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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Communion Sunday

John 19:31-37

Prayer: *Father, we just again thank you for who you are. We thank you that we can indeed call upon you to draw near to us, and that by virtue of the cross we have the ability to have a relationship with you. Lord, this day, this morning we are going to focus in on what it is you've done for us on the cross. We continue to examine that and we again ask for the presence of your Holy Spirit, because we recognize that's an impossible task without your Spirit's accompaniment. So guide us, draw us into your word, again make it of permanent value, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, once again, the first Sunday of the month, as you know, is the day that we dedicate to remembering Christ and his cross. And we speak of that by first speaking of the night beforehand where Jesus met with his disciples and there for the last time he celebrated a Passover supper. It's described in *Matthew 26* which says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given*

thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and blood and then he asked the disciples if they would eat the bread and the cup again as symbols of his flesh and blood. He asked them then to repeat this remembrance of his sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we call "the Lord's table." We, in particular, celebrate it once a month, some people celebrate it every week, some people celebrate it twice a year, but we do so by first meditating on the Lord Jesus Christ and what he's done for us on the cross; secondly, by asking God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sin; thirdly, by confessing that sin; and then fourthly by participating in the elements. Jesus said in *John 6:53*: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well, we've been working our way through the Gospel of John. We're at the end of the 19th chapter, and if you remember the last time out, we looked at the actual death of Jesus. Today we're going to look at what took place immediately thereafter. *John 19:31* says: *Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a*

special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. Well, there's three reasons why the Jewish leader wanted Pilate to break the legs of Jesus and the two thieves, and the first one is practical and it points to how awful crucifixion actually was. You have to understand that crucifixion was really a form of execution that was designed to prolong the agony of dying, sometimes for days, and what would literally kill the person being crucified was asphyxia. Being hung by your arms would put a huge stress on your diaphragm, making breathing itself a form of agony. Actually in order to breathe, you had to push up on the nails that were in your feet, making every single breath a source of renewed pain. And when the soldiers wanted to hasten someone's death, they would take a club out of wood or out of metal and they would smash the legs of those who were hanging so they could no longer push up on the nails. Death by suffocation would soon overtake them. You know, this level of brutality is almost incomprehensible to those of us in the western world and our understanding of crime and punishment. We have many, many death penalty cases that are pending today because people are concerned that the drugs that are administered to hasten death might cause some suffering as they're administered. Well, you compare that with Rome's idea of capital punishment, you get a sense, just a tiny sense, of the brutality that Jesus endured.

There's a second reason why the Jewish leaders wanted the legs broken, and it's because evening was soon approaching and they were acutely aware of *Deuteronomy 21*, which says: "*If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.*" Now it was typical of Rome to crucify folks and to leave their bodies on the cross literally to rot so that it would be a deterrent for anyone who might be considering that type of crime. Well, the Jewish leaders wanted to make sure that the Roman approach didn't apply to these particular criminals, because their only concern was that the Lord's body and that of the thieves would be left overnight, thereby desecrating the land. You have to understand the irony in all of this. They had just committed the single greatest desecration ever undertaken by human beings. They had taken the holiest individual who had ever walked this planet and butchered him on a cross. Now they're concerned that these bodies left overnight might be a desecration. Well, Jesus spoke to that kind of mindset when he spoke directly to the Jewish leaders shortly before he was crucified in *Matthew 23*. He said: "*You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!*" Well, the gnat was obviously the concern that these bodies would defile the

land and the camel was the crucifixion of God himself. Jesus' use of the terms was designed to create a ludicrous comparison about misjudging what is important and what is not. And here we have the Jewish leaders so concerned that God would be offended at the presence of a body left on the cross and not the least bit concerned about whose body it was.

