

Audio file

[New Years Eve Audio.mp3](#)

Transcript

All right, everyone. So as we prepare to wrap up 2023 today, I want to take a second to look back before we jump into the year 2024. Usually I'm a pretty big proponent of just looking forward for people say don't focus, looking too much behind you. You're not going that direction. And I and I believe that. But today I do want us to take some time. Looking back, we are where we are because of the past, good, bad or otherwise. We've kind of gotten to where we are because of what's happened. So we're going to look back a little bit at this. Year now in a little bit, I'll read through Psalm 65. That's kind of a Psalm. I want us to to think about a little bit as we look back on the year. But before I do that, I want to go through some things hometown did in 2023 because I really just want to see what God did through us as a church, as a whole. Because as I wrote some of these out. I thought about the year and reflected on the year as a church. I'm like, wow, we did a lot of stuff. God did a ton of stuff, and it's really, really cool. So here's just a few highlights. This is again. A few from our year, we started our Meadow Ridge Ministry this past year. The ministry that we we sponsor once a month where we provide sandwiches and snacks for kids that hang out at the Meadow Ridge Library once a month. It has been an amazing time. It's been a cool thing to really help out the library and these kids and the numbers grow and we're able to. To support that, and then for Christmas, we even did a gift drive for the kids there as well. So that was 2023. That all started this past year. We had our first ever church and Chile event for the Super Bowl this past year. We had over 50 people in church that day as one of our biggest numbers we've ever had, people hung out, participated, worshiped in our service, and hung around to eat chili with the chili cook off for salmon. Good for you. You won last year. He's not going to repeat this year because the the whole event. Coming back, church and chili, the cook off the whole deal is back for 2024, but we had our first one in 2020. Three, and it was. Super cool. Then. Excuse me. We celebrated our second anniversary of meeting in person as a church in June. We had cupcakes we celebrated together as a church. Everything God has done in those two years. But then also we went outside and celebrated Verona. It was the hometown days parade, so we gave out hot dogs and water right outside at the Senior Center where we meet during the parade, right? That was just so cool. To be able to be part of the community on our anniversary. And then throughout the year, we've had men's and women's small groups that meet a few times throughout the month, just a chance for different people to get together and share life and what God has been doing together in their lives. And that's a lot. And that's not even everything we did right. That's just kind of some of the. Highlights that I thought. Of we aren't a big church in number, but Dang, God did a lot through us and we were able to do a lot and. I'm super encouraged when I look back on that. And I fully believe that God is going to build on that for this next year. So I'm really excited for that as the church. But I do want us to take some time and look back at our own lives as well in 2023. That here we're going to look at Psalm 65. I'm going to read it kind of in sections and just break it down in three ways. Kind of quickly here this morning and see what is going on in this song. So Psalm 65, I'm going to start with verses one through 4. It says praise awaits you, our God, in Zion to you, our vows will be fulfilled. You who answer prayer to you all people will. When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We are

filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. We'll stop there. God shows grace. That's the first thing I wanted to see is I. Got she was. Grace, he answers prayer and he forgives sins. That's grace. He doesn't hold anything against us. Even when we do stuff we shouldn't do, he still comes through for us. So when did you ask God for forgiveness this? Past year. What? Was it for just between you and him? What was it? And if you're like me, you had asked God for forgiveness many, many times. It's normal. That's OK if you did because I did. But I gotta believe that he gave that forgiveness we asked for. We got it. No matter what you did, no matter how guilty you felt, or you still feel for whatever it was. These are normal feelings. But we get to erase that guilt. We get to wipe it clean. Because God did forgive us. He wiped our slates clean. If you want to go in. To 2024 with that clean slate, you can and you will with God's Forge. If you still need forgiveness for something with God, you need you need to talk to him about that right now. Pause the video and pray about it. Right now, wherever you're doing, just pause it and talk to God about it. If you need to. Ask for forgiveness and believe that God will. Grant it. He already has because God answers prayers. He hears everything we ask for Kate, even if we're all talking at once all of a sudden watching sort of praying all at once, he'd figure it out, even for super scattered, and we start praying at one thing and then another thing and then another thing. Might seem random to us, but God's got it all figured out and he will hear it all. I don't know how he does it right as a parent, when my kids all start talking at once, I can't do it. I live too, right? I can't imagine God with all his children across the world, right. My kids are like dad. Look at this new toy I got for Christmas and this one and this one. And Dad can help me with this. And Dad, can you give me a banana and dad, can you help me with this? I'm like, my head's going to explode. I can't keep it all straight. But God can God can handle the randomness and the chaos, and he listens to all of it, hears all of it. And answers all. Of it, he's able to do all of that now the answers may not come how he wanted them to, and that's the hard part. But it doesn't mean God didn't answer. So would you ask for this year? Would you pray about? Maybe it wasn't something you need forgiveness for, but just something else. What did you pray about? How did he answer? Do you feel like? You didn't we? Still, we feel like you're still waiting. Spend some time thinking through that. And and if you're in that spot of, like man. I didn't like. The answer or I don't. If he did answer. Was he maybe just working in a way you weren't expecting or still spend some time on that? But God answers prayers. God Forgives. God shows grace. He showed grace to all of us this past. Let's keep going in the song. So I'm 65 and now verses 5 through 8. As you answer us, with awesome and righteous deeds, God our saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seeds who formed the mountains by your power. Having armed yourself with strength, who still the roaring of the Seas, the roaring of their waves and the turmoil of their nations, the whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders where mourning dawns. Where evening fades, you call forth songs of Joy will stop there. God shows his. Power and his strength throughout the world. And the world can be crazy. Sometimes so much happens. It can be crazy good, but there's just a ton. Of stuff going on. It can be crazy bad where it feels like there there's war or conflict. Or just bad things happening. But God's strength and his power is over all of it. He provides A stability that only he can. There's talk in the Psalm of of strong mountains that could tumble and oceans with waves and currents that could rage. God can stabilize all of it. He writes the wrongs that cause the chaos. Right. He supports everything. He provides stability. To everything, even if we don't always get how he's doing and or see how it's working, I have some fun. Lower back issues, have some arthritis in my lower back and I went to see a physical therapist about it and talking to him about it and knew I was going to get exercises right to help deal. With that. And I was actually very interested in at first a little confused because the the exercises and the strengthening work he gave me to do wasn't geared at my lower back at all. It was in my hips and in my abs and in my

