

Second Service
God Multiplies Blessings Upon Us
Pastor JD

KAPONO: Would you join me in a word of prayer? Lord, thank You so much, Lord. We never stop thanking You, praising Your name. We thank You for this time of worship, Lord. We lift everything up to You, Lord. We thank You for this time that we can come together in this beautiful place that You have blessed us with, Lord, to learn Your word, to hear Your word, Lord. So would You speak to us, Lord?

We thank You so much for Pastor JD. Continue to guide, lead, protect, and watch over him and his family. We ask these things in the mighty name and the only name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good morning and welcome. You can be seated. Glad you're here. Glad those of you joining us online are.

Just a couple of things before we jump in, the first of which is an update concerning Maui. As you know, Pastor Steve Santos of Calvary Chapel Westside there in Lahaina is a dear friend of mine. And we talk all the time, and we're hoping to have him and his wife, Kim here early March.

So Lord willing, and if we're still here, we're going to schedule another Thursday night together like we did before. And it's tentatively planned for March 7th. You might want to mark your calendars for Thursday night, March 7th.

Also, I'm hoping to provide you with a more detailed update of what's happening next Sunday. Steve has been kind of keeping me apprised of what's going on. It's not good. God is good, but it's not good in Maui. And so I'm hoping to have more details for you by next Sunday.

Secondly, we're continuing our ongoing missions outreach to both the Jews and Arabs in Israel. And I'm also hoping to update you on this as well as soon as I'm able.

Another mark your calendar date will be Theresa's celebration of life. It will be here at the church on Saturday, February 3rd. It will begin at 10:55 a.m., and then it will be followed by the graveside service at Mililani Memorial at 2:30 p.m. So that's Saturday, February 3rd, coming up.

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All right. Jude: We started the postcard of Jude / epistle last week. And we started in *verse 1* and got through *verse 1*. But I did warn you, in all fairness, full disclosure, that this week we would pick it up in *verse 2* and go through to *verse 2*. So that's what we're going to do.

So you don't have to, but if you want to, you can stand up for this lengthy reading of God's word. By the way, that comes out of the Book of Ezra in the time of Nehemiah, where they would stand for the reading of God's word.

I don't want you to think that this is just out of nowhere. This is biblical. And that's my story and I'm sticking with it. So now try to sit down after that.

[Laughter]

Verse 2, **“Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.”** Or as some of your translations render it: **“be multiplied.”**

Let's pray.

Father, thank You, Lord, we're (Chuckle) posturing ourselves before You this morning in this, Your church, humbly, readily admitting and acknowledging and confessing that we are a needy people, and that we need You for such a time as this to satiate the hunger and the thirst that we have in our souls. We cannot live on bread alone, and we are starving for the bread of life, every word that precedes out of Your mouth.

So, Lord, we're spiritually famished, and we need You to nourish us and feed us and minister to us and speak to us as only You can and as You're always so faithful to in the time that we have together today. So will You, Lord? We're asking You. Speak. Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You could be seated. Thank you.

So what I want to talk with you about today is how God not only adds but multiplies His blessings upon us and does so abundantly. Now, it's true that sometimes God chooses to add, but more often than not, God multiplies exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond anything we could ever imagine, let alone ask.

And such is the case with just *verse 2* in this *epistle of Jude*, short in length, but certainly not strength as we'll see throughout, as we saw last week, and as we'll see again today.

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So what follows are three blessings, and I think probably now is as good of a time as any to just mention that I'm just as prone as anyone else to respond to blessings. Well, of course, we say it all the time, 'God bless you.' God bless you. Well, God bless you. And it's not just after you sneeze either.

And so we sort of dismiss the blessing of God. And thank you, Jude, and thank You, God, for inspiring Jude by the Holy Spirit to pen these words for us today, some 2000 years later because we need to be reminded of the blessing of God.

It's not just the blessing of God, but it's the abundant blessing of God. It's the blessing of God multiplied, and it's the blessing of God upon us as His people. So as we go through this, (Frustrated sound) you're just going to have to bear with me because I'm going to point out the firm grasp of the obvious by any stretch of the imagination.

