



Message **Transcript**

Our God is Awesome

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Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise for who you are and for all you're doing in our lives. Lord, you and you alone are worthy. Lord, you and you alone are the only one worthy to build our life upon. Lord, today, as your word is opened and proclaimed, Lord, would you have your way with us. Would you challenge us and encourage us, admonish us any way that you need so that we can be more fruitful in our walk with you. And Lord, for all you're going to do in advance, we do praise you. So for all those who are gathered now, who desire to hear the word of the Lord and will believe everything that the Lord says about you and will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity of going to see the Grand Canyon for the very first time. And I remember when we got there and I was overlooking the majesty of the landscape, I looked around and said, "God, you are awesome." And then we did a tour one day and we went there, and certainly, the tour guide was coming up to us and telling us all about, from a secular perspective, how all of the stuff was formed. And I remember one time he told me that, "See that rock out there about a half mile down the way?" He goes, "That rock right there is from Appalachia."

And I said, "Well, how did it get there?" And he's like, "Millions of years." And I remember thinking, "Wouldn't it be more interesting just to explain it the way God explained it, that this was a flood of epic proportion that flooded the world, and in 40

days, God did this, and I'm looking at destroyed beauty? And that the Rockies that we have here in Colorado and that the Grand Canyon and everything we see in Utah is all part of his majestic nature?" And when I looked at all that, I said, "Our God is awesome. Our God is incredible."

We look around, we see the stars, we see the sun, we see the moon, we see different things in the sky. Our God's awesome. He created all things. All things were created by him and all things were created for him. He's incredible. He's awesome. We've been talking during the last couple of weeks just about our identity in Christ and how God made us, and that when we trust Jesus, how it is we can experience the fullness of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and what it looks like to be engaged in the mission of Jesus Christ and be all in on everything.

But it's also important that we understand, when we're talking about all that, it can be really easy to get man centered or woman centered, and we begin to think about who we are and all we're going to do, rather than who our God is. And if we're truly going to understand who we are in Christ, we need to understand the God of the Bible and the one that we serve and really say the word, our God is awesome, and truly believe it. And in case you wanted to know how awesome our God is, that's what we had to tell you about today. So if you open up your Bible to Ephesians chapter three, Ephesians chapter three, we're going to take a look at verse 20 and 21 today.

If you've been in the church for any period of time, you will have heard these verses before. And what we want to highlight in these verses are really five aspects of the awesomeness of our Lord, or five character qualities that show that our Lord, our

God is awesome. As Paul's writing this book to the Ephesian church, he spends chapter one really talking about the great salvation that we have and all God has done to redeem humanity and how the gospel is available for all who believe. And then in chapter two, he talks about how God miraculously brought the Jew and the gentile together in one family called the church, and so there's great unity among diversity in the body of Christ.

And then in chapter three, he begins to talk about how this church is so incredible. And for this reason, he bows his knee and begins to pray that God would show us as a church just how incredible he is. And he ends this section in chapter three with this doxology, this praise to our God. And he says this, "Now, to him who is able to do far more abundantly, beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." I'm going to read it again, because really that Amen is for the church to say out loud when we hear this, which means, yes, that's totally true, I believe that.

He says, "Now, to him who is able to do far more abundantly, beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever," And you said?

Amen.

Amen. That's what we get the picture of, is that our God is awesome. And in case in your mind you don't have the picture of our God being as awesome as you

think he needs to be, I want to let that our God is indeed awesome, and I want to spell out five character qualities about our God, just to simplify what this verse is saying to us. And the first is this, our God is capable. Our God is capable. It says, "Now, to him who is able. To him who is able." That means our God is competent, that means he's able, that means there's nothing that is too difficult for our God to accomplish.

Now, I know in a church of our size and people watching online at different campuses, every single week we gather every single person's in a different place. Nobody had the exact same week as anybody else, even if we had 10 people, that would be true, but it's certainly true of a large congregation like this. And here's the truth, some of you have dealt with tragedy this week. You've dealt with tragedy. It was painful even to come to church and you're wondering, "Is there any hope in this world? Can God do anything to help my aching heart?"

I got great news for you today I want to tell you, our God is able to provide the hope that you need. Amen. Some of you have been dealing with interpersonal challenges with people, and while things instead of getting better, things continue to get worse. It could be in your marriage, it could be with a child, it could be something at work, where you're trying your best or you think you're trying your best, but there's schism in the relationship and you're wondering like, "Is there anything that I can do? Is there any way this relationship could ever be put back together? I don't know that I'm able."

I got great news for you this morning, our God is able. There's some of you that are here today and you struggle financially and you wonder, "Is it really possible for

God to provide me for employment that's going to take care of this? Or will anybody care enough to provide for some of my needs? And I don't think that I'm going to have enough." I'm here to tell you this morning and the authority of God's word, that our God is able. He's able, he is competent. There's nothing that is too difficult for our God.

You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, how do that? Not only does the word tell us that he is able, but let's just take a look at a couple of other illustrations. Remember back in Luke's Gospel, how Luke starts his gospel by talking about how Mary has found favor in the eyes of the Lord. And that what God is going to do, this Trinity God, father, son, and Holy Spirit, who has always existed in three distinct persons, that the second person of the Trinity is going to become incarnate flesh.

