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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**October 20, 2013**

**The Servant Song of Isaiah, Part 1**

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do thank you and praise you for the extraordinary gift you have given us in your Son. We thank you for the gift you've given us in your church, we thank you that we can still come together corporately to offer up our worship, our praise and our thanksgiving. And Father, this morning as we get to that part of our service where we open your book, we want to grow even more in our understanding of what you have done for us in the gift of your Son. And so we pray for your Holy Spirit, we pray that you would guide us as we open up your book, that you would accompany us, that you would give us the ability to make these things a permanent part of our lives, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we are starting a new series this morning and deciding on what to do at that point is always a -- it's an agony for me, involves a lot of praying and a lot of just asking God what he would have me do, and we spent the last oh, six or so sessions kind of doing a "how to," looking at stewardship, and I was looking for

something that kind of drew us back to the loveliness of Jesus Christ. And someone suggested looking at the book of Isaiah, and I kind of pictured looking at 66 chapters of that book every Sunday for the next 10 or 15 years, and that was kind of daunting. And then Michael Scaman suggested well, why don't you look into the servant songs of Isaiah. Bingo. There are four of them depending on which commentaries you read and they are prophetic messages identifying and speaking to the servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ the Messiah. They are called "songs" because they are written in a unique form of Hebrew poetry and are scattered throughout the book of Isaiah. You will recognize each of these servant songs because they are so often quoted not just by biblical scholars but by New Testament authors as well, and Luke is a good example.

The fourth chapter of Luke describes the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and it says this in *Luke 4:16*, it says: *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's*

favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus identified the servant in Isaiah's song as himself, and he was reading from one of Isaiah's servant songs. It is just possible that these songs themselves played a foundational role in Jesus' understanding of who he was and of his ministry of reconciliation. It is entirely possible that the Father through the Holy Spirit by means of these scriptures in Isaiah communicated to the Son the servant he was to become. I know for myself it's very easy to slip into thinking that Jesus' communication with his Father was unrealistically modern. You know, many of us think that Jesus' access to his Father was about as direct as if Jesus had a cell phone without the phone. I think we can more easily imagine the Father and the Son kind of texting themselves constantly rather than we can imagine Jesus being completely filled with the Holy Spirit using God's word as the means he chose to discover who he was, to discover he was the suffering servant Isaiah was speaking of. And to better understand that, we have to do some background work on the nature of Jesus, the man. I think it's easy to forget the implications of *Philippians 2:5* which says this: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but*

*made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Jesus arrived on this planet in the Town of Bethlehem in a feeding trough in a barn having made himself nothing. There's a popular theory about Christ making himself nothing that suggests that he emptied himself of all of the prerogatives of the Godhead in order to become fully human. It's called the Kenosis theory after the Greek word for emptying. And it suggests that Jesus, because he had emptied himself of these prerogatives, was able to work miracles only because he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit like you and I. Like we could. Well, such a theory fundamentally misunderstands something. It misunderstands that Jesus was fully man and he was fully God. You see, as God in the flesh, he couldn't be fully God if he had emptied himself of his omnipotence and omniscience because they are attributes that define who God is. Strip them away from God and God ceases to be God. And we know that Jesus was fully and completely God. *Colossians 1:19* says: *For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.* You see, it is far better to understand Jesus as simultaneously and voluntarily veiling those aspects of his incarnate deity in order to fully realize what it meant to live

like a human. You know, the scripture doesn't say he emptied himself. It says he made himself nothing, that is he embraced the profound humiliation of flesh to become one with us. Moment by moment Jesus chose to make himself nothing by veiling from his human nature those aspects of divinity that would have denied him the ability to live life just like we have to live it. You know, Jesus could have lived among us with all of his attributes like some type of a superhero, but then he wouldn't have experienced life like we experience it. *Hebrews 4:15* says: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* So to be tempted in every respect as we are tempted is to live life like we have to live it. And to do that, Jesus had to cover his divine attributes.