And I'm going to start with two words that I think it's incumbent upon me to point out. And I know it's a firm grasp of the obvious, you'll forgive me, but I want to draw your attention to the word "abundant" and the word "multiplied." And here's why.

We read the words and — okay, abundant. Multiplied. Praise the Lord. But not so fast. Because in the original language, the rich meaning is so vast. Let me try, if you'll indulge me, to expound on these words that we just read over and move on from. They carry with it the idea of being plentiful. How about inexhaustible? There's no end. It's infinite and it's multiplied. This is an enlarging and an increasing to the full, even overflowing, where you just can't even contain it.

How am I doing? That's what I thought. I won't try again. That's as good as it gets. So if you didn't get it, I'm so very sorry.

I guess what I'm trying to say by way of an introduction before we get into our text is that we minimize the blessing of God on our lives. And we really don't understand that not only is God the source of that blessing multiplied in abundance, running over so there's no more room for it, but we also minimize is the "why" behind it.

We talked about this last week. When you understand the "why" behind the "what," it changes the whole complexion of the "what." Oh, that's why? Oh, now I get it. See, I just knew the "what." But now I know the "why."

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Why is God so gracious and generous and abundant in His blessing, exceedingly, abundantly above and beyond anything that I could ever possibly imagine, let alone ask? And I've got quite an imagination, by the way. And so do you.

So even more than that?

Yeah.

Wow, that's a lot.

That's the point. So as we go through this, I would just humbly ask that we revisit, rethink these blessings. We're gonna look at three of them from our text.

But let's not be too quick to just, okay, check that box off, starting with this first one, which we do: Mercy in the first part of *verse 2*. Now, right out of the chute, we have a problem.

What do you mean?

Well, again, we minimize mercy in the sense that we just, we try to define it, which, by the way, it's undefinable like grace. Try to define grace. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve. And mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve. And we leave it at that, and we close the file to our own peril.

What do you mean?

Well, we package mercy and grace, and we just leave it there. And we don't allow the Holy Spirit the much-needed elbow room to minister the mercy of God in our lives. I mean, the richness of just mercy. And it's not just mercy. It's so much more.

Do you know what comes packaged with just the word "mercy?" And keep in mind, we've got to have the backdrop of God's blessing: abundant, multiplied.

Okay. What is abundant and what is multiplied?

Mercy.

Wow! Especially when you realize that mercy comes packaged with kindness, compassion, unfailing love. We'll talk about that more in a moment.

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The Proverbs say that the desire of every man, woman, and child, whoever lived, is unfailing love. And the only unfailing love, as we'll talk about in a moment, is agape love, that unconditional love, undefinable as well, that God has for us.

But it comes packaged with mercy. How about this word? This is a word we don't use much in our vocabulary these days: Longsuffering. Do you know what longsuffering is? It's l-o-o-o-n-g suffering. My wife knows this word very well. Oh, good. You were really quick to laugh on that one, weren't you? Okay.

How about this word? It comes packaged with mercy: Comfort. And that's not even the proverbial scratching of the surface, as they say. It's so much more than that. You cannot even describe it. It is indescribable. And you're telling me, or better said, Jude is telling me, and I'm yelling it to you, that this mercy that's all of that and so much more, infinitely more, God blesses me with and multiplies exceedingly, abundantly? Yes.

This is where the “why” comes in. This is — just I'm going to forewarn you, this is going to be convicting, which is good because if I'm convicted, you're going to be convicted too. And actually, I, just this morning woke up at 2:00 a.m. and said okay, Lord. We're doing this. And He just took me to *Matthew 5:7*.

And of course, the Lord already knows.

I'm like, not *Matthew 5:7:7*.

No, we're going there. *Matthew 5:7:7*, the Beatitudes. Come on.

Interesting, they're not the “Do attitudes.” They're Beatitudes. They're the attitudes that we be. This needs to be an attitude, not an attitude. Don't give me attitude but a beatitude. What's the beatitude? Oh, watch this. **“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”**

Now, let me just rewind for a second here. I packaged forgiveness, long suffering in with mercy. Think this through with me. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, part of that model for prayer was **“forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.”** Mercy.

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And here Jesus is — I was going to say He's raising the bar, but I don't think this is raising the bar. I think this is removing the bar. Would you agree? Proportionate to how merciful you are, will be how merciful others are to you.