And the way that the second person of Trinity is going to become incarnate flesh is the Holy Spirit is going to place the second person of the Trinity in Mary's womb and she is going to deliver the king of kings and the Lord of Lords, who will always be now both God and human forever and ever. Amen. And Mary asks the question, "How is this going to be?" That would be a simple enough question, how does God do that? But she's asking the question because she's saying, "I've never been with a man." And here's what the angel says, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

If the God of the universe is able to incarnate himself to come down and identify himself with the humanity he's created, what's too hard for him? What's too hard for our God? What challenge could we bring to our God and say, "God, here's what I'm dealing with in life right now, here's what's really hard for me." And God says, "Uh,

shucks, that is hard. I don't know what you're going to do, I'm glad I'm not you." That's never going to happen. Our God is able, he's competent. There's nothing that is too hard for him.

You remember when Jesus was coming down off the Mount of Transfiguration, his disciples were having a challenging time because there was a young boy who had a demonic spirit that was throwing himself into the water. And so the father brought the boy to the disciples and the disciples were trying to cast out this demon and they couldn't do it. And so Jesus says, "What's going on? Bring the boy to me." And so the father brings the boy to Jesus and the father says to Jesus, "If you can do anything, would you help?"

And Jesus says, "If I can?" What does he say? "All the things are possible for him who believes. Nothing's too hard for me," Jesus says. But the disciples after that encounter with the boy, see Jesus privately and they ask this question in Matthew chapter 17, like, "Why couldn't we cast it out? Why couldn't we do anything?" And in verse 20, he says this, "Because of the littleness of your faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain move from here to there and it will move," and what? "Nothing will be impossible to you."

Why? Because our God's the God of the impossible, nothing is too hard for him in any way. Even when Jesus turns away the rich young ruler and looks at him and loves him and says how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, and the disciples are looking at Jesus and saying, "If he can't get in, who can get in?" And what is Jesus' response? With God, all things are possible. See, I just don't know what the

lie you've been told this week, but I do know that the lie is that our God is not able for whatever circumstance you're in.

I do know that the lie is you'll never be happy again. I do know that the lie is there is no hope in this world anymore. I do know that the lie is God doesn't care about you. I do know that there's some in our congregation that struggle with depression and struggle with anxiety. And perhaps one of you looked in the mirror this morning and said, "I'll go give one last chance to church to see if I'm truly loved by God." I'm going to tell you on the authority of God's word, he loves you. And not only does he love you, but he's able to demonstrate his love for you.

He sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on a cross for you, so if you'd repent of your sin and trust him, you could have a relationship with him forever and ever. Nothing is impossible for our God. He is able, he is able. The reason we have so much discouragement in our society and all the different things that go on and we look inwardly instead of upward, is because the enemy lies to us and say, "Yeah, you say you serve a God that can, what's he done for you lately?"

And I know there's people in our congregation that need more joy, and more healing and more deliverance, and more resources, and more relationships. I'm here to tell you on the authority of God's word, he is able, he's able. Single people, those of you that have prayed for a spouse for years and years, and years, "Is it ever going to happen?" He is able. For those of you who are married, who have been in a challenging marriage for years and years, and years, and years, and wonder, "Is this

ever going to get any better?" He is able,

There's nothing you can bring before God that God would say, "I can't do anything here. This is beyond my scope." He's able, he's confident and we're going to worship him because of his ability. It's important that we go to someone that has more ability than us. And the reality is, God oftentimes engineers circumstances in our life to show us our lack of ability in a certain area so that we'll have to trust in him, because too often, Christians in church are always trying to prove to God how committed they are and how they're going to get through everything.

No matter how gifted you are, there are certain areas in your life, no matter how much you pray, read the word or whatever, you're going to need the Lord to show up. If you don't believe me, just keep walking with him, you will see it. You will see it. See, it's important that we understand this, and we see it in life. I don't need to tell you, because I tell you in about every third service sermon, how unmechanical I am and how I don't really have a toolbox, which is not a lie. I don't have a toolbox and I don't have tools, and I don't have those things.

So when things happen for me, I need help. And it's always hard for me to ask help because I don't enjoy that stuff at all, and so it feels like if I ask somebody else to do it, that I'm copying out, they're not going to want to help. This year, my daughter, for her birthday in May wanted a swing set. I bought her a swing set. I was capable, I was able, I got online and ordered it and it arrived in May. And since then, about every day, she has asked me, "Dad, when are you going to put it up?" And I know the answer. I can't, I'm not able.

And I've talked to some different, I've hinted, "Could you help? Could you do this?" And finally, there were a couple guys, "Hey, I'll come to your house." And so I called them on Thursday and said, "Hey, when do you think you might be able to come? "We'll come tomorrow." They brought this tractor, they brought tools. My house was, it was incredible. They put the whole thing up in one day and they even let me participate. They showed me where to put the thing and how to use a screwdriver. And I have some marks on my hand where I got hurt a little bit doing it, just to show.

And then when it got done, they allowed me to carry the bags of mulch and spread it under the swing set, which I was able to do that. The point is, when we got done, they were thanking me for being able to help me, and the fact I would call them to do that. I'm like, "You enjoyed it?" Like, "Yeah, this was great. This look awesome." I'm like, "It looks incredible. And my daughter's friends with me again, and it's great." Spiritually, we do the same thing. Spiritually, pride creeps in, and instead of calling out to the Lord and asking him for what we need and telling him how he's competent and we're not, we are afraid to go to him and tell him what he already knows, and that we're incapable without him.