John Calvin said that Jesus -- quote -- "suffered His divinity to be concealed under a veil of flesh." He didn't do that by emptying himself of himself but instead by embracing what it meant to live life on earth like we have to live it. You know, Augustine was once asked how did he empty himself, and he said this: "By taking that which he was not, not by losing that which He was." For instance, Jesus never emptied himself of his divine ability to uphold the universe. *Colossians 1:15* says this of Jesus, it says: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all*

creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the glue that binds the entire universe together from atoms to mountains to oceans to everything. That glue is Christ himself. In him all things hold together. He didn't empty himself of that when he took on flesh. And so in short, the mystery of Christ's incarnation is far more profound than our puny little human minds can begin to grasp, and the glory of God in Christ lies at the heart of that profound mystery that we can only scratch the surface of.

*Colossians 1:18* says: *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.* If you want to sum up everything the Scripture is trying to tell us, you can state it simply by saying the epicenter of the universe is not man and his desires but God and the preeminence of his Son. That is his glory. And Jesus never emptied himself of his glory. To put it another way, while Jesus the baby was squalling powerless in a feeding trough in a barn unable to even to lift his head or articulate the need for food or comfort or warmth, this very same Jesus as God fully divine

was also simultaneously holding the universe together. Just try meditating on that for a while. You see, the human nature that Jesus embraced had to learn how to crawl and to walk and to talk just like we do, and he learned that all the while veiling his human nature from his omnipotent power and knowledge. You know, the Scripture says that Jesus grew in knowledge and understanding and that he learned obedience through suffering. It paints a portrait of Jesus voluntarily choosing to discover his mission by understanding what the Spirit revealed to him through the Scripture. By having to discover on his own through the same Scriptures that we have the full extent of his identity as the Messiah. And so it's entirely possible that the Father used the servant songs of Isaiah to instruct his beloved Son in the role that he would have as that suffering servant.

We know at the age of 12, Jesus had already discovered through the Scriptures his unique relationship with his Father and the role he would have in reconciling the world to himself. In fact, his understanding caused a substantive break with his earthly parents over his true Father. You know, if you remember the story in Luke 2, it's the story of the boy Jesus in the temple. And Mary and Joseph had gone up to Jerusalem for the Passover ceremony, somehow or other in the confusion of the caravan, Mary and Joseph both leave separately each thinking that the other one has Jesus in

tow. After three days in a panic, they returned to the temple. And there they find Jesus as a young boy of 12 instructing the great leaders in the law. See, Jesus had been attending the Passover celebration and it had meant so much more to him than it did to the Jews who were attending it because Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Scripture, well, he understood exactly what the Passover was about. You know, the Jews thought they were just remembering their escape from Egypt, and it was an escape preceded by the worst of the ten plagues when the angel of death swept into Egypt killing the firstborn by passing over all of those who were protected by the blood of a lamb smeared on their door posts. They didn't realize that they were picturing the sacrifice of the lamb of God on the cross whose blood alone could save them from death itself. It was said that during the Passover celebrations, the stream that ran past the temple turned completely red with the blood of the lambs that were being slaughtered. Only one person, only that 12-year-old boy in that temple understood that all that blood, it was a picture of his own blood that was going to be shed for sin. By the time Jesus had reached the age of 12, he had come to fully grasp the enormity of who he was. That's why he would say to his earthly parents in *Luke 2:49*: "*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. They didn't understand but Jesus did. He fully understood



that 12 years earlier he had left heaven itself to enter the womb of the peasant woman to be born in a barn in Bethlehem. Jesus had come to fully realize that he was the Messiah come to earth and that he had the very mind of God inside this 12-year-old body. You know, Solomon is considered the wisest man who's ever lived. We have Michelangelo and da Vinci and Einstein and perhaps even Steven Hawking who would be considered to be extraordinary geniuses, their minds were thimble fulls compared to the limitless ocean of wisdom that was inside the mind of this 12-year-old boy speaking in the temple.