The third reason why the Jewish leaders wanted legs broke is because they knew that the Sabbath was approaching. It was late afternoon, and they knew that they were headed towards evening which was the beginning of Sabbath and they also knew that this was a special Sabbath, this was a Passover Sabbath. They wanted to make sure that all the details were attended to correctly and dead bodies hung overnight would defile the Sabbath as well. And so we pick up at verse 32, which says: *The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.*

There is a great deal that is being said here. John is actually

acting like the eye witness he actually was, I mean, the rest of the disciples may have scattered, but John didn't. John stayed until the bitter end, and he wants us to know that he was an eye witness to what took place. He saw the legs of the thieves being broken while Jesus' legs were left untouched. But he also saw Jesus' side being pierced. And when that happened, he saw a great quantity of blood and water flowing out of his side. Now medically the flow of blood and water points to a rupture of the heart muscle itself, something that's extraordinarily rare. *Baker's New Testament Commentary* shared is this insight. It said: "The physiological explanation might be this, that the death of Jesus resulted from rupture of the heart in consequence of great mental agony and sorrow. Such a death would be almost instantaneous, and the blood flowing into the pericardium would coagulate into the red clot (blood) and the limpid serum (water). This blood and water would then be released by the spear-thrust."

I just want to clarify that a little bit. This is not to say that Jesus died of a broken heart in the way that we understand that term, because Jesus died an absolute victor. Jesus died having conquered death itself and only then by voluntarily giving up his Spirit. I mean, the one whose voice caused Lazarus's rotting body to suddenly pulse with life once again was not subject to the same laws of biology and physical death that we are. The author of life

could only enter into death by choosing to do so, as Jesus did. I think the physiological evidence of blood and water points towards such an incredible effort on the part of Christ that the effort itself caused his heart to rupture. I mean, there's a medical part to that description that John has given us, but there's also a very important spiritual part. See, on the one hand, John was dealing with the docetic heretics who believed that Jesus never really took on flesh, he just gave the appearance of having done so. John wants them to know that this death was as real and as fleshy and as bloody as death could be, but he also wants us to note the picture that Jesus' pierced side is presenting. You see, there's deep symbolism in the blood and the water that is flowing from Jesus' pierced side, and again, as Baker's commentary points out, why else then would John spend four entire verses describing this? You see, water is something that Jesus himself spoke of on more than one occasion, and the first time he spoke about it was when he had this conversation. He was hot and he was tired, and he went to sit down at a well, and a woman came alongside him and he has this conversation with the woman and the woman is astounded. She's absolutely amazed that Jesus, a Jew, would violate protocol so severely as to ask her, a Samaritan, for water. In response, Jesus said this to her, he said, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* *"Sir," the woman said, "you have*

nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Chucks Swindoll points out that Jesus didn't say that he was this living water. What he said was he would give them this living water, and that's an important distinction to understand. It becomes a lot more apparent with Jesus' second statement about living water that was given many months later at the festival of Booths. This is what he said, he said: *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.* Now Jesus is saying, he's saying that believers also are going to produce this living water. We can read these words in 2019 and understand that Jesus was speaking about what happens when you become a believer in Christ. I mean we understand that God himself enters us and that

he takes up residence within us in the form of the Holy Spirit of Christ himself and that you become a source of that living water as you share the gospel and the Spirit of Christ himself flows out of you into the person that you're sharing that gospel with. Again, he says, *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."*

It's a marvel to look back at what Jesus said, knowing that some of the things that he said, his disciples couldn't possibly have understood but that he said them knowing that in time all of it would begin to make sense. Well, we see this as Jesus is instructing his disciples about his upcoming sacrifice, as he's telling them as they're growing more and more despondent. So he gives them additional teaching about the Holy Spirit, which again they couldn't possibly have understood at the time. This is what Jesus said. He said: *"Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All*

that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you." Jesus is clearly speaking about the Holy Spirit here, and now symbolically as John is looking at the cross and what he is seeing in Jesus's pierced side, he is physically depicting the flow of the Spirit's living water. I mean, the soldier pierces his side and literally from within, from the heart of God himself, comes a flow of living water that is the Spirit of God who would only come after the death of Jesus. Again, he says, *"Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you."* Well, this is the very same Spirit of God, this is the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer so that each of us become exactly what Jesus had said he would become, and again, Jesus said, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

As the elders begin to distribute the bread, I just would like us to take a few minutes to consider Jesus's words. You see, if you are one of his, Jesus is telling you that you are going to be the source of living water to somebody else. He clearly means that the Holy Spirit is going to not only indwell you but that he will fill you such that he will overflow out of you.