The Christian life is a life of dependence. The Christian life is a life of dependence. Sometimes, sometimes, we think we come to church to put on airs like, "We got our marriage together," or, "I've got my singleness together," or, "My kids are looking pretty good aren't they?" We know how to handle our finances, or we know how to handle all this stuff. And all it takes is a little thing to go out of place and realize

you don't have it all. And then you start hiding a little bit. And then you don't want to get in a small group, because you don't want people to really know that you don't have it all together.

I not only have it on authority that God has it all together, but I also have it on authority that nobody that goes to BRAVE Church has it all together. So you should all always feel confident here that you don't have to have it all together when you come to church. Our God has it all together, you don't. But he is able. The reason that we worship him, the reason that our God is awesome is he's capable, he's competent, he is able. Let me give you a second reason why our God is awesome. Our God is awesome because he's abundant.

Our God is awesome because he's abundant. Not to him who is able to do what? To do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think. Do you hear that? Our God is not only abundant, he's able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think, he's an abundant God. Sometimes the way the enemy lies to us is he tells us about the poverty of our God, God could help you, but he doesn't really help people like you. If God really loved you, then how come he's not acting like that yet? If God really cared about you, then why are you going through this circumstance? He's not abundant, he's not lavish.

I'm here to tell you on the authority of his word, oh yes, he is. He is a loving God that owns everything and he's very lavish towards his children. That's who he is. Notice this, he's able to do beyond what you do." What? Ask or think. It means no matter what you ask God for, he says, "I can do better than that." I think about all the things

we could ask God for. You could ask him for a lot of things and God says, "That's nothing for me. That's not too hard for me," or beyond what we think, beyond our imagination. God gave us an imagination, I can imagine a lot of things.

I can imagine a lot of things and ask a lot of things to God, and there's nothing I could imagine or ask where God would be like, "That's way too big of a vision. And no, we can't do that." Nothing. God is so abundantly lavish that we forget that when we're praying to God, we are not talking to somebody who just doesn't have a lot and, "Hey, I saved you. What else do you want?" That's not our God. God did not save you just to take you to heaven, God saved you because he made a deposit of his Holy Spirit inside of you. And he desires to use gifting in you to build his church, to advance his kingdom in the world.

He's got purpose for your life beyond anything you've ever dreamed of. That's who our God is. We read throughout the whole New Testament how lavish our God is. When Paul is writing to the Philippian church, he prays in Philippians 1:9 that your love may abound still more and more. No matter how loving you are, no matter how loving you are, do you realize you can grow in your love for other people? If you think you've reached a pinnacle of love, like you would say, "There's no way I could love my spouse more. There's no way I could love my kids more."

Here's what the Bible would say, you can actually grow in your love. There's deeper and richer ways to love the people around you. And here's what the Bible would also say for people that you don't like and for people that are challenging to you,

and people that make your life difficult, that God can give you a spirit to love those people with the same love that he has for them. Only the spirit of God can do that. Paul was praying that they would grow in love. At the end of Philippians, because they had given him a monetary gift, he says this.

In Philippians 4:19, He says, "And my God will supply all your needs, according to his riches and glory, in Christ Jesus." How does God supply us? According to, not out of. When God lavishes something on you, when he lavishes a relationship, when he lavishes something monetarily, when he lavishes his health, he's not giving it away as if he doesn't have enough in reserve. When God pours out, he's giving, according to what he has. Just out of curiosity, how much does God own?

Everything.

Everything, all. He has power, he has all knowledge, he has it all. When he gives, he's not losing anything. And yet sometimes, when it comes to asking God for things, we refuse to ask him for what we really want and pray our true heart. God says, "Come to me, ask." He says, "You do not have because you do not ask." Oh, I'd hate to ask God for something that big, what if he said no?" Who cares? He says no. Sometimes God says no to you because you don't have the character to receive the blessing of what he wants to give to you, and so he is like, "Hey, you just need to grow for a while." It's not, no, it's just, grow.

Other times, God says, when you ask for things, he says no because it doesn't align with his word and it's not your best. Sometimes though, God is waiting for you to

ask because your character is right and it is aligned with his word and God wants to tell you to go, but he's not going, because you're not asking for anything. You're not showing that you're dependent enough on him for it. And some of you're like, "Well, God already knows that. God knows what need before I even ask it. The Bible says, 'Before words on my tongue, he knows it completely.'"

Yes he does, but he wants you to ask, because when you ask, it demonstrates dependence upon him. God is an abundant God, he is a lavish God. No matter how deeply intimate you are with him, you can know him more deeply and more intimately. And God wants us to have an abundance. Because how can I give joy to another person if I'm not experiencing the joy of the Lord? How can I show love to another person if I'm not experiencing the love of Christ? I can't give out of my poverty what I don't have. How can I help somebody financially if I don't have any finances to help other people?

See, God wants to lavish us with blessing, not for ourselves, God wants to lavish us with things so we can be a blessing to others. Prosperity gospel falsely teaches that God wants you to be rich, healthy, and have everything your way all the time and life is all about you. That's wrong. But it's also wrong to say that we don't serve a generous, lavish, abundant God that wants to prosper and bless you for the sake of giving to others. That's what he says. Amen. Satan will tell you that God has a poverty mentality, God has no poverty mentality.