Thousands of years earlier, this boy's mind had confronted Job when Job sought to question his wisdom in how he had created and ordered the world. *Job 38* says this, it says: *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined it's measurements -- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"* You see, the one who originally had laid that cornerstone was now in the flesh in the temple in the presence of a 12-year-old boy. That same mind

went on to ask Job in verse 8: "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors and said, 'Thus far shall you come and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed?' Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this." That 12-year-old boy could declare it perfectly because it was he who thousands of years before had done it. Again, he asked Job in verse 19: "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness?" In verse 31, he said, "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on earth on the earth?" That adolescent boy could and did. Colossians 1:15 says: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. He understood. And he understood because it was he who had said to Job thousands

of years before in verse 34: *"Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?"* See, this 12-year-old boy, he was the very same one who years later while on a boat on the Sea of Galilee would stop a life-threatening squall from overwhelming his companions by simply demanding that nature itself cease and desist. His omnipotence terrified his companions who said in *Mark 4:41*: *"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"* This is not someone who had emptied himself of his glory. Instead this is someone whose glory was completely and totally under the power of the Holy Spirit. When he asked Job in verse 36: *"Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?"* Only this 12-year-old standing in the temple could answer: It is Me. And he had been enlightened and instructed and encouraged by the servant songs of Isaiah. That's what we want to look at this morning. We're going to look at all four of the servant songs to understand more about the servant that they are directed to and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our first servant song is found in *Isaiah 42:1-7* which says this: *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his*

voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."

Well, first thing that we see right off the bat is that the Father delights in the Son. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him.* Jesus in Luke 2 identified himself as that very one whom the Father had chosen, and right after Jesus allowed himself to be baptized by John the Baptist, his Father breaks through to the kingdom of earth and he speaks out his delight in Matthew 3:17, he says this, he says: *And there came a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son. I take delight in him!"*

What do you delight in? I mean, some folks delight in things

material like cars or homes or some kind of treasured possessions. For others it would be loved ones, it would be friends, it would be relatives. For most others, I suspect, it would be their children. I mean, almost every parent loves his children but not every parent can say I take delight in my children. You know, for some of us, children are a source of great heartache and pain. We want the very best for them and it hurts to see them making wrong choices. That was not the case for the Father. The Father saw in the Son a source of unending limitless delight, but it was a delight that had to be tempered with the knowledge that the Father would one day experience the unimaginable pain of seeing his own Son slaughtered on our behalf. When we truly delight in something, our first instinct is to seek to protect it, to guard it from pain and suffering and evil. That was not an option for the Father. Jesus had come to embrace the pain, the suffering, and the evil that our sin had produced. So the delight of the Father and the Son always had this profoundly sad edge to it. The cross imposed itself on every aspect of Jesus' existence. It imposed itself not only on Jesus but on the entire trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each represented in this opening line. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold.* That's the father. *My chosen, in whom my soul delights.* That's the Son. *I have put my Spirit upon him.* That's the Holy Spirit. *He will bring forth justice to the nations.* There was only one way that Jesus could ever do that. There was

only one way to bring forth justice and that was through the cross. God had offered to Adam a covenant, it was a covenant that required obedience. Adam had forsaken the covenant, sided with the serpent, and along with Eve committed treason against his creator. Adam's perfection had been shattered, but God was not taken by surprise. There in that very garden, God explained to Adam, Eve and the serpent the curse that their fallenness had produced but even there he held out to them the hope that justice would be satisfied and they too could be restored. In *Genesis 3:15*, God said this to the serpent, he said: *"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."* See, the serpent had enmity towards the woman because he knew that his undoing would be through a man born of a woman, born of a virgin, born so that he could die for our sin. God's perfect justice required that all sin be paid for in full, and that left God with only two choices. Either mankind would suffer the consequences of his action and be completely wiped out and done with forever or God himself would suffer those consequences and bear the penalty of man's sin on the cross. So justice to God meant the death of the Son he delighted in. Because of the resurrection, God could say to the serpent you will only strike his heel but he will crush your head. Thus God will bring forth justice to the nations.