Well, that explains a lot right there, doesn't it? Ho, maybe that's why I have not really been shown mercy. I don't show mercy. I'm not merciful, which is why I have not been shown mercy.

You know, there's a good question that's asked, and I don't presume to have the answer. Nobody has all the answers, right? But, you know, when we pray as Jesus taught us to pray, **“forgive us our trespasses,”** where we trespass against someone, as we are forgiven of our trespasses, the question is: Does that mean that if I withhold forgiveness, forgiveness will be withheld from me, or does it mean that the forgiveness that I've been the recipient of is the source of the forgiveness that I, in turn give?

Please tell me you got that. What if it's both? Is that a game-changer? Because I think we do err greatly when we buy into this either / or notion. Well, it's either this or that.

Here's God going, Well, wait a minute. What if I want it to be both? How about that? Because that would comport with the exceedingly, abundantly multiplied, above and beyond. I mean, it's not either / or. That's a stingy God. No, you can have them all.

Both?

Yeah. Actually, there's more. But what's this either / or? No, I'm going to give you both. It means both. Why can't it not? I'm God. I can do whatever I want.

I think it is both. And I say that from a scriptural standpoint, but also from an experiential standpoint because I know that in my own heart, when I have withheld forgiveness, I have a very difficult time asking God for forgiveness.

And God is faithful, isn't He? I mean, He sends me an email right away. Priority attachments, very large attachments, PDF file, Arial, narrow font, size 10, single-spaced. The margins have been adjusted. There's no margins. It's just line after line after line of all the times God has forgiven me. And I'm not forgiving them?

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How about the other file? The title of the PDF file: Mercy.pdf. Oh, try to open that one. You open it up. Whoa! How many pages is this thing? What is it? It's all the times that God was merciful to you.

So you're not going to be merciful to others? Well, you're missing out on a blessing that is reserved only for the merciful, which explains why you're not shown mercy because you don't show mercy.

Well, it's going to get worse in *Luke 6*. This was the other one. The Lord knows. Okay, *Matthew 7*. Okay, I'm good. Not *Luke 6*.

Nope. We're going to *Luke 6* too.

So you ready for this? *Verse 36*, **“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. [Now, wait for it] Do not judge, and you will not be judged.”** [*Stop right there*]

The antithesis of mercy is justice. Oh, how do we say it? I throw myself at the mercy of the court. In other words, be merciful to me. I deserve the judgment, the sentence, but be merciful to me. I'm throwing myself at the mercy of the court.

So if you're merciful, you're not judging. And by the way, if you're merciful, you'll be shown mercy when you show mercy. And if you don't judge, you won't be judged. Do you see a pattern here? In other words, no wonder I'm judged because I judge. No wonder I'm not shown mercy because I do not show mercy.

And then we're not even through *verse 37* yet if you haven't noticed. So let's continue. **“Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.”**

Oh, my goodness. I am busted right there. We are judge and jury in our own minds. And you — I'm sorry to point. I should probably do this and then this. You are guilty until proven innocent.

Come on. It's not the other way around. That's not human nature, the sin nature, the adamic nature in all of us. All I have to do is hear someone judging you and condemning you and pointing the finger at you like I am right now, and you're guilty!

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I think of David when God sent Nathan the prophet. Well-nigh one year, David has been drying up and dying inside after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, her husband. You can read about what was going on with him in the Psalms. It's brutal.

And we've all tasted from that cup, haven't we? And so Nathan is sent to him, a type of the Holy Spirit, and Nathan the prophet presents to David a case for which he needs to make a judgment on. And he proceeds to explain the circumstances of the case where this guy's got everything, takes one sheep, one lamb from a guy who has nothing, and he takes it from him, steals it from him.

And I mean, David is getting incensed. And then it comes time for the judgment. And what does David say? That man needs to die! He's condemned to death. And then this had to cut. It cuts just reading the account. Can you imagine? "David, you are the man!" And he just crumbles.

And what does God do? Well, he doesn't torch him on the spot. I would have. So would you have too. No. He says through Nathan, God has put your sin away from you and forgiven you and been merciful to you. You're not condemned, you're forgiven.