And think about this. Just think about salvation for a second. God is not willing that any would perish, but would want all to come to know him. That God's desire for

the world would be that every single person, every single place would truly repent of his or her sin and come to know Jesus Christ as Lord. When that happens, do you realize what happens in salvation? That you were on a track for death and destruction and hell, separated from God and every other human being, in outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth for all eternity, and God in his grace stepped in, sent his son, Jesus, who died in your place for all your sins, who took them to the grave, who rose in victory to show he indeed is the one and only son of God, and saved your life so that the Holy Spirit come and indwells you. Is with him now and forever more. And you get to spend eternity with Christ and all of God's people forever and ever without sin, Amen.

That's a pretty big ask. Amen?

Amen.

And yet God's willing to do that, but like, "Oh, I hate to ask God for a job, that's a lot." What can you ask? That's too great for our God? He's an abundant God, he loves to give good gifts to his children. Parents, just like you love to give good gifts to your children, God wants to give good gifts to you. And good doesn't mean he gives you everything whenever you want it, that's not a good parent, that's not a good parent. Just because your child wants something doesn't mean you just give it to them because you know that it could harm them, it could hurt them. I'm hoping my children are listening to me today.

But if you're a good parent, you want them to have the best of different things.

But notice what Jesus said about those of us that want to give good gifts to our kids. In the Sermon On The Mount, he said this in Matthew chapter seven, starting in verse nine, he says, "Are what man is there among you who when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone, or when he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? Will he?" Who among you, parents, who are good parents, if your son's like, "Dad, I'm really hungry. I could really use something to eat." He's like, "Hey, here's a snake, make yourself at home. Here's the scorpion, don't get stung."

Nobody would do that. Good parents, if your kids are hungry, you're going to feed them. And Jesus says, "If you then being evil," that's how he refers to us, "If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask him?" Friends, you may not have had a good earthly father, you may not have even known your earthly father. You may have had a father that did the exact opposite of what God wanted a father to do, but I got good news for you today, you have a heavenly father that is lavish and loves you and wants the best for you. That's who our father is. He's an abundant father.

I thought when I was preparing this that I would just share this because it's something that I'm going back to now that I prayed certain way years ago. But there's this story in the Old Testament in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 about a young man named Jabez. And a book was written by Bruce Wilkinson called The Prayer of Jabez, and it got all sorts of reviews. And some people are like, "That's the best book ever." And other people are like, "Prosperity gospel, don't preach it." It's in the Bible, so we might as well look at it because it's God's word. And in the middle of this huge genealogy of

all these different people, if you want to really study genealogy today, go home and read 1 Chronicles.

But in the middle of that, in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, it says this, it says, "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers," so he had good character, "And his mother named him Jabez saying, 'Because I bore him with pain.'" Jabez means, I'm a pain. How would you like to get named by your mother, everywhere he goes, "What's your name?" "I'm a pain." "Now, Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, 'Oh, that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from harm that it may not pain me.'" And what does it say? And God granted him what he requested.

We know he had good character, that's what the Bible says. But then what was he praying for? He was praying for four specific things. For some of us in America... Before I go back to this, I just want to tell you, one of the reasons that you don't pray a lot is you don't have tracks to pray with. And so what we tend to do is we wake up in the morning and our prayer life looks something like this. We sit down, maybe we have a journal, maybe we're trying to pray on our way to work. Something like that. And we start to write the different things that are going on, or we just start praying, "Lord, help me today. I got this thing going on." Oh my gosh, the phone just went off, what's that? Oh yeah, I got to get back to them.

We start texting. Then we're back in the word, and then we're back here. And next thing we know, we're not even praying anymore and we don't even know what happened. It's because we have no tracks with which to run on. And God wants us to

run on tracks. I remember a number of years ago, it was about 30 years ago, I was in this training. And that morning, I got there and they said, "Hey, we're going to teach you how to pray today." And they started passing out these little booklets. I don't know if they're from the navigators or somewhere in Colorado Springs, it was called Seven Minutes with God.

And they said, "We're going to teach you how to develop a devotional and spend seven minutes a day with God." And in my heart, I remember exactly where I was and I scoffed, I'm like, "Huh, seven minutes with God, like that's anything." And the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and said, "That was seven minutes more than you spent this morning before you left." You ever have a day like that? I said, "Well, I better pay attention." And what they talked about was to take a scripture and to read that scripture and spend about a minute meditating on that scripture, and then pray the prayer ACTS, A-C-T-S.

Pray for a minute adoring Christ, pray for a minute confessing all your sins, pray for a minute thanking God, and then pray for a minute for supplication. Supplication is what we're all really good at, it means to ask or beg. So you start out with prayer for a minute, you read a Bible verse for a minute, you do these four things for a minute. Now you're at six minutes, and then you close in prayer for a minute, seven minutes. So I said, "You know what, that seems pretty easy. I'll start doing that." Seven minutes turned to 14, which turned to 30, which turned to an hour. It was pretty easy, because it's really hard when you start walking through thanking God for things and finishing in a

minute.

It's really hard if you're letting the spirit of God work on your life to confess every known sin that you've ever sinned in a minute. It's really hard to adore Christ and give him all the words he needs in just a minute. It's really hard to ask God for all the things going on in your life in just a minute. It was just a track and a way to pray. Nothing magical about it, its just getting your heart right. I think the prayer of Jabez is another one you can pray. The prayer of Jabez, what was he saying? "Oh Lord, that you would bless me indeed."