In verse 2, it says this, it says: *"He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street."* Well, the King of the universe, he had come to earth and the heavens blazed with his glory and the angels proclaimed it in *Luke 2:11*, they said this, they said: *Today a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David. This will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough."* Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: *Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!"* You see, the heavens were shouting out God's glory that night, but the earth, well the earth had the exact opposite reaction. Just another peasant child born to an impoverished couple in a backwater town that wouldn't even provide them with a room. And after escaping the murderous intent of wicked Herod, Jesus goes on to live a completely obscure life as an infant and a child and an adolescent. But at the age of 12, Jesus had his first opportunity to -- quote -- *"cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street."* You see, after his parents had sought him out in the temple, Jesus who's been astounding the religious leaders said to his parents, well, I've said once before, in *Luke 2:49*, he said: *"Why are you searching for me?"* He asked them, *"Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?"* But they did not understand what he said to them. You see, Jesus had the religious

leaders listening to every single one of his words. He could have begun his earthly ministry right then and there at the very center of Jewish thought and culture and he would have been instantly famous. The Scripture says he did otherwise. *Luke 2:51* says: *Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart.*

Do you remember Nazareth? Do you remember anything about Nazareth? You know, when Jesus was first calling his apostles, he found Philip, and Philip found Nathanael, Nathanael was absolutely appalled to find out that this Messiah was from Nazareth. This is what Nathanael said about Nazareth in *John 1:45*, he said this, he says: *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law and so did the prophets, Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth!" "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him. "Come and see," Philip answered.*

*"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* John Gill's commentary says this, it says: The whole country of Galilee was had in contempt with the Jews; but Nazareth was so mean a place, that it seems it was even despised by it's neighbors, by the Galileans themselves; for Nathanael was a Galilean, that said these words. It was so miserable a place that he could hardly think that any sort of good thing, even any worldly good thing, could come from



thence.

So instead of staying in his father's house in Jerusalem, the boy Jesus returns to Nazareth with his stepparents Mary and Joseph, and you know why. *He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the streets.* This 12-year-old boy was the most brilliant genius the universe will have ever known. He was astounding the greatest teachers in Israel and yet even though his own mother and Joseph did not understand him, Jesus leaves the temple, the place that could have been his launching place for worldwide fame, power and ministry, and he leaves it for Nazareth. Jesus goes back to a life of absolute and complete obscurity working in a carpenter shop for his stepfather. *He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street.* For 18 more years Jesus submits to his earthly parents. The one who laid the cornerstones of earth itself is planing boards for his stepfather. The creator of Orion and the chain of Pleiades is doing household chores for his mother. The humility, submission, and obedience of Jesus is literally incomprehensible.

Verse 3 says: *A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.* Well, could there be anything more useless than a bruised reed or a faintly burning wick? You know, if you've ever been gardening or landscaping and you come

across a flower or a plant that's bent over perhaps broken by having been stepped on by some animal or even a person, you do what I've done thousands of times, you either yank it up, or you pluck it out or squash it down. When I come across a candle that's just about to go out, I just, you know, I touch the wick with my finger or just blow it out. Both those examples represent profound weakness but they represent also a weakness that can provide no benefit in exchange for any extended mercy. A broken reed and a smoldering wick have got nothing to offer, and a bruised reed is someone who is broken in spirit. A burning wick is someone on the verge of having the light of their spirit snuffed out. And Jesus is God's servant ministering to those very people.