And that's the next thing Jesus says. **"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."** But isn't it interesting? We're all David. Oh, some of us fancy ourselves as being Nathan. God is speaking to you through me! **"Thou art the man."** No. You're David. Deal with it.

And how quick are we? You know, our sin always looks just horrific on everybody else but us because we're always shedding ourselves in a favorable light. We do it. I'm always reminded whenever I go through the Proverbs, you know, those teens proverbs, the ones like *Chapter 13, 14, 15*, et cetera? I call them the contrasting proverbs. They're the proverbs that start out like this: The righteous do this. (Speaking in a gentle voice) But the wicked do that! (Shouting)

And I'm like, Yeah, them wicked people! I'm so righteous. There's a verse in here about me. No, you're the wicked that does that. No, I thought I was the righteous that does this. No. Nice try. You're David. You're not Nathan.

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But this is who we are and what we do. And here's God going, Why do you do that when I don't do that with you? If you only knew. I mean, here you are. Do you want Me to judge you the way you judge others?

No! I would be toast. And that's actually what Jesus goes on to say. Now we're talking about the context of mercy here.

Now, as I read this, you're going to have flashbacks of televangelists who twist this to be about money and not mercy because Jesus goes on to say, **“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”**

Oh, well, I'm pretty stingy with grace and mercy and forgiveness. Well, what did you use to measure? I've got this little teaspoon. Let me have it. I'm going to use the same teaspoon for you.

Wait a minute. Let me get the gallon container out. Because if it's going to be like that. Well, it is like that. The measure you use, the gauge by which you judge will be the gauge by which you are judged. The measure that you use to condemn will be the same measure that is used to condemn you.

Let's flip it around the other side. Let's talk about mercy and forgiveness. Yeah, so we say like this: I forgive you, but I'll never forget. Translated: You haven't forgiven them. You're very bitter and resentful and you're recording everything.

Well, wait a minute. Love doesn't keep an account of wrongs suffered. This is applicable. I did not mean to talk about the marriage relationship, but I think it is apropos. Guys, don't even try. Your wife is a very good record keeper.

No, she knows the weather forecast on the day of the transgression. She knows what you were wearing. She can describe in vivid detail everything. And she — I might as well. So my wife's 21st birthday, I surprised her.

I took her from her birthday party and said, Hey, real quick, I just want to — she needed a car. I was a car guy. I was going to get her a car, buy her a car.

Yeah. Okay, anyway...

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[Laughter]

Is there a lightning bolt behind me? Somebody tell me.

So I take her to show her this car, and she didn't like it. I'm like, Wow, we're not off to a very good start here. So she goes, Can I go back to my party? I said, Okay, I'm sorry.

So I take her back to her party; everybody left. She has never let me forget that. I don't know how many years ago.

She's got a history, historic, hysteric too, but historic.

[Laughter]

Here's the other thing. She never reminds me about another birthday, her 30th birthday when I took her on a Nile River cruise in Egypt on her birthday. But no, she's always talking about the car.

[Laughter]

I'm like, wow, you haven't forgiven me.

No, I forgave you. I just haven't forgot.

You need to forget too. Why do you keep bringing it up? Why do you have to keep reminding me? And by the way, while you're reminding me, why don't you remember the Nile River? Shouldn't that make up for it? Now I'm bitter.

[Laughter]

Do I have a point? Yes, I have a point. To forgive means to never bring it up again and beat them over the head with it. Listen, they haven't forgotten. You know. God forgets. **“He remembers our sins no more. [Thank God!] And He removes them as far as the East is from the West.”**

But why is it that we can't do that? Because we're not God. And here's another reason. Perhaps more importantly, God allows us to remember that which He forgave us for so that we'll also remember the mercy that He showed us when He forgave us for that.

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So it comes into our remembrance, and it's a godly sorrow, not a regret, the worldly sorrow, but it's a godly sorrow that leads to repentance. **"It's the kindness of God [Romans 2:4] that leads a man to repentance."**

It's not the justice of God. It's the kindness of God. When you've been the recipient of such mercy and grace, you are ruined. And it's really hard to sin against the God who is that merciful.

You know, the argument is if you teach that God is merciful and God will forgive, then that's just going to give people license to sin more. Oh, God's going to forgive me.

