intensity of the trials that you will face. There will be difficulties in relationships. There will be difficulties in the work place. There will be difficulties in your life and things that you will know, maybe other people know, but things that maybe you won't even tell other people, but it is just a time of sorrow, a time of difficulty, a time apart from somebody. That is a difficult thing. Maybe it will be a time of being apart from someone. Maybe someone has now had to move where I have to change or I have to do something different. God has called me to do something different and, oh, it is time to sorrow.

But God is still wonderful.

And what if God called one of us to be a missionary. Would you go? What if the Lord said, “Preacher, I want you to be a missionary to some foreign country”?

Folks, I would have to go if God called me to do that.

Now I don't believe God has called me to do that. And once that happens the work would still go on. You know, a church isn't built on a person. It is built on the rock, Jesus Christ. And it is not built by a person. It is built by Jesus Christ. That is how a church is built. God hasn't called me to do anything like that. I am glad God has called us here.

But no matter what happens in our lives, our God is wonderful.

What happened in your life? Whatever will happen, know this. God is wonderful.

In a time of sorrow death becomes victory, tears become triumph, in troubles or trials or a time apart. And then, finally, in verse nine we find a time of salvation. Here is where it all comes together.

²⁹ Isaiah 25:8.

³⁰ Revelation 21:4.

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”³¹

Wow. Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? Be glad and rejoice in the Lord. Be glad and rejoice in the Lord. Take every moment of every day and as you can, as the Bible says:

“Pray without ceasing.”³²

Just thank the Lord. Lord, thank you. You are wonderful. I don't deserve this opportunity. I don't deserve this job. I don't deserve this house. I don't deserve life or living or even the ability to have another day of breath or one moment of having a breath flow through my lungs, but, Lord, you are wonderful.

And if you are a believer, I don't deserve heaven. I don't deserve being forgiven. I don't deserve these things. The Word of God, the will of God, I don't deserve any of that. But, Lord, you have given it to me. And you are my wonderful God.

Believer, rejoice in the Lord like that. Be a rejoicing Christian.

You know, a lot of times we get around complaining. I don't like this at the work place. I don't like that. about the spouse. Thank God you are married. Men, say amen. Somebody... Oh, no, that is ... no what I am preaching next week, right? Marriage and family.

If you have a church thank God for it. If you have a job, thank God for it. If you have a roof over your head, thank God for it. If you have eternity with Jesus Christ, thank God for it. Amen. Our God is wonderful everyday, all the time.

Folks, maybe I don't know him like that. You can know him like that today. You can believe on Jesus Christ. You can receive him.

First of all, you need to recognize your need and then, secondly, just rely on him. Recognize your need. I am a sinner. I do fall short of the glory of God. I have transgressed the law of God.

It might not be a lies today, but I have lied before. And you might not be a thief today, but I have stolen before. I have broken God's law somewhere. I am a sinner. We are guilty of all. We offend in one point the Bible says we are guilty of all. I need forgiveness. Admit your need. Recognize your need. Then what do you do about it? You rely on Christ.

³¹ Isaiah 25:9.

³² 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

No, it is not going to church. It is not being a religious person. It is not being baptized. It is not being a nice person to your neighbor or to your spouse or whoever. It is none of those things. It is believing and relying on his work, not my work, not your work. Our righteousness, they are all as filthy rags. The best that you can do is despised by God as filth.

You recognize your need. I am a sinner. You rely on Christ. He died on the cross 2000 years ago. He shed your blood because without the shedding of blood there is no remission or forgiveness of sin and he died on that cross for you. And then he rose again on the third day. And God is alive in heaven. Jesus is alive in heaven today and he is extending salvation to you. You can believe it for yourself. You can receive it for yourself. It is not being religious. I am not...

Well, you know, I am Catholic. I am Methodist. I am Baptist. I am whatever. It doesn't matter. You could be a Baptist and still go to hell without Jesus Christ. Trust Christ today. Rely on him, not yourself for salvation. And then you can say with me, "My God is wonderful."