Now, communion is a time of self-reflection. Communion, one of the things that we do during communion is we ask ourselves some very important questions and one of the questions we need to ask ourself is if we've seen any evidence of that living water. Have we seen any evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence within us? Listen to what God says in *Romans 8*. He says: *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*" You might notice there's a gigantic "if," in that passage, and it determines if you are one of those who are a conduit for the Spirit of God or not. I think it was John MacArthur who once pointed out that there are really only two options for people when it comes to receiving the living water of the Holy Spirit. You can be a conduit, you can be an aqueduct, something that water flows into and through and then out, you can be an aqueduct or you can be a dam. And those who refuse the Spirit, those who do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling within them, within and without of the church, well, they act like

dams, trying to box in, trying to enclose, trying to limit the Spirit. And that certainly does seem for a time that they're on the winning side. I mean, we look at places like China, North Korea, Africa, the Middle East, and we see those who act like dams of that living water seem to have a large measure of success. But you have to understand, the flow of God's Spirit is limitless. And just like actual water flows, a dam can only last for so long before the water just begins to build up, and eventually it's either going to flow around or it's going to overflow as it continues to flow. You see, it's not the dam that's inexorable, it's the water, and the water is the Holy Spirit. I mean, we saw in China how the government through its program of licensing officially government-approved churches, thought they could dam up the Spirit of Christ. And we saw for a while they were very successful but then we start to see is this living water and it starts to build up and it begins to overflow either around or over these little dams. And we see house churches starting to form and sometimes starting by the tens and then by the hundreds and then by the thousands until literally tens of millions of people are now receiving this living water that has overflowed the dams that the Chinese government thought they could put up.

ISIS is another example. ISIS is extremely proud of what they think they're accomplishing. They thought they could dam up the

living water of the Holy Spirit through terror and through brutality, and certainly for a time they've been successful. But you got to understand, the flow of God's Spirit is inexorable. It never stops. And God uses their very brutality to demonstrate how powerful this living water is as it flows even through the victims that ISIS has selected. Witness this article in *Christianity Today* that recently came out. It was entitled: "*Forgiveness: Muslims Moved as Coptic Christians do the Unimaginable Amid ISIS attacks, Faithful Response Inspires Egyptian Society.*" It's an article by Jason Casper. He writes this, he says:

Twelve seconds of silence is an awkward eternity on television. Picture that. Just picture a television just sitting there and watching it for twelve seconds. That's a long time. He says: Amr Adeeb, perhaps the most prominent talk show host in Egypt, leaned forward as he searched for a response. "The Copts of Egypt are made of steel!" He finally uttered. Moments earlier, Adeeb was watching a colleague in a simple home in Alexandria speak with the widow of Naseem Faheem, the guard at St. Mark's Cathedral in the seaside Mediterranean city. On Palm Sunday, the guard had redirected a suicide bomber through the perimeter metal detector, where the terrorist detonated. Likely the first to die in the blast, Faheem saved the lives of dozens inside the church. "I'm not angry at the one who did this," said his wife, children by her

side. "I'm telling him, 'May God forgive you. And we also forgive you. Believe me. We forgive you. You put my husband in a place I couldn't have dreamed of.'" Stunned, Adeeb stammered about Copts bearing atrocities over hundreds of years, but couldn't escape the central scandal. "How great is this forgiveness you have!" his voice cracked. "If it were my father, I could never say this. But this is their faith and religious conviction." Millions marveled with him across the airwaves of Egypt.