It doesn't work like that. When you've been the recipient of grace and mercy and forgiveness from God, it just ruins you. And the response is I cannot sin against a merciful God like that. He's been so merciful to me. And then what happens as a result by the power of the Holy Spirit?

This is again like last week. Please, please, please don't put this into the template of being meritorious, meaning that it's not earned, it's not merited. It's not like, Hey, God, I forgive them. Now forgive me. Or God, I was merciful to them. Where's the mercy now? It's not like that.

Oh, or flip it around. I wasn't very merciful, and so we think that God's not going to be merciful to me. That's meritorious. No, God is a gracious God. He's a merciful God. How many times is God merciful to us when we should have never gotten mercy?

But that's what mercy is. It's not getting what you do deserve. And here's the grace of God and the mercy of God and again, they go together. It's like you think, man, I blew it so bad. I blew it so bad. You know, David thought that, which is why he was distanced from God: Condemnation.

Conviction draws us nearer to God. Condemnation distances us from God. That's the litmus test, by the way. So when that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit is convicting, not condemning, there's a godly sorrow that ensues, and then there's repentance that comes. And then what comes from that? It's really fruit. Fruit grows. Gifts are given. Fruit grows.

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We talked about that last week, right? Well, this is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and it grows, and it ripens. And by the way, have you noticed that fruit is always to bless somebody else? When was the last time you saw a mango tree eating its own mango? That'd be weird. You be like with your phone going, Whoa, man! Post this on social media. You don't see that every day.

That's because you don't see that any day. The fruit tree is to grow fruit to bless others. And that's what mercy is. So when you've been the recipient of mercy, then you are also now going to in turn respond by being merciful.

That's the source of the mercy. Because when you've been shown mercy, you've got an un — that's wrong — inexhaustible, endless supply of mercy from which to draw upon and then show to others. So even with forgiveness, I can forgive you because I've been forgiving of so much. **“And to whom much has been forgiven that one loves much.”**

You've been forgiven of much, you love much. You've been the recipient of forgiveness. Now forgive. You've been the recipient of mercy. Now show mercy.

So God's not going to just heap this on us, bless this, multiply this so much so we have no — it's overflowing into our laps. And again, it's sad because it's been marred by these televangelists. Give forgiveness, mercy, and it will be given to you. Good measure.

Picture this. I love this about God's word. Sometimes they're very illustrative, visual. Let's get this picture here. You've got a good measure. So it's already heaping and then it's packed down, press down. And I can get more so I got to shake it and (Clapping hands) pack it in more so I can get more in because there's more where that came from.

And then now I got it packed in so much, it's overflowing, it's running over. And here I am holding this thing. God keeps pouring and pouring. I'm like, God, stop! There's no more to pour.

No, I got more to pour.

It's just pouring into my lap. It's overflowing in my lap.

I know. Here you go.

That's a lot.

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I know.

Wow, God! Thank You! Now, what do we do with that? We just going to say, okay, give me more. You get all you can and can all you get.

And God's like, No, that's not why I'm giving it to you. I'm giving it to you to be merciful to others with this supply of mercy that is overflowing all over the place.

Now, let's talk about peace. Here again, we just, you know, like, you know, in the Middle East, Peace be upon you: As-salamu alaykum: Arabic. Shalom aleichem: Hebrew.

But this word for peace is not "shalom" that Jude uses, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It's a word having the meaning of listen, harmony, tranquility, calm and quiet. I tell you; I love every single one of those words. And isn't it interesting.

As you get older, the things that you want the most are the very things that you got in trouble for when you were a kid. Like, you go to your room.

I can?

You're going to bed early.

Oh, thank you. Right? Am I right?

You can't leave the house.

Oh, wow! What a relief.

[Laughter]

I just want to stay home.

You have to stay home.

Thank you!

The punishment becomes a reward when you get older. Not only that, but you'll forgive the illustration. $10 + 10 = 20$. I know. Deep, right? But $10 \times 10 = 100$. Do you get the picture?

So wait a minute. Let me see if I got this straight. So the peace is going to be multiplied exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond anything I could have ever thought or imagined. Not added. That's only 20. That's finite.