Believer, teach that class. Get excited about it. Serve the Lord. Sing that song. Build that building. Share the gospel. Do the things that you know God wants you to do. God is wonderful in a time of salvation. And then serve God.

That is why they said they were waiting on it. They say it is why he waited on God. Wait on the Lord. That means not only time, but service while we wait for him to come forth.

Would you be faithful to serve God like that? And then if you haven't trusted him, trust Christ today.

On May 24th, 1965 there is a 13 and a half foot boat slipped quietly out of the marina at Falmouth, Massachusetts. It would be the smallest craft ever to make the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to England. The *Tinkerbelle* was piloted by Robert [?] a copy editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. He felt that 10 years behind a desk was enough boredom for him, so he took an absence to go on this boat voyage and it was a secret dream that he had.

Manery was afraid not of the ocean, but of all of those who would try to talk him out of it so he didn't tell very many people. He told just his wife and just a few relatives about his trip. The trip was not pleasant. You could imagine going across the ocean in a 13 and a half foot vessel. He spent nights, many nights of sleeplessness trying to cross shipping lanes without getting run over and sunk. Weeks at sea caused his foot to become tasteless. Loneliness at that age old monster of the deep led to many terrifying hallucinations. His rudder broke three times. Storms swept him overboard and had it not been for the rope that he had around his waist, he never would have been able to pull himself back on board.

Finally after 78 days alone at sea, he sailed into Falmouth, Cornwall, England. And during those nights he had wondered as he was traveling about what he would do once he arrived. He expected just to find a hotel and check in and eat dinner all alone and then the next morning see if he could find the Associated Press and let them know about it in case they were interested in his story.

But he was in for a surprise. Word of his approach came to England and to his amazement as he approached the shore, 300 vessels with horns blasting escorted *Tinkerbelle* into port. 40,000 people stood screaming and cheering for him as he came to shore and Robert Manery, the copy editor turned dreamer became an overnight hero. His story has been told around the world, but Robert could not have done it alone. When he got to shore, the first face that he saw was to him a greater hero, his wife Virginia. She had encouraged him and said, "You go for the dream that God has given to you," when other people would have discouraged him.

Folks, as we go into 2012 you are not alone. You are not alone. You have the Word of God. You have the people of God. And thank God you have God himself. He is right here with you. He is our wonderful God. And he is wonderful all the time.

Let's bow for a time of invitation. Thank you for your good attention here this morning. If you say, "Pastor Harness, you spoke about salvation that the Lord is wonderful in salvation, I have received Christ as my personal Savior. I would like to know I am going to heaven. I would like to know my sins are forgiven. God spoke to me about salvation today," would you raise your hand around the sanctuary? Anyone at all. Just raise your hand quickly so I can see it. Anyone? I need that. All right. Would it be others? I need salvation. I want that today. All right.

If you want to trust Christ as your personal Savior in our invitation time you come forward. We will have someone show you in the Bible and by faith you can receive Jesus Christ. You can be forgiven of your sins. That can happen for you today.

Maybe you say, "I am a believer." As we go into 2012 in the high times, in the good times, I know that God is wonderful. And when the times are difficult, the storms are there, trouble is all around, I still want to acknowledge that my God is wonderful. God spoke to me about that. I purpose to have that in my life in this year. Would you raise your hand around the sanctuary?

No matter what happens, I want to say, "My God is wonderful." Amen. Would there be others? Amen. Good. Others. Thank you. You may put your hands down. Anyone else? Thank you. Amen. Thank you.

God is working in our hearts and lives. There are spiritual needs, spiritual decisions that we are making right now. I encourage you when the pianos begin to play to come forward, talk to the Lord in prayer. Kneel before him. Bow before him. Make these decisions to talk to the Lord about them today.

Father, we thank you for your Word and how you have challenged our hearts this morning. We ask that you would bless this invitation time. May your will be done. Help each one to follow we pray in Jesus' name.

Would you please stand to your feet?