

Longing for Dependability & Freedom

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[0 : 0 0] Father, your word sometimes frightens us, and your word also, Father, sometimes awakens in us or helps us to recognize longings that we have that we didn't recognize or maybe had forgotten that we had.

We ask, Father, that these healing and saving words of Mark's gospel, that your Holy Spirit would bring them deep into our hearts, that they might speak into our hearts, that they might speak to our fears and speak to our longings, that we might know that Jesus is the Savior of the world and that his salvation and his lordship, Father, is only for our freedom and our great good.

So, Father, please do this gentle but powerful work in our lives. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

I don't know what it is. I seem to have a bit of a frog in my throat. I don't know what it's from. Some of you know this, or maybe you've forgotten, maybe you've heard it many, many times.

I haven't told about that much, but if you speak to me after coffee time or if you have a meeting with me, one of the things that can throw people off is that just you're the one speaking to me.

[1 : 2 8] I stand like this a lot. And in fact, if you were going for a walk with me and wanted to talk with me, I would stop you and make sure that you walked on my left.

And the reason is that this coming, I think it's July, it'll be three years ago this July, I got a bit of an ear infection. And being a guy, I just thought it would just go away by itself.

I didn't have to get anything for it. But then one day, I started to have a little bit of a vertigo. And those of you who would, vertigo is this, I don't know how many of you have experienced, it's this weird experience where you're standing completely and utterly still, but the room is moving like this.

And then shortly after that, I got it really, I got it so bad, I literally couldn't walk. I literally could not stand up straight unless I was holding on to something.

Like literally, I couldn't. And the room is spinning very, very, very, very fast. And of course, if you have that experience, another thing that goes along with it is nausea and the desire to vomit.

[2 : 3 7] And I won't go any further with these symptoms. You've got sufficient data. So at this point in time, even a dumb male like myself realizes I maybe should see a doctor about this and get some medicine.

So we get some Gravol first. So I don't want to be throwing up all of the time. We go to a walk-in clinic. This is during the COVID time. So, you know, they take my temperature and everything before they let me into the waiting room to make sure I don't have COVID, you know, the symptoms and all that screening.

And the doctor listens, looks in my ear, gives me some medication and, you know, tells me it should all be cleared up in a couple of days.

Well, you know, a couple of days later, I'm still struggling with the vertigo. It's not nearly as severe and it's now a little bit episodic. But I still have these times when the room will just spin.

And so I go back to him and tell him that the drugs didn't work. And he looks in my ear.

[3 : 44] It was a different doctor. He looks in my ear because it's the same walk-in clinic. And he looks in my ear and said, no, no, it's all cleared up. And then I said, but I'm still having, like, first of all, here's another thing.

You have, like, right now, I don't normally notice it, but I always have a very, very, very loud ringing in my right ear all the time. Like, it's always there. Most of the time I'm not, but just, I don't think about it.

So I said to him, I'm still having some vertigo problems, et cetera. And that's when I discovered that there's this very rare virus that will piggyback on an outer ear virus and penetrate into the inner ear and basically destroy part of the hearing and balancing mechanisms of your ear.

And so he informed me that I was now, for the rest of my life, going to have severe hearing impairment in my right ear, which was a real shock. Severe hearing impairment in my right ear for the rest of my life.

You go from having a good hearing to that in just, remember, that's maybe why I was thinking about that colic, for those of you who were here. A tiny little virus that you can't even see can change your life in an instant.

[4 : 55] He ended up telling me the good thing is about the way the brain works, that the eyes eventually can cover for the loss of, because basically my right ear is next to useless for balance.

But the eyes take over the function and the brain gets rewired. And so I'm fine. But one of the things about the whole experience, and all of us have our own different health, many of us have different health things that happened.

We expect the world to be a certain way. And when that, the world isn't just a certain way, or we expect our bodies to be able to do, you know, certain types of things.

And when those things just go from us, it really hits us at a very deep level. Like, it's not just that you're dealing with the fact that the room will spin all the time.

And, like, you lose your confidence in the world. I, it took me a while to feel comfortable to drive a car. It took me vastly longer to feel comfortable to get on a bicycle.