Here's what he was saying, "Lord, I want everything that you ever would have for me, I don't want you to hold back anything. I want the abundance that you would have for me." Here's what Jabez was saying, Jabez was saying, "I don't want to get to heaven and know that I left on the table. If there was something you didn't have for me, I'm totally cool with that, but Lord, I'm asking for you to give every good thing that you would have for me." Lord, I want the fullness of your joy, I want the fullness of your mercy. Lord, I want the fullness of your forgiveness, I want the fullness of your love. I want to know how to love other people the way you love other people. Lord, I want to be overflowing with everything that you would have for me. Oh Lord, that you would bless me indeed."

Bless the Lord oh my soul. There's nothing wrong with praying that if you understand blessing is not for you, it's experiencing Christ in you so that you can pour it out to other people. Abundance. What else was he praying for? He's praying for influence. Lord, expand my boundaries. Lord, give me greater influence with more

people. Lord, give greater influence. Do we need to have more influence as Christians in this world?

Yes.

I'm going to ask it again because I want an answer. Do we need more influence of Christians in this world?

Yes.

Okay. Thank you. We do. For some of us, we falsely believe that gospel is just about getting us safe so we can go to heaven and hide out in church. It's not. God didn't save us to hide out in church, God saved us so that in church we can minister to one another, build one another up so that when we go out into the world, we're living for Jesus as examples in such a way that regardless of our vocation, whether we're doctors or attorneys or lawyers or stay-at-home moms or dads or whatever it is we do, that people look and say, "That's what it means to be a Christian. They're not apologizing for being a Christian. And this is what it looks like." Do we need more influence? Yes, that's what we need. That's what God wants for us.

Lord expand my influence. And it could be one person at a time. That's usually what he does. Sometimes we pray that prayer like, "Oh, he just for a bigger church. Always just praying for more business, no praying for influence with people, that more people would know who this God is that we serve. Then what's he praying? He's praying presence. Oh Lord that your hand would go with me. Moses said, "I'm not going unless you go with me, God." It means this, everywhere I go today, Lord, may

my hands not touch anything that you don't want them to, may my eyes not see anything I don't need to. May my mind only be filled with thoughts of you. May my heart not be captivated by things of the world, but only you.

Lord, may my feet only go where you want me to go. Lord, I want to go where you go and I want you to go with me so that everywhere I am, at all times, you are living your life in and through me in a way where you're pleased, Lord. I want your presence in my life everywhere I go. I want your presence in my marriage, I want your presence in my family, I want your presence with my friends. I want people to know that your Holy Spirit is coming out and spilling out through me in such a way that people know I spent time with the Lord today. I spent time with the Lord this week, this man, or this woman, this boy, or this girl are living for Jesus. Lord, go with me, give me your presence.

And then finally, he asked for protection. He asked for protection, that you would keep me from harm. Are we supposed to pray protection from the evil one? 100%, we're supposed to pray for protection from the evil one. We're supposed to pray protection from him in every possible way, because you have an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. And that's what we have. So that's what Jabez is praying. He's praying for abundance, he's praying for influence, he's praying for presence, he's for protection. You start praying that way in your life so that God will be glorified in all you do, just see what he does. God listens to prayer and God answers it.

You want another track you could run on? I'll give you several today. The Lord's

prayer is a great track to run on. "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name." Why not just worship the Lord and tell the Lord how holy he is, and ascribe the Lord all the names that he is, the great healer, the great provider, the great protector. Worship him. Then pray, "Let your kingdom come, and let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Pray God's will everywhere you go. Pray for Jesus' return soon. Pray that until he gets here, we would live for him in such a way that the world would know that he's Christ.

Pray that everything that goes on, here is what he wants from heaven coming down to us. "Give us this day our daily bread. Lord, here's my needs today. Lord, would you meet those?" You start having some tracks to run on when you pray, you'll see how abundant our God is. The reason many of us miss out on all that God has, we don't ask him for anything, we don't spend any time praying to him unless we're in crisis. And then we usually just pray, "Lord, take the crisis away." Now, I don't know about you, but if I were to design my life, I would not design it with any tragedy, I would not design my life with any pain, I would not design my life with any problems, I would not design my life with any prosperity. I would not design any of those things.

But however, I would say, "In the of seasons in my life where those are the things I'm going through, those are the ways that God's grown me the most." God is a God of abundance, he's a God who is capable. Seek him. Not only is our God capable and abundant, but let me give you a third one, our God is powerful. Our God is powerful. Now, how much power does our God have?

All.

All. He's omnipotent, that means he's all powerful. Now, to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, how? According to the power that works within us. Now, don't miss this, it's his power that is able to do everything. That's why Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it as the power of God for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and then the Greek." It's power, the gospel has power. You can't change people, you can't even change yourself, but the same power that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you through his Holy Spirit, and God is able to do all things.

You may feel inept, God's like, "It's not too hard for me. Not only am I abundant, not only am I near, but I'm all powerful. I got this. I got this." There's something about knowing how powerful our God is and who he is in circumstances of what he wants to do. Now, the New Testament teaching of his power is even greater than what we read about in the Old Testament. The same God that parted seas or put a bush on fire that didn't burn or brought down fire from heaven and consumed a sacrifice, that same God is the God that lives in you.

So God's not just out there performing powerful miracles. Notice what the word of God says, according to the power that what? Works within us. Last week, we said we are his workmanship. We are his. Where's he at work? In and through us. Where is the power? In us. What does the enemy lie to you about? You have no power. You can't change anything. Who do you think you are? You don't make a difference. You're

no good. You can't change the world. You can't do this. If you believe that, he's right, but if you believe the truth of the word of God, you could say, "I may not be able to change anything, I may not be able to do anything, but I know his power that works in me can do all things."