hamstrings and everything around my lower back and he said what we need do is help that lower back stabilize by strengthening everything around it. Right. We're going to get those other muscles stronger, keep them more stable, which then helps your back be more stable. So see, God may not fix the chaos directly. In your life or in the world? But he also works around it. He might be working on all the pieces around it, strengthening those, stabilizing those in his way that then will help whatever that main part of. The chaos is. So have you seen God's strength and stability somewhere this year? How have you seen it? Man, I still love that word. Stability from God. I think that's something I know in my life. I need things just be stable, right? So where have you seen it? As you look inside yourself, you look out into the world. Where have you seen God provides strength and stability because the amount of strength it takes to be a stabilizing force in the world is crazy. But God is just there. God is that crazy amount of strength and stability. So God provided Grace this year, God provided stability and strength. This year it's like the last piece Verses 9 through 13 of. Psalm 65. Says you care for the land and water it. You enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain. For so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges. You soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty and your carts overflow with abundance. Grasslands of the wilderness overflow the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks, and the valleys are mantled with grain. They shout for joy and sing. God pours out. Blessings. The imagery here is that of abundance, of excess of overflow. And in the order of the Psalms. This comes after everything in the song, so he offers the forgiveness and the grace and his stabilizing power. And if that wasn't enough. Him doing that wasn't enough. Now he shows care. My blessing you. God cares, even after. All of that. He's. I'm mad that you need a forgiveness. He's not too tired after showing his strength. He still shows care after all that. Because he cares about you. He wants to give. You more and more. So how is God cared for? How has God blessed you now? Might not be that you pulled a winning lottery ticket or anything like that this year. But he did care for you. Look back and think, man, how? Did God care for me? Where did God bless your life this year? And it can be big or small. Don't he gate? That thing where you just saw God really come through. And take you to that next level. Don't skip over that part. We want to see God's blessings in our lives. Right. We want to ask for forgiveness and grace and see him as a stabilizing force and and power. But don't skip over the blessings he's given. Because when we do, the response is to celebrate. Celebrate who God is in your life and how we care for you. Maybe you're getting ready to celebrate tonight with some type of New Year's bash. I will not be awake when the new year turns. I guarantee I will be asleep. But as you get ready, maybe it's ring in the new year. However, you're gonna do it whether it's at midnight or it's at 8:30. You're 5:00 or whatever you want to do it, or 11:00 central with the East Coast ball drop. I don't know. Pick one. As you get ready to celebrate, look back. At what God has done this year? And make that part of your celebration. See God's grace in your life and do it before midnight tonight. Do it this year. Still look back at this year and see God's grace where he forgave and where you might still need forgiveness. See the prayers, he answered. Maybe he didn't answer in the way you expect. But he still answer. And then see God's strength and how he was stabilizing force in your life and in the world. Remember, he doesn't withhold his strength. He has. Enough of it. To go around OK, you might need a lot of strength. Somebody else. Does I do? He's got enough of it. To go around. And then see how. God has cared for you. Look at that. How has he given you his version of abundance? How has he blessed you this year? Celebrate that. Take stock of it. Write it down. And think about it, it doesn't matter. But don't get to midnight and turn into the year and you think back on that from this year cause I really want us to to see what God has done. In all of our lives this past year. As we move into the new Year, so we gotta go on and I feel like it's kind of this high note, this energetic,

hopefully celebratory note into the next year in our relationship with God. And we're going to end with a song here in just a minute. That has to do with God's faithfulness, and that's something that will look back on how God was faithful this whole year and how God's also going to be faithful in the next year to come. So I think it's a great song so I just want to pray. And then we'll sing this song, and then you can ring in your new hearing. God, I thank you for today that again that we were able to gather just watching this video. It's at different times, different places. It doesn't matter. God, that's what's so cool is. As Christians, God, as followers of you, we can come together. And we can we can all hear the same thing. We can. You can experience you no matter how far apart we are. So I pray that as we wrap up this year, regardless of what we're doing. That we would look back and we would see your grace, we would see your strength. God, we would see your care and your blessings, and we thank you so much for that. God, we thank you that you were faithful this past year. God, that you're going to be faithful and gracious and strong and caring in this coming. And your name.