[5 : 59] It took me a while to feel comfortable about exercising again, because you're just not sure if your body is going to just get completely and utterly, is going to let you down. Now, I mention all of this because, you see, I think one of the things about us human beings is that we have a longing that we're not conscious of having.

We have some longings that we're not conscious of having. And, and the Bible actually speaks to this longing all the time. But often when the Bible speaks to this longing and this need, it does so in a way that frightens us.

Like, paradoxically, we get frightened when we see the doctrine in the Bible. But we need to understand that the Bible is opening us up to making us more fully human and, and to recognize that we have this longing and this need that we often don't recognize.

Anyway, the Bible is just very wise. So let's look at this story, and it's going to come to us in a very helpful way, in a way that's going to frighten us at first. But actually, if we just spend some time looking at it, it's actually very wise and very helpful.

And so let's look. So please turn in your Bibles, because we're preaching through the Gospel of Mark and the ancient biography of Jesus. It's Mark chapter 14, verse 12 to 21.

[7 : 22] And we're going to begin by looking at verse 12. Here's how it goes. Oh, and just in terms of the context of the story, the context of the story, it's now come to, you know, in a sense, you're now counting down the minutes almost before Jesus is going to die.

If you're reading the story for the first time, that's a spoiler alert. But those who are Christians know that it's now come down. You can almost count it in terms of minutes and hours and minutes.

And just before this, to really set the stage, we know that the religious and cultural and intellectual and political and community elites have united around the fact that they had to get this inconvenient Jew murdered.

And the means of that murder has been presented to them because one of Jesus' closest friends, who's actually lived with him for three years, goes and agrees to betray him so that this inconvenient Jewish man by the name of Jesus will be crucified.

And that's what's just going on beforehand, as well as this weird, odd story that we looked at about the woman anointing Jesus' bodies for burial. So that's what's just happened.

[8 : 38] And now the story continues. Verse 12. I keep messing up that sentence.

Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover? So that's the question. Now, for some of us, maybe not in this room, maybe some of you watching online, we get a bit freaked out with the idea that the lamb's going to get killed.

I'll talk about that a little bit more in a moment. It's just, I mean, one of the things, it's really, when I was in my rural parish, nobody would get freaked out over that because everybody killed their own animals to eat them. But in a country, like in a city like Ottawa, I don't know, I guess we just think factories produce ham and the chicken and the beef that we eat.

But we'll return to it. But here's actually the bigger thing that's going on here. It's a very, very common problem. Two summers ago, we went to visit somebody who had a cottage.

They'd rented a cottage way out past Calabogie. Like way out, like, you know, half an hour, 40 minutes into nowhere beyond Calabogie. And as we're driving there and we're a bit late and everything like that, and so I'm frustrated with being a bit late.

[9 : 57] And the gas gauge somewhere along the way there hits the, you know, the warning light, the little light to say that the fuel is low. And I look, I don't know how much we can have. And I say, yeah, well, we'll make it there, no problem.

And so we make it there. And we have a really, really good time. You know, swim and, you know, talk and eat and all of that type of stuff. Have supper, swim some more. And, you know, it's starting to get dark, you know, 9 o'clock or whatever, or 10 at 9.30.

It's time to head home. And then I mentioned to the guys that we were staying with about us, you know, where's a good gas station? And they said, gas station? Open?

Out here? At 9.30 at night? On a weekday? Well, there's 24-hour gas stations near where I live in Ottawa.

So we now have this anxious drive back. One of those anxious drives where you do a lot of prayer. You're searching.

[10 : 58] You're multitasking. I'm just, my main task is to drive slower than I usually do to maintain maximum gas mileage from the vehicle. And I worry and I pray.

And Louise is searching on the phone for possible gas stations and all of that. And we're just worried. Just worried. Like, where are we going to find a gas station?

Out here. And then we do, you know, probably on fumes. Jesus, maybe in heaven I'll find out that one of you folks was praying for me that night.

And God miraculously added two liters of gas to the vehicle. Because it was quite a long way before we came to a gas station. We had to go way out of our way as well to get. Anyway, what's going on here in the story is a similar problem.

And they even cover it up with their anxiety is that they're not actually, you know, we're not anxious for ourselves, Jesus. We're just anxious for you. Because they're in Jerusalem.

[11 : 59] And Jerusalem's population, because of this, like people from all over, the Jewish people from all over the Roman Empire would come to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. And so I don't know what it is. But the population is seven or eight times bigger than it normally is.