You see, the terrorist thought that he could dam up this living water at the cost of his own life. He never realized the flow of living water that he was causing. You see, those who act like little dams eventually are going to be overflowed. And those who are truly in the Spirit are going to act like little aqueducts. The living water doesn't just flow into them, it flows through them to others. I mean, every time you share the gospel with somebody, that living water is flowing from Christ via the Holy Spirit into and through you into the world at large and those people in particular that you're directing it towards. That's wonderful news, but it's also frightening news. The wonderful news is the privilege that we've been given to be aqueducts and conduits for this living water. The frightening news is that God says if you do not have that living water within you, you do not belong to him. "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to

him." So I want us to take a moment and I want you to consider whether or not you have that living water within you. Have you ever felt the need to have that water flow through you and out of you? There will be plenty of time -- if you don't ever sense that, if you never sensed that, we just encourage you to meet with us afterwards. There's plenty of time to figure out how to make that happen.

But I want you to consider this for a moment and again, as you consider God's warning about communion itself. Let me read to you from *1 Corinthians 11*. It says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* You know, I say this every single month. I say how serious communion is and we point to this section where God has literally said he's taken the lives of people who have treated communion as something less than serious. I say if you enter into communion in an unworthy manner, you are courting disaster. I say if you are not absolutely confident that you're a child of God, if you haven't been faith trusted in Christ as your Savior, if there's never been

this river of living water within you or if you first need to be reconciled to your brother or sister before you bring your sacrifice to the altar, then just pass the elements on. Again, I said speak to us after. We can get this squared away. If you pass these elements on, nobody's going to look at you, nobody's going to wonder what's wrong with you. In fact they may well think you're wise. But we also want to address the other side of that equation which says that you can make the mistake of thinking that you have to be spotlessly perfect to receive communion. The enemy loves that as well. That's a glorious mistake that he enjoys. See, being a child of the King doesn't mean that you are sinless and that you never fail. It means that you recognize the gift that you've been given in salvation and you recognize that no one has ever been saved by being good. Again, we repeat Dane Ortlund's quote. He says, "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." It means understanding that we will fail and when we fail we are aware that we've sinned and we're aware that we've sinned because God's Spirit is indwelling us, he's the source of this living water. And because God's Spirit is within us, convicting us, we grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us. A Father who says: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all*

unrighteousness. So being a child of the King doesn't mean that we are sinless. It means that when we sin, we understand we have an advocate with the Father, someone speaking up there, on our behalf. John writes: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And it's because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own, that's the reason why we are now free to eat from His table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself this privilege that Jesus purchased for you at incredible cost. He lived the life we were supposed to live and then died the death we deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven, so that we could have this living water within us. Just take a moment to think on that.

1 Corinthians 11 says: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* So take, and eat.

As the elders come forward to distribute the cup, I want to continue with our text this morning. Verse 36 says: *These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and as another scripture says, "They will*

look on the one they have pierced." Why did the soldiers break the legs of the thieves and not that of Jesus? Well, Matthew's gospel tells us that among the fruits of Jesus' sacrifice was perhaps the very first flow of living water in the New Testament. That would be the centurion, the man who was assigned to Jesus's crucifixion. See, after Jesus gave up his Spirit, the veil in the temple was torn in two and it was accompanied by a mighty earthquake. *Matthew 27* says: *When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"* Perhaps the centurion ordered the other soldiers to leave Jesus alone. And maybe they clearly saw that he was already dead. It doesn't much matter. What does matter is that God's sovereign will will always go forward, and even as it goes forward, it goes forward through the free wills of fallen, sinful men. The scripture predicted that none of his bones would be broken because there was clear instruction in Exodus about the Passover lamb, and the instruction was that lamb was not to have any of its bones broken. Jesus, as the perfect Passover lamb, was protected by God's sovereign will from the indignity of having his bones broken. We're also told in the Old Testament that Jesus would be pierced while he was on the cross and that we would gaze on the One who was pierced. Well, the soldiers and John, the eye witness, gazed and they saw this living water mingled with blood that flowed down from Jesus that day. And

we know that it still flows from Jesus through his Holy Spirit into and through us today.