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But you keep multiplying and that's infinite. Wait. So — and what comes packaged, no extra charge, from this peace multiplied from God to me, the peace of God from the God of peace? His harmony. Ho! I could use some of that.

Tranquility: I don't remember the last time. Chaos, maybe. But tranquility and calm?

Calm: What does that even look like? I haven't seen calm in 20 years. I wouldn't know it if it walked in the front door. It's been that long. I wouldn't recognize it. Calm. And it's all multiplied. No way.

Way!

Wow! What a blessing!

I know. I mean, this is supernatural, right? Because in the natural. Forget about it. That was some New York. No extra charge.

[Laughter]

Think of it like this. The Apostle Paul, when he's writing the Philippians in the fourth chapter, verses 6 through really 8, but 6-7, it's what I call the 3-for-1 deal. That's terrible, I know. But there's three things that were promised and will be given as a blessing. And one thing that God will do as a result of the three.

Proverbs 3:5-6 is a 3-to-1 deal. You **“don't lean on your own understanding.”** Easier said than done. You **“acknowledge the Lord in all your ways.”** You **“trust the Lord with all your heart.”**

There's the three. Here's the one: and **“He will direct all of your steps,”** better understood, **“make your paths straight.”** He'll straighten it out. That's the one.

Well, fast-forward to *Philippians 4*. What are the three? **“Worry about no thing.”**

How?

“Thank God for everything and pray about anything.” **“And the peace of God [Here's the one] that transcends, [Surpasses, defies] human understanding, will keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

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The peace of God from the God of peace. And God's going to multiply that abundantly and bless me with it? Yeah. Who among us as earthly parents doesn't want this for our own children? How much more our heavenly Father?

How much does it rip your heart to shreds when you see your children in just turmoil and just chaos, and they're anxious and riddled with anxiety and worry and fear? Does that not tear you up? It's been said that you're only as happy as your saddest child.

And we want this for our children. And if it's within our ability to provide it, then we're certainly going to provide it and withhold nothing. Multiplied, infinite, this tranquility and calm.

You know, this last week I was able to spend some much-needed time with my wife, and she made a comment to me and said, you know, had it not been for this, we would not have gotten to be together this much.

And, oh, my goodness, this is the love of my life, man. This is my soulmate, 37 years, best friend, I mean, my best friend. And we were able to have all this time together with no kids.

[Laughter]

Stop. Wait. Let me have this. It was so calm that we thought, wait a minute, it's too good to be true because we're just waiting for the text, the call. You know, the call always comes at the wrong time, right? You know, it's like, Mommy, Baba, (Panicked scream) There it goes.

But we tasted of that, and it was kind of like, wait a minute, God wants this for me all the time, abundantly and multiplied? Yes.

This last one: Love, we'll spend the remainder of our time on. This is the word "agape" again. And true to form when it comes to mercy, grace, even peace, and now love, try to define it, try to understand it, try to, as we say, wrap your mind around it. You will not. I'll save you the time. It won't happen. And by its very nature it should not happen.

Why?

Because in the finite, we can never grasp the infinite, the infinite love that God has for us.

It's not only the infinite love that God has for us, so too is it the basis upon which God offers salvation to us. That love.

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It's been called the "anyways love," which I don't like very much, by the way, if I could be so candid with you. It's like, I love you anyways. Wow. Thanks a lot. You know, kind of like, Yeah, I love you still. Wow.

Sorry it's such a — it's a got-to not a get-to. Yeah, I got to love you. I'm love, so I guess I'm kind of... (Chuckling) Did I take that too far? Maybe.

Can I just — one more personal example with my wife. Is that okay? What are you gonna say, no? So early on in our marriage — I know I've shared this, but it's been a while. And plus we've got new people here. So if you've heard it, this is for them.

Early on in our marriage I was so full of myself, so pious, so spiritually proud. I mean, I was the godliest husband I knew. Just ask me, I'll tell you.

[Laughter]

Don't ask my wife. Just ask me, and I'll tell you. So I remember one of these — it was just this moment where I just thought, man, I'm just going to tell my wife how much I love her because I do. But the way I did it was just, I mean, it reeked of just pride and, you know, ugly pride.