We saw a few weeks back the woman taken in adultery. She was a bruised reed. She's not exactly what you would call a portfolio builder for Jesus. And all it would have taken from Jesus to break that bruised reed would have been to acknowledge the very sin she knew she was guilty of. Instead Jesus stooped and he drew on the ground pointing to the sin of her accusers. One by one they slinked away leaving Jesus and her alone. But Jesus was also called to bring forth justice to the nations while being perfectly righteous and perfectly merciful at the same time. The condemnation that justice demanded had to be placed on her head or on the head of someone else. To bring justice to the nations is to

perfectly balance the wrong with the redress of that wrong. And her sin and for that matter her partner's sin created a debt like all sin creates. And there was only one way that a perfectly just Christ would tell that woman she was now free from condemnation. In Christ perfect justice would condemn and execute her sin of adultery, and in Christ perfect mercy would stand in her place to absorb it. As I said last time, Christ himself would so identify with this broken reed that her sin would become his sin, and he would take that sin with him to the cross. *2 Corinthians 5:21* says: *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* Again, *a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.*

Peter, the shattered rock on which the church was established at one point was a faintly burning wick. He had just denied his Lord, denying him three times with cursing and we all know what the circumstances were. Jesus was arrested and he's attending this kangaroo trial and after he had bragged about how brave he would be, Peter became completely overwhelmed with fear at the persistent questioning of a servant girl, and he denied his Lord. Luke's gospel gives us one detail that the other gospels leave out. It is a very haunting detail, perhaps the most awful detail of that entire night, it's in *Luke 22:61*, it says: *And the Lord turned and*

looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. Just imagine how that look must have pierced Peter. Imagine how he must have been haunted by that look for all of the days that he was waiting until he was reunited with Jesus. But also remember a faintly burning wick he will not quench. After Jesus had risen from the dead, he cooked his disciples a meal of broiled fish, and shortly thereafter Peter and Jesus have this meeting in *John 21:15*, it says this, it says: *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me." And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." You see, Peter, the rock on which this church was to be established was not only a broken rock, he was a faintly burning wick on the verge of going out. It was Jesus' kindness and mercy that refused to let it go out. It is Jesus' kindness and mercy that still ministers to a broken world today because "A bruised reed he will not break, and a*

*faintly burning wick he will not quench."*

I spoke with a woman this week who was a bruised reed. She had a hard time imagining that God could ever forgive her of her sin. I pointed out to her that we serve an omniscient God who knows all things, past, present and future, and that while he was there on the cross, all of our sins, hers and mine, they were all there in the future, and yet on the cross, He paid for them. I tell folks all the time that God never, never, ever discovers us in sin. He cannot discover something he's already seen, and he saw our sin at the cross 2,000 years ago. That's what *Romans 5:8* is telling us: *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* You see, we serve a God of incomprehensible mercy, a God whose love for us included an ongoing veiling of his attributes so that he could live life and embrace life just like we have to live it. I cannot imagine the process of Jesus through the Holy Spirit by the Scripture coming to an understanding of his role as suffering servant, but I also can't even comprehend the enormity of the gift the trinity has offered to us, declaring God's perfect justice and his perfect mercy in Isaiah's servant song. The Father *beheld his servant whom He upheld*, the Son was *His chosen, in whom His soul delighted*, and the Father declared, *I have put my Spirit upon him.* So it was the entire trinity itself that declared: *He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or*

*lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. Next week, we'll take a deeper look at that justice, but for now just consider, just consider the humility, the kindness, the mercy, and the faithfulness of the God that we serve. Let me leave you with Paul's own expression of wonder at the beauty of God's prophetic word. These are Paul's words in Romans 16:25, he says: Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that he was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith -- to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Let's pray.*

*Father God, I just I thank you for the opportunity to return to an examination of the loveliness of Christ. Father God, this is a limitless quest, this is an ocean that knows no bounds, this is the love of God in Christ. We praise you for the gift of Jesus Christ, we praise you for that unimaginable unfathomable gift. Father God, so enflame our hearts with the love of Jesus that we can't help but share it with a world that is dying. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*