John's description of the crucifixion ends on a note of hope for us sinners. We continue with verse 38. He says: *After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.*

You know, there's no question that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus both had succumbed to fear. Joseph was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin but one who clearly kept his mouth shut when he could have opened it. And Nicodemus, the scripture points out, came to Jesus at night because he was afraid to be seen. I mean, a prominent teacher of the law coming to this unschooled illegitimate Jesus of Nazareth, that would never, never do. Both

had allowed their fears to overwhelm them and so both contributed to abandoning the Savior while he was alive. In Jesus' death, they found their courage. I mean it was no simple task for Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea to ask for the body of Jesus. There was probably no going back from doing so. So in a sense we could say Jesus's living water had found its mark. God was so gracious, God was so loving, that we see here he ministers even in his death. We know Peter let fear get the best of him, we know that Joseph of Arimathea did, so did Nicodemus, so did almost all the rest of the disciples, and yet we find in scripture God reaching out to each and every one of them, offering forgiveness and grace.

And so it begs the question for us. Have you ever let fear get the best of you when it came to sharing the gospel? I know I have. I know that I have confessed it here before, before you, I know that same kind of cowardice that Joseph and Nicodemus knew. I also know that God has forgiven me that cowardice and encouraged me that I am his child, and therefore I am an aqueduct and not a dam. And so my question for all of us this morning is actually very simple, it's how about you? Are you an aqueduct? Are you moving the living water of Christ's Spirit in you and through you to others? Or are you in effect a little dam bottling up and resisting his Spirit? It's a question of eternal consequence. It's a question we need to address. It's a question we need to again spend some time just

thinking about. Let's do that.

1 Corinthians 11:25 says: In the same manner he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." So take, and drink.

This the part that the we call heart, hands and feet, where we try to have some practical application of what does it really mean to remember Christ. And I want to go back to *John 19:38*, which says: *After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission.* And I want to ask you what if you were to substitute your name for Joseph of Arimathea and anything else for the Jews in that statement. What if the statement read: *After these things Tom, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of his relatives, his friends, his job, his career, his colleagues, for that fear he wouldn't acknowledge his Lord.* And we say after these things what? Well, we know that Joseph of Arimathea conquered his fear and he asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. We know that Nicodemus joined him in what they thought was an essentially hopeless task. I mean, Jesus was clearly dead. They had the task of removing the nails, of taking down the body, of feeling Jesus'

flesh turn colder and colder, because they served a dead Messiah. Imagine their joy when three days later that flesh started breathing again. Imagine their joy at realizing that they had been given a second chance. They had refused Jesus in life, they had honored him in death, but now they could worship him in his resurrection. We, too, may have acknowledged or refused to acknowledge Jesus out of fear; but understand, we, too, have a second chance. Are we willing to conquer our fears and tell this lost world that we have living water that will forever satisfy their deepest thirst? Or will we keep it bottled up? And how different is that from damming it up? You see, if you are one of his own, you are going to find that you cannot keep this to yourself. Jesus said, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* And by this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. That's not a statement of hope. That's not even a command. It's simply a statement of fact. That living water will build up and flow out and the only thing that will keep it from flowing is fear. Ask yourself, how would I approach sharing the gospel if I was absolutely fearless? Well, you can be. God says, *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Are you willing to confess your fear? Are you willing to serve a risen Lord? Are you willing

to be an aqueduct for the living water of Christ? Let's pray.

Father, I confess that every one of us in this room has fears. I'm just assuming that these folks are as fearful as I have been at times. And Lord, I am so grateful and thankful that you have forgiven me my fears, that you have given me the same second chance that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus found and that we all, every one in this room has the opportunity to have that second chance, to be an aqueduct, to let the Spirit of Christ flow through us to an incredibly lost world out there. Father, I pray that you would give each of us a spirit of willingness, a spirit of courage, and a desire to share that good news, a desire to let that water flow. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.