So I said to her in a very godly tone, I might add, Honey, I love you with a love that can only come from God. I mean, it was sick. It was horrible. And I'm thinking she's going to just throw herself at me and hug me a Velcro hug and just, you know, cry, Oh, honey, you're such an amazing, godly husband. I think you're the most godly husband in the world. I told you. And, you know, she would just respond all gushy and mushy.

And she did not. I was ill-prepared for her response. It actually started with the look.

[Laughter]

No, she, you know, as only a wife can, she gave me that wife look. Wives, you know exactly what I'm talking about. So does your husband. You know the look. And she's looking at me like, wow.

And I don't — wives, I don't know how you do this. This might be a gift from God that was not given to us.

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And by the way, this might explain why it is, wives, that your husbands will look at you like they don't have the foggiest idea of what you're talking about. You know why that is? We don't have the foggiest idea of what you're talking about. We're just kind of like, what?

So she looks at me. And I say, uh-oh. I did it this time. I'm just waiting because I don't know what she's going to say. I mean, I'm already in shock, I'm in a state of shock because I fully expected her to throw herself into my arms and just, you know, thank you! Honey, you're such an amazing...

And she looks at me and she goes — and she pauses just the amount, just the right pause — and she just looks at me and says, You mean to tell me...

I know I was done right there. Just that opening.

[Laughter]

...that I am so unlovable that you cannot muster up any love in and of yourself that the only way you can — she started cracking, the only way — she's crying for a different reason now — the only way you can love me is if God gives you a love for me?

And now I'm the one giving her the look like, what? Wait, what? Where did you get that? Where did that come from? How did you do that? I can't do that. How did you take what I just said and get that out of it?

But here's the thing. She's right. No, for real. Think about it. When Paul writing to the church in Ephesus — I use this passage when I do weddings, which is why I don't get asked to do weddings anymore. But you know where Paul says, **“First submit yourselves one to another as unto the Lord”?**

Oh, guys, we don't like that verse. That's *verse 20*, by the way, wives. And *verse 20* comes before *verse 21*. I know that's deep too. But *verse 21* says, **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands.”**

Now don't just extract that from the text and take it out of context and say to your wife, like I did, Woman, submit to me! I'm the godliest husband in the world. But you need to read, as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story.

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So he goes on to write, inspired by the Holy Spirit, saying to the husband three times, Husbands love your wives. The first time, **“Love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”** Second, **“Love your wives [Husbands] as you love yourself.”**

Oh, there's the problem right there. I don't love myself. (Chuckling) Nice try. You love yourself. You walk by a storefront. What are you looking for? Yourself. Sucking it in. You get a photo back in the day. You young people have no idea you had to — it was, I mean, fast. One hour photo.

Remember those days you take in the film? I'm having a flashback. I'll be back here in a second. One hour. Wow. Cool. One hour? And then you get the photos, and you rip them open even before you pay them and you're looking through them.

What are you looking for? Picture of me. Come on. And it's a good picture if I look good in it. If it's not a good picture of me, it's not a good picture. Because I love me, the unholy trinity: me, myself, and I. I'm my favorite subject to talk about.

Reminds me of a guy who said, that's enough about me talking about me. Why don't you talk about me?

[Laughter]

So let's be honest. You love yourself. And Jesus said, Love your neighbor as you already are head over heels in love with yourself. You already love yourself. Now all you got to do is love them as much as you already love yourself. That ain't going to happen, right? Because I love myself so much.

But now Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, takes it to another level with husbands and says, love yourself — (Chuckling) love yourself. You know I should stop preaching when the sermons over, which was about 5 minutes ago. We're almost done. There's hope. Love your wives as you love yourselves.

And then thirdly, **“love your wives [Husbands] as you love your own bodies.”**

Oh, that's — I have yet to meet a guy that is not in love with his body. And I don't want to look at anybody. I have such a respect for those of you that exercise and work out. I envy you. It's a sanctified envy and covetousness. That is foreign to me.

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I'm getting a new body. That's what I'm banking on.

[Laughter]

You know, and you guys, you got shoulders. I didn't get shoulders when they were doing shoulders. I was gone that day or wasn't born that day. I don't know. Anyway, enough of my problems.