Here's all that's important. Listen, some of you as Christians that know you're born again, that truly believe you've repented and trusted Christ, know he dwells on the inside and yet still struggle with the same habitual sin pattern you've had since you were converted. Here's why, because you believe the lie that his power is not big enough to change your sin. You believed the lie, you've got to struggle with that sin for the rest of your life. There's no way. Listen, there's no way you can go before the Lord where the Lord would say to you, "Yeah, I want you to struggle in sin until you meet me." No, no, no.

Lord, I struggle in sin, and here's my sin. And I've tried to fix it and I've tried to correct it on my own, and I know that doesn't work, but I need your power to change the way I think about this. I need your power so I love what you love. I need your power so I hate what you hate. I need your power to take me away from that group of people. I need your power to put me in this environment. I need your power to have the courage to act like this. Lord, I need your power to move me. And when God begins to move you and you see his power and you look over your shoulder and say, "I used to be that and now I'm moving this way and I'm entirely different," that's the power of God at work in your life.

Friends, listen to me, one of the reasons why Christians that end up disengaging

in the church and leaving and getting bitter and living their life on their own is because they haven't let the power of God rule in their hearts. And if you don't and you think Christianity's all about getting saved and then you working really hard to keep God pleased, talk about a miserable existence. That's it. God's power is in you to liberate you so that you can be free and enjoy the goodness of God. When Jesus came, what did he do? He preached the gospel of the kingdom. He delivered people from sin. He healed people. He cast out demons. No. Does that mean God heals every single person? No. Does that mean God delivers every single person? No. But is God able to do all of that? Yes. Does he want to do all of that? Yes. How is he going to do that? Through the power that is at work within you, within me.

When I think about the New Testament and I study the gospels and I see what Jesus did, I think to myself, "That's amazing." We study the gospels and we see Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man and what he's done and how he's doing it, and we see him heal people from diseases. We see him raise people from the dead, we see him heal the heart of spiritual needs of all these different people. And then we see him at the beginning of the book of Acts, and what does he say? The disciples are saying, "Is this the time you're going to restore the kingdom? Is this one Israel's coming back together? Is this when you're going to rule?"

He's like, "It's not for you to know dates and times, but here's what you do need to know, but you will receive," what? "Power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses in both Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria until the ends of the earth." What was God's plan? God's plan was not staying on the earth and

ruling. No. Having met his disciples through the living and active word, I'm not all that impressed. I'm not impressed with Peter, I'm not impressed with John, I'm not really impressed with those guys. As a matter of fact, the reason Jesus picked them is because no other rabbi did.

And there's nothing about them that's attractive like, "Oh great, you got Peter on your team. You're going to take on the world now." Peter was the one on the night that Jesus was betrayed that said, "Even if all men betray you, I'll even die for you." And Jesus prophesied that he betray him three times, which is exactly what Peter did. The one who said I'll die for you is the one who betrayed him three times in the very same night. And now Jesus is looking at all these same men that have abandoned him and failed him in every way and say, "Now, guess what, we're going to change the whole world, and I'm choosing you to do it."

Does that sound like a good plan to you? Because it certainly does not to me. And yet, what Jesus understood because he had been promising it back in the gospels that I'm going to send you another, the one alongside of you, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit who will be in you and be with you forever, and wherever you go, there I am. So it's not going to be you doing the work, it's going to be me doing it through you. And you'll do even greater things than these because I'm going to the father. So what do you notice about Jesus?

He's the master of empowerment. He can take that which has zero potential, empower them with his Holy Spirit and turn them loose to do a great kingdom work.

That's who our God is. Now, if you're sitting there saying, "Who? Me? Here's my answer. Yes, you. Who? Us? Yes, y'all, because God wants to do great things. And in the history of the church, when the church has truly believed, God can use us for great things. In those seasons, in church history, there's been massive change in culture wherever that has been believed.

Friends, do you want to see a massive change in our culture in Denver, Colorado and around our great nation? Because I do. And I'm going to tell you the way it's going to change is when believers of the Lord believe that they are actually valuable to him and can be used by him to the full and will step out in faith believing the fact that our God is abundant, believing the fact that our God is capable, believing the fact that our God is powerful and that he indeed dwells in us. Is that good news or what? That's who we are.

I'll give you a fourth one. Our God is not only capable, abundant and powerful, but our God is glorious. Our God is awesome because he's glorious. There's no one like our God, there's no thing like our God, there's no one like our God. He is awesome. I want to be a faithful preacher of the word of God, I really do, and I'm trying my best to do it. And I hope as long as God gives me life, I always will be, but even if I am, we're going to get to heaven and we're going to see each other and you're going to come up to me and you're going to say, "Pastor Jeff, God's awesome and your words didn't even come close to how awesome he is."

Because there's no way to describe the awesomeness and the glory of our God. 2 Samuel 22:4 says the same thing as Psalm 18:3 says, "I will call upon the Lord who

is worthy to be praised." Psalm 96:4 and 1 Chronicle 16:25 says the same thing, "For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared among all gods." Our God is worthy. He's worthy of all your praise. And notice what Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think according to the power that works within us," what does it say to him? "To him be glory." To him.

We're called to bring him glory. Well, where? And that's what he says, in the church and in Christ Jesus, that's where we're called to bring him glory. Where's God's glory rest in Christ Jesus. We see the fullness of God's glory in the person of Jesus Christ, the God man who died in the cross for sins and rose from the dead. Where else do we see his glory? In the church. Now, when you hear the word church, because of our Western mindset, we think building, we think title on the building, we think location of the building. It's not church.

Church is the called out ones who are gathering together to give glory to God. Friends, you cannot be a Christian and experience God to the full and not be part of a local church, that's an impossibility, "Oh Pastor Jeff, if you don't know, I know a guy, he does a pair of church ministry, he does all these great things, he loves the Lord." He can't be the fullness or she can't be the fullness of what he or she is apart from being part of the body of Christ because the church is where Jesus Christ dwells. Jesus Christ died for the church, he rose for the church, he redeemed the church.

He's coming back for the church. He's rupturing the church and the church is going to spend eternity with Jesus. It's his church, that's where his glory rests. The

only thing we ever accomplish on a Sunday when we gather is to give glory to Jesus. We're pretty far down the road. That's why we're here. We're not called to give glory to a man, we're not called to give glory to a woman, we're not called to give glory to a boy or a girl or somebody's wonderful accomplishments. We're here to let you know that Jesus Christ and him alone is worthy of all of our praise, and that's who we are.

He is worthy, we're not. And when we show dependence upon him, that's what it's going to be like. I think about Revelation chapter four and chapter five, it was fun to teach that book this last year. I really enjoyed them. But when I think about the throne of God and what's going on around the throne, I think about Revelation chapter four and verse 11, where he says, "Worthy are you are Lord and our God to receive glory and honor, and power, for you created all things and because of your will, they existed and were created." And Revelation 5:12 says, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

You will never run out of words to tell God how awesome he is, you'll never run out of time. We'll be worshiping him for all eternity because he's that awesome and he's that great. And when we think about all that he's done for us, how worthy is he? I have a friend of mine that was back on campus, where I went to college some 30 years ago, and he sent me some pictures yesterday and just reminded me of who I was back then, how I had just come to know Christ, how I was living, how far apart from God that I was, and all the different things that went on.

As I started going down that road, I started to feel some shame in my heart. I'm

like, "No, God, you've forgiven all that, I'm not buying that lie, I'm a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have been made new. I'm redeemed, I'm adopted, that's I am." But when I think about what God's done just in my life, just personal testimony, he's worthy of my entire attention all day long, every single day. I think of the scripture in Jude 24 and 25 that the half-brother of Jesus wrote. He says, "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God, our savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen."

It means in my life personally, Jesus Christ took someone that was living really far apart from him, who thought he was pretty special and has redeemed him and is going to keep me from stumbling. And not only that, he's going to present me standing, not stumbling into the kingdom, not falling on my face into the kingdom, he's going to stand me before his father. How? With exceedingly great joy presenting me faultless before his dad. You talk about miracle of miracles, that's what our God does. So to him be all the glory forever and ever. Amen.

We should worship him for what he's doing in our lives. And that's true of every single believer. We just don't take the time long enough to think about what he's done. He's glorious, he's absolutely glorious. Let me give you a final one here. He's eternal. He is eternal, he's unchanging. Notice this, "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus," for how long? "To all generations,

forever and ever. Amen."

How long? Every generation, this is who God is. There won't be a generation of the church, there won't be somebody that was brought up in a different part of the world that says, "Yeah, wasn't true of me." No. In every generation, in every generation and throughout all eternity, we will know that our God is awesome. That's who he is, that's who our God is. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish, but would have," what? "Eternal life." Not everlasting life, not like you begin life now. And it keeps going, you get eternal life.

Well, what is eternal life? Eternal life is the very life of Christ in you that begins at the moment of conversion and continues on forever and ever. Amen. That's who our God is. He's eternal. The things that we're talking about in church are eternal. He's willing to forgive your sins for eternity, forever and ever. Amen. That's who our God is. And yet, here's the challenge that we face. Some of us have made the gospel so small that it's just about getting into heaven and that's about it and we miss the purpose of the gospel, which is to worship the resurrected Christ to advance his kingdom on the planet by being part of his church, the bride to do that.

And what ends up happening is, for some of us who are Christians, we struggle with sin, we continue to struggle with sin, and we don't do anything about it. And then we wonder, why it is I don't feel like going to church anymore. And why is it I don't like that pastor anymore. And why is it I don't like reading the word anymore? And why is it

I don't like praying more? What is that? I was studying Psalm 32 this week, I almost preached it. This is David after he committed adultery with Bathsheba after he had her husband murdered, after he had been forgiven, he was giving testimony to how sweet it is to be forgiven.

And why am I reading this to you? Because there's somebody that come to BRAVE Church, that the Lord has been laying his hand upon for weeks or months on end about a specific sin in your life that he's asking you to confess and repent of, and yet instead of doing that, you're feeling the weight of his hand more and more. And instead of coming to Christ, you're blaming everybody else around you, and you're talking about why things aren't working out in your life, and you've lost the joy and freedom and hope you have. And God's just saying, "No, no, no, I'm asking you to come back to me and experience my forgiveness.

Notice what David says, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered? How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and whose spirit there is no deceit? Do you know it's a blessing to have a freedom, a free conscience? There's no price tag for a free conscience. You know how good it is to stand here knowing, "I know I'm a sinner, I know there's stuff in my life that the Lord's going to bring, but I'm not faking anything, I'm not hiding back things from the Lord." I've gone through seasons like that, I hate seasons like that.

Notice what he says. This is a testimony of David that we've all experienced, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away. Through my groaning all day long for day and night, your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as

with the fever heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and my iniquity I did not hide. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the guilt of my sin." Do you know why God puts his hand on you? Do you know why it's hard to walk with Christ when you're feeling his hand on you and his weight on you?

Because he loves you so much, he's trying to grow your character. He's not trying to shame you, he's not trying to guilt you, but there's people in church all the time that instead of continuing to confess and repent, and confess and repent, they just say, "Well, I'm already saved and I'll just move on." Let me tell you this, God will never let go of that feeling that you have until you repent. And some of you have gone long enough now that you're like, "Well, if I repent now, then my wife's going to know this." Or, "If I repent now, my husband's going to know that." Or, "If I repent now, my mom and dad are going to know."

Hey, there's no price tag on a clean conscience, who cares? Wouldn't it be worth it just to live free? Wouldn't it be worth it to experience the joy of the Lord? Oswald Chambers used to say that when we get to a place to confess our sin and we're willing to do that that God will tax the remotest star to get everything aligned in our life. God will go to every single length to free up your conscience before him. And the reason that some of you while I'm talking about our God is awesome and in your head you say, "Yeah, I agree with you, pastor, that's great," but in your heart, you can't get excited about it? It's because there's a known sin in your life, you refuse to repent of.

And in five seconds you could have that change by repenting to the Lord and

experiencing in his grace, lavish out all over you and remind you that you belong to him. BRAVE Church listen to me, confess your sin before him. Some of you have come, you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you're checking things out, you're not sure about this whole God idea. I'm here to tell you on the authority of his word, that Jesus Christ is the God of the universe, that he came to this world, he died on the cross for all your sins. He was buried in a grave and he rose. And if you will exchange your sin for his life, he will come and dwell you right now forever more.

And for some of you, for some of you that know that, you would say, "I remember how joyful I was when I came to Christ, I've lost the joy." And perhaps the reason you've lost the joy is there's an ongoing sin in your life that you refuse to deal with. Perhaps it's a sin of greed, perhaps it's a sin of lust, perhaps it's a sin of idolatry, perhaps you worship something other than the Lord, perhaps you're so bent on getting married and you hate your singleness so much that that's all you focus on, or perhaps you focus on material things.

There's something God's put hand on you, know what it is. And it's not getting any better, I got news for you, it's not going to, because that's God's love for you that says, "I need you to repent, and I need you to repent, and I need you to repent, I need you to repent. Confess your sin before me. Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laid, and I'll give you rest. I'll give you rest for your soul, I'll fill your fresh with my presence in your life so that you can enjoy me to the full." Friends, I'm here to tell you, our God is awesome. Our God is awesome. He's worthy of all of your honor, he's worthy of all of your praise, he's an abundant God, he's worthy and he cares.

He's an eternal God, and how you respond to him, will impact your entire eternity. Why live your life now miserable without Christ? For those of you who don't know him and say, "Well, I'm just going to live my whole life," what does it prop you to gain the entire world and forfeit your soul and be all alone in hell by yourself, separated from God and every other person you know for eternity because you refuse to repent? But what about you as Christians that know you're going to heaven that live miserable from now until the time you meet Jesus, only because he loves you enough to put his finger on sin in your life that you refuse to repent of?

Let me tell you, wherever you are in your journey of sanctification or your growth and holiness, God wants to take you just one more step. What's the thing in your life now? I used to think when I was a younger Christian that after I got rid of some big ones, "I've given them all to God now, there's no big ones in my life anymore. I gave him all those." Only to find that God continues to educate me every single day of my life and take me deeper and deeper, and deeper to show me how sinful my heart truly is apart from him."

He wants you to grow in holiness so you can enjoy him to the full. The way I want to end today is just by praying, just by asking the Lord to do a work in your life and what he's been laying on your heart during this service, that if you're not a Christian, you'd come to him. And that if you are, that you could literally leave this place today saying, "My God is awesome. Our God is awesome, and I'm experiencing his goodness in my life." Would you pray with me? Lord, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we're asking in this moment that you would do

your work.

If you're here today and you've never trusted Christ, and you know you're separated from him, here's how you can pray, "Jesus I believe that you're the God of the universe and I'm separated from you because of my sin. Right now I want to give you all my sin, I want to turn from my sin, you can have it, but I want all of your life in me, come into my life, Lord Jesus and save me." And for some of you that know that you know that the Holy Spirit is inside of you but aren't living your life to the full, here's how you can pray, "Lord Jesus, I know you're awesome, but I'm not experiencing your character because of sin in my life. Lord, you've been are crystal clear about this specific sin or the specific sins."

I'm just going to ask you in the quietness of your own heart to name them. Don't start telling God, "Lord, I know I struggle with," no, just call it by name, what the sin is. Lord, I pray that you would help us to love what you love, that you would help us to hate what you hate, and Lord that we'd have a fresh measure of your forgiveness in and through our lives in such a way that you'd be glorified and honored. God, I give you praise for all you're doing in our church. Lord, may we be a church that advances your kingdom in this world because we believe that we have a new identity, and we believe that you're working in and through us for great measure.

And so Lord, for all you're going to continue to do, we give you glory, honor and praise, in the mighty and the [inaudible 00:54:05] name of Jesus. Amen and Amen. Can we give God some praise this morning for who he is?