Ten times bigger than it normally is. And so there now, it's like now just, we're supposed to be eating the meal, Jesus, in like eight hours, you know, ten hours.

And we don't have a place to have the meal. And like where on earth are we going to find a place to have a meal? And so they're worried. They're worried. Because having this meal is a really, really big deal.

And it's hard for them to imagine. Most people probably would have prepared for this a long time ago. And it's now just a couple of hours away, relatively speaking. And they ask this question to Jesus. That's what's going on here.

They're worried. And so what happens? What does Jesus do? Well, he's going to answer it in a very, very puzzling way. Look what happens in verse 13.

[12 : 57] And Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city. They're just outside the city, about three kilometers away in Bethany.

Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, The teacher says, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. There, prepare for us. And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover.

Now, this is a puzzling story. And, you know, it's very interesting. I'm ancient of days. And on one level, modern people today have less problem with this than people would have 50 years ago.

And part of the reason is that we've all watched Star Wars. And so we can just picture the force, right? You have the force. And, you know, the guy with the force just says to the guard, You're not looking for this person.

[14 : 01] Or that person isn't here. And the person in the force just means they can't see or whatever. Or they're used to Harry Potter dealing with muggles. And you just wave your wand. And it all happens. Now, you know, what happened?

We don't know exactly. We don't know what it is that's going on here. We don't know how much of it's providence. We don't know how much of it's miracle. We don't know how much of it's just Jesus making his own arrangements. But there's two big ideas that you need to notice about how Jesus solves this.

There are three big ones. The first one is Jesus knows that his disciples are really anxious about this. And he doesn't say, don't be anxious about this. Like, you know, don't be a puny little weakling worried about it.

He doesn't speak like that. He doesn't demean them. They have a valid need and they have a valid worry. And Jesus doesn't look down his nose at him.

It's a very important thing for us Christians. I mean, one of the things that's hard for people outside the Christian faith to understand is that for people who enter deeply into knowing the gospel and knowing Jesus, one of the things that's hard for people outside of that to understand is how deeply emotionally satisfying and helpful the Christian faith is to know that you have a Savior who cares for your needs, who doesn't despise them.

[15 : 22] The second thing which is important about this little story is to help us to understand that Jesus is a believing, observant Jewish man. Now, we live in a society where anti-Semitism is on the increase.

And there are many parts in the world that are anti-Semitism is a defining part of their culture. And it's very easy for us as Christians to want to downplay the Jewishness of Jesus, but we should never downplay the Jewishness of Jesus, just as we should never be anti-Semitic.

But this story is very clearly showing that Jesus is a believing, observant Jewish man. And as a believing, observant Jewish man, he wants to keep this very important Jewish feast, which has been mandated by the Tanakh, by the Torah.

He wants to do it. And he does. He keeps it. And the third thing, before we move on, is that this shows, this is part of the general thing which is going on in these whole chapters to show that Jesus isn't afraid.

And he's not like a pin, you know, a ball in a pinball machine. He's not just sort of being batted around by forces, you know, his disciples are batting him this way, and the disciples are, and the religious leaders are batting him this way, and the Roman authorities are batting him this way, and his fears are batting him.

[16 : 48] No, no, no, no, no. Jesus is on mission. Those of you with a military background, he's on mission. And he's not being distracted, and he's in control. We're not told the mechanisms of his control, but he's very clearly in control.

He's not frightened, pushed around. He's in control. And so he has this all worked out for them.

And so the disciples go, and just so you know, I mean, in the background, what this means is the two guys go, and they buy a lamb, and the lamb is sacrificed the appropriate way, and then it's all, in a sense, butchered, and they cook it, and somebody else is buying all the grain and the food and the vegetables and all of that stuff.

Somebody else is going off to buy the wine, and they're preparing the food that has to be prepared just while somebody's cooking the lamb, and they get the cooked lamb cooked by the right time, and the food is prepared by the right time, and the wine is prepared by the right time, and it's all in a room that has the proper table and rugs, and it's all there waiting, and then that's exactly what happens very, very next, which is evening comes, and it's time for the feast.

Look at what they say here in verse 17. And when it was evening, he came with the twelve, and as they were reclining at table and eating, now here it takes a very, very sudden and surprising turn.

[18 : 24] Jesus said, Truly I say to you, or verily I say to you, or Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.

Now, there's a couple of things here that helps us to enter into the story. I don't know if any of you have had an opportunity to go to Jerusalem in modern-day Israel, modern-day Jerusalem.

And if you have, and if you ever go to Israel, you need to be in Jerusalem on a Friday and a Saturday. You've got to be there. Don't go to see Jerusalem and miss Friday and Saturday because it's so stunning.

There's this flurry of activity on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday, a Friday night, the whole city stops. Like, you could go to roads that the rest of the week have four lanes each way and are just busy with cars going as fast as they can and honking when people in front of them aren't going as fast as they can.

And you could probably just go and play with those little kids and play catch in the middle of that road and not have to worry about anything happening because the whole city sleeps. Now, I mention this because it happens quite suddenly at sundown.

[19 : 52] And then the other thing to be there is just shortly after sundown on Saturday, so just sundown on Saturday, all of a sudden, within like a half hour, it seems as the traffic is there, the tables are out, the cafes and the bars are full, and the whole city wakes up.

It's a really stunning thing to experience. So here's part of the thing, which is going to be really important to understand the text and understand the things that are going to happen in the next weeks, is that Jewish people do something, they don't have their day begin at midnight, and they're not like Canadians who think of the day as beginning when they wake up in the morning.

For Jewish people, day begins with sundown. The day begins with sundown. The day goes from sundown to sundown. That means that what you're going to see from this moment on, right through to almost the end of chapter 15, all takes place in one day in how Jewish people understand the day.

You're going to see the Passover meal. You're going to see going to the garden. You're going to see Jesus being captured. You're going to see Jesus being tried. You're going to see the Roman authorities passing their judgment on him.

You're going to see him being whipped. You're going to see him being dragged through the streets. You're going to see him stripped naked and crucified. And you're going to see him die. And all of that happens on the first day of the Passover, the way the Jewish people understand things.

[21 : 19] All of that happens in one 24-hour period. All of it. One 24-hour period. And the other thing to understand, which is going to be very important, is that it's, you know, and maybe your families are different than ours, but, you know what, in our family, I guess, you know, people would have gone to a Christmas service, but then quite a few hours later, usually, we have the Christmas meal, and, you know, we have family, and sometimes friends, and all over.

You know, and the same thing with Easter. You know, most of my family, not all of them, you know, lamentably, because they're not all practicing Christians, believing Christians, but, you know, most of them will have gone to church or something like that, and then they come for the meal.

But the meal is just a meal. The meal is just appetizers and a meal. But this isn't the way that it's going to work for the Jewish people when they celebrate this Passover meal. The Passover meal has four stages, and in a sense, intermingled with the meal, as some of the food is very, very symbolic, and part of the whole purpose of the meal is to recount this wonderful, miraculous, powerful act of deliverance.

And the other part of it is looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, and it's all built into a series of readings and responses that are acted out during the course of each of the stages of the meal.

And what they remember, you know, if you think about it for a second, like, you know, if you had been a slave, if you had been a slave, and one day you were set free from slavery, you would probably remember that day that you were freed from slavery for the rest of your life.

[23 : 14] And you would tell your kids, and you would tell your grandkids, it was just recently Holocaust Remembrance Day.

And of course now, there's not that many Jewish people left. They'd be very old who survived that. But if you meet Jewish people and you get talking to them, many of them will tell you about the family members that they had that they lost in the Holocaust.

And some of them will tell you about the day they were freed from the camps. My very, very influential man in my life as a young child, like, you know, like 10 to 12 or 9 to 12 or something like that, was a really very, very, very, very fine man.

I grew up in a suburb of Montreal. And I still, I've shared it with you before, but I still remember very clearly the day. I'm like 11 years old. And you know, 11 year olds, nothing, no offense to you young kids, but we don't really know much, right?

And I'm in the front seat sitting right beside him and his wife, in the middle of him and his wife. There's some kids in the back. They don't do things like this nowadays, but they did things back then. And I say to the man, why do you have those numbers tattooed on your hand?

[24 : 32] And the man, a bit of a tear in his eye. And his wife said, that's the number he had from the camps. And he'd been in Auschwitz. Very, very fine man.

And so you see, what Passover, what this Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about, is it's the Jewish people remembering, now many, many, many centuries later, how they were in bondage, in slavery, in Egypt.

And God, in his grace and favor to them, did a mighty act of deliverance. And his act of deliverance was on one hand, an act of judgment, against the slave owners.

It was an act of judgment, on the slave owners. And the way, that the Jewish people would be spared, that general judgment on the slave owners, was very simple.

They were to take an innocent lamb. They were to put their hands upon the lamb's head, so that the lamb represented them, and not just the householder would do it, for the entire family, and for the neighbors.

[25 : 43] And then that lamb was to die in their place. And some of the blood of the lamb, that has died in their place, is put on the lintel of the door, on the door frame. And the story goes, that as the angel of God's judgment, passes over Egypt, to exercise judgment over the Egyptians, when he sees the blood on the door, he passes over, and they are spared.

And the next, even that night, as the wailing goes throughout the land of Egypt, as they are judged for their cruelty, of their slavery, the cry goes out, to send those Jewish people away.

And God, by a mighty act of deliverance, takes his people, and in grace and mercy, they are delivered from slavery into freedom. And that is what the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is all about.

For seven days, they remember this. It's told in story form, on Friday night. And it would still be present, in all their minds. While all of the things, in this story now, to the end of chapter 15, the betrayal of Jesus, the death of Jesus, upon the cross, all of these things, it's all part of their story, their mental imagery, as Jesus dies upon the cross.

And what we see here with this, remember, the question is about the betrayal. What we see here, is that they are in the third part of the meal. The story of the deliverance, has now been primarily told.

[27 : 17] After this, is going to primarily be a brief time, of longing, for the Messiah, to come. longing, for the Messiah, to come.

And there he is in Jerusalem. Poor, that he has to borrow, another man's room, to celebrate the Passover.

And he says, one of you will betray me, who is eating with me.

So how does the room respond? Well, let's see. Verse 19. They began to be sorrowful, and say to him, one after another, is it I?

They could tell by the way, that Jesus said it, he must have said it, with some emotion, it wasn't flippant, it wasn't a joke. You know, it's not like maybe one of us say, I think I'm going to out and kill myself.

[28 : 34] And we know, we normally think that's not going to, people don't mean it literally. They obviously realized, in the solemnity of the moment, that this, he means it. One of you are going to betray me. And so they say, is it I?

Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? And now we bump to get against this part.

Remember I began by saying, that the Bible has this very, it's not just this story, but it's part of the whole fabric of the Bible, and part of the whole fabric of the gospel, a very wise way of understanding, that we have longings that we don't recognize, needs that we don't recognize, that we're not thankful for, that, that, that, but often when we meet it in the Bible, we, we find it off putting.

Well, look what happens. Verse nine, verse 20. He said to them, it is one of the 12, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.

And just sort of pause here. One of the things that you see in this is that Jesus, the room that Jesus separated the last supper with, wasn't just with him in the 12. I mean, if you go back and you look at what the Torah, the Tanakh says about it, is you're to invite your neighbors.

[29 : 45] And we know that from other parts of Mark's gospel, that there were women who accompanied Jesus. And so we don't know if there were 20 or 30 or 50 or 80 people in the room, but there's lots of people in the room.

There's probably kids. Kids played a very important part in the Passover meal. And Jesus welcomed children. So there were probably maybe some neighbors. Maybe they came across some people who didn't have a place to celebrate the Passover.

And they were very worried. And they said, come and join with us. You know, bring your kids. Yeah, bring your kids. But we're looking forward to have kids ask some of the questions. And so the whole room, you know, whether it's 30 people or 50 or 80, they're all bothered by Jesus's question.

And now Jesus narrows it down. No, no, no, no. It's not, it's not you, Mary. You know, it's not you, Salome. It's not you, cute little kid who's going to betray me.

Maybe they're thinking of kid will say something that will get the Romans on them. He says, it's going to be one of the 12. In fact, it's this very, you know, right?

[30 : 42] It's, you know, it's like they have a common bowl of hummus and a common bowl of tabbouleh and a common bowl of lamb shish kebab.

And they have pita bread to scoop it up. And it's one who's so close to Jesus that there he's in there using him and Jesus are scooping from the same hummus bowl.

That's how close it is. The betrayer. It is one of the 12, verse 20, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.

Read verse 21 again.

For the son of man goes as it is written of him. But woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.

[31 : 49] Judas is there. We know that from, this is recounted in all four of the ancient biographies that we, eyewitness biographies that we have of Jesus.

And we know, if you look at all four of them together, that Judas is there for this bit. Judas asks, is it I? Judas is sorrowful. And Judas is the betrayer.

The first thing you see here is that this is actually a moment where Jesus offers Judas an opportunity to repent.

Jesus doesn't out him, doesn't try to shame him into it. Judas' freedom is preserved. But there's this moment with a very solemn thing that the man who betrays me, what is it he says again?

Woe to that man. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. You know, when Judas appears before the judgment seat of God, he can't say that he didn't realize he was betraying Jesus.

[32 : 59] He can't say that he didn't realize it was serious. He will have no excuse. He was warned and offered a chance to repent. Another thing you see here in this text is this mystery of evil.

You know, I've talked about it before, but it doesn't get talked about in our culture. Our culture is all mixed up and wrong about this. It's just all mixed up and wrong.

And in fact, you know, only the Bible understood in light of the gospel and only the gospel understood in light of the Bible actually talks about the reality that human beings choose evil.

And that is a feature of what it means to be human. It's a feature of reality. It's a feature that can't be explained, but that explains other things.

In our culture, we're all confused about that. We say, well, you know, it's because his mother didn't love him enough, or it's because his dad worked too hard, or because his dad died when he was too young, or it's, you know, it's because he's working class, or it's because he's of this social class, or it's because he doesn't have enough money, or it's because he has too much money, or it's because he's not educated, or it's because he's been educated the wrong way, or it's because his dad spanked him, or it's because his dad didn't spank him, or, and you can keep going and going and going and going, and our culture is fundamentally confused and mixed up about the fact that human beings choose evil.

[34 : 37] I choose to do wrong things. And yes, you can say, well, George, one of the reasons you're getting really angry is because you're hungry.

Hangry. I get hangry. Some of you do too. But that doesn't, that might explain a couple little things, but it doesn't explain the fact that I choose. It doesn't even, that I allow the hunger to make me more angry.

There's just this mystery. Why did Judas do it? Well, I don't know. Because you see, the fact is that human beings choosing evil is what explains other things, and other things don't explain the fact that human beings choose evil, but human beings choose evil.

Not all the time, not everything we choose all the time, but we do. And you know what? To our Muslim friends, Islam doesn't, the Koran does not explain this.

It doesn't deal with it. To our Buddhist and Hindu friends, your scriptures do not really deal with this and explain it. The only system that deals with it and explains it and has hope for it is the Bible understood in terms of the gospel and the gospel understood in terms of the Bible.

[35 : 54] That's the way human beings are. But there's something else which is going on here. You'll see this wonderful phrase, for the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him. One of the things that we see happening here is this ancient, powerful river of God's love, unstoppable, is bringing to this moment where God's love is going to provide one who will stand in our stead so that the evil that we have done that should be judged, that he will be judged and suffer the penalty in our place.

And Jesus is in control. He's not being forced to do it. On one hand, we have this river of love that comes from Jesus, that that's what he's moving to do. But he's not just doing it on his own because he decided it needed to be done, that there's this ancient river of love, this ancient river of truth that's coming to this moment where God, in his sovereign purposes, from the ages and ages and ages to go, is acting, and he's not been deflected, he's not been stopped, he's not just acting like a pinball machine, he's not acting on a whim, that this is part of the deep, sovereign love and truth and purposes of God, and that Jesus, in his full power of his freedom, is also at one with this, and it's God's mighty, eternal act to save us.

Remember, it will be on all of the minds that what has delivered human beings, Jewish people, from slavery is the slaying of a lamb, and it is Jesus dying on that day of holy remembrance, that Christians throughout the ages would understand that he is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, not just for Jewish people, that he is God's provision for all human beings in slavery, both in slavery to economic powers, to political powers, to addiction, and most of all to sin and to death, that he is the one who is God's provision to deliver us from slavery into freedom.

It is him. You see, we have this wonderful interplay. See, what do we desire? We don't just, you know, in our culture, what we desire, we don't say, I desire the world to be more fixed.

[38 : 44] No, nobody says that. We want to be more free. But if you just have freedom in a world that's not fixed, it would be like some black mirror. Those of you who are familiar with that British series, some black mirror, horror, hell, where you never know if things are just going to change or the direction of gravity is going to change or gravity is just going to stop or whatever.

You know, some of us might like, excuse me, the freedom of being able to dance when there's nobody at home. Not very good dancers, but we like singing or we like dancing.

And if we ever thought somebody came home, we'd quickly stop, right? But we love the freedom of it. But we wouldn't love the freedom if every time we took a leap, we didn't know if gravity was going to continue to work.

I don't realize how much I need the world to be fixed until I get a minuscule microscopic virus that destroys my right inner ear and causes the room to twirl all the time.

And then I realize part of what I desire is something fixed. And it's only when there's something fixed that I can be free.

[40 : 09] And that's what the gospel provides. There's this sovereign, unstoppable river of God's love and of God's truth and of God's promises.

And it is within that that I am free. He provides the freedom in the person of the Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the one who stands in my place to be that Lamb.

And his innocence comes to me and my guilt goes on him. And he is that one whose blood means that God's wrath is set aside. It's within that that I am free.

We need the fixed and we need freedom. And it's only the solid and the fixed that can give freedom just as it's only God's sovereignty that gives us freedom.

And you know, when we understand this as it becomes more deep and real to our heart, it encourages us to pray. We have this freedom to pray. It's part of the dignity of causality that God has given us that we can pray to our Heavenly Father in Heaven and say, watch over my child as he drives or help me with my financial problems or help me with my health problems or grant me wisdom and direction for this.

[41 : 34] And we can pray knowing that God is sovereign, that there's something fixed and it's within that context of him being sovereign and powerful and in control that we can pour out our hearts to pray.

Knowing that our sovereign God hears our prayers and takes them into account. It's within this context of the sovereignty of God and the freedom that comes from the gospel that we can face hard things about ourselves, that we can do hard things in the world.

It is within this context that we can share the gospel. Knowing that all I can do is just tell people about Jesus and it's God's sovereign purposes that work in their soul to bring them to a saving faith in Christ.

Thank you to stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we thank you that it is part of your sovereign rule over the world that you have created us to be free.

[42 : 44] We give you thanks and praise that our freedom is real. Our moral responsibility is real. We give you thanks and praise, Father, that when we used our freedom to choose evil and to choose pride and self-centeredness that you did not turn your back on us but that you, even back in the very, very depths of human history and the beginnings of human life, that you promised that there would be a way, that you would do what we could no longer do ourselves because we had chosen evil and changed ourselves so that now the choosing of evil at times is a fixed part of our nature that cannot completely be erased on this side of the grave.

That you, in your love and mercy sauce, that you provided a means in the person of your Son after centuries of promise that he would be the one who would be in our stead, that he would be the one to deliver us from slavery and bondage.

We give you thanks and praise that you have led us to a faith and trust in Christ. And, Father, if there are those here who do not know that they know Jesus as Savior and Lord but feel the attraction that wish that this would be true, may your Holy Spirit move and work in their hearts that they might turn to you and call out to Jesus to be their Savior and Lord.

And, Father, for us who know Jesus as Savior and Lord, we ask, Father, that you bring these great profound truths of your word deeper and deeper into our hearts so that we might desire to pray, that we might know that in you we have the strength to do hard things and face hard questions and that there are no little people or little concerns for you that we can pour out our heart in prayer and do things for your honor and glory and to share the gospel for others.

And we ask, Lord, that you would bring these truths deeply home to us. And we thank and praise you, Father, that your desire for us is to so know that you are Savior, that you are Lord, and that Jesus is our Savior, that we grow in freedom.

[44 : 41] We give you thanks and praise, Father, that that is your desire for us, for each one who knows Jesus as Savior and Lord and now has you as our Father in heaven. Is it your desire for us is greater freedom, not just freedom from, but freedom to, freedom to be generous, freedom to forgive, freedom to do hard things, freedom to show compassion, freedom to seek justice, freedom.

Father, we give you thanks and praise that your heart for us is freedom from and freedom to. And we ask and thank all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Yep. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. fungi to out. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.