Let's not even talk about the hair. Everybody was saying, Hey, nice haircut. I didn't cut my hair.

[Laughter]

There's no hair to cut. Well, it just looks good.

What did you do?

I just, I just said I'm over it. I just started (Simulating brushing his hair)

[Laughter]

You were wondering about that, weren't you? That's okay. I see how you're looking at me.

[Laughter]

It's all right. I'm glad we got that out of the way. We probably should have done that at the beginning. Okay, back to the sermon, which was about to close.

So husbands love your wives that much. How are you going to do that? I've even asked the groom during the ceremony. This is again why I'm not asked to do them anymore. But the groom is standing right here, in fact, it was here on the stage.

And I just looked at him and said, That's a pretty tall order.

He goes, It is since you put it like that!

I said, Well, how are you going to do it?

He said, I don't know!

This is before the vows. I always do it before, just to make sure. Are you ready to enter the vows?

Not now, after that!

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So but, no, seriously. How are you going to love her that way?

He says, I can't.

I said, You're right. The only way you can love her that way is the love that you have from God is the only way you can. Just don't tell it to your wife the way I told it to my wife. If you do and it works, could you just let me know? I would like to know how you said it.

But that is true. We love because we're loved. He first loved us **“in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”**

That's love. And God, lastly, wants to bless me with that love exceedingly abundantly above and beyond anything. I mean, it's to the point where you're saying, God, stop. I can't take it anymore.

No, there's more.

I'm just being loved by God. How can I not love others when I'm that loved? Mercy, peace, and love multiplied.

And don't you find it interesting, and I will close with this, that Jude, which we're going to see, Lord willing, next. I've got to be careful. I don't make any promises I can't keep. We will maybe do more than one verse. We'll live on the edge next week, Lord willing.

But what we're going to see — and for those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you already know this— but do you know that Jude started off writing this letter wanting to talk about just this, the gift of eternal life, salvation, love, God's love, God's peace?

He just wanted to bask and rejoice in the love of God. And he was going to write them that kind of a letter. But he says, I couldn't write the letter I wanted to write.

Instead, I've got to write a letter to you that I don't want to write because there are people creeping in unaware, and they pose a formidable threat, and they're turning the grace of God into perverted licentiousness. And it's dangerous. I wish I could write you a nice letter about God's love.

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Boy, this is every pastor's lot in life. I think I've shared this before. Just being open with you. There are so many times where I step behind this pulpit, as is my privilege to, and I so much want to not have to teach what I have to teach.

I mean, I'm just like any other pastor. I want to get up here and talk about the love. I got to today. Might as well enjoy it while it lasts. Because there are other times where I've got to get up here like Jude, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and I've got to speak the hard truth in love because of love.

And that's what we're going to see as we turn a corner, probably starting next week, is that man, Jude is going to go from this — so again, enjoy this today. Now you have to come next week. If you don't come, we'll know why.

But next week it's going to get a little bit ugly, and it's going to get down and dirty because he has to. And why? Because he loves them. Because he's so loved. Could you imagine?

Anyway, I'm done. That was it. Isn't that a smooth close? Kaponu, come on up. Why don't you stand up? We'll close in prayer. Hey, not bad on the time. Don't look at your watches. Yeah.

[Applause]

Again, I should have stopped the sermon when it was over about 10 minutes ago now.

Father, thank You. Just this one verse here in Your word, and oh, so full and rich. So powerful. Really so life-changing in a way. Oh, that we would grasp the mercy that You have for us multiplied abundantly. Just that alone. That could have been just the entirety of the sermon, just on Your mercy, God. But then peace and love, and it's multiplied and it's infinite.

Oh, Lord, forgive us for being an island unto ourselves in that we don't share with others, show others that which you've shown us. Lord, I pray that there wouldn't be any condemnation, but maybe a healthy dose of conviction and a godly sorrow that brings about a genuine repentance.

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We do repent, Lord, especially in this day and age that we're living in. This world is just getting so dark and so evil. Mercy is virtually nonexistent even within the church.

Forgiveness, love; gone, rare. May it not be so with us oh, Lord.

May we be numbered amongst those of whom it is said oh, they are a merciful people, they're a peaceful people, and oh, my, how they love. So thank You, Lord, We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen.