

Psalm 143

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Preacher: Josiah Haynes

[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

My name is Josiah. If you don't know me yet, I'm a ministry intern here at the church. Today, Pastor George is on holiday and he'll be back next week. So this is the last week that you're stuck with me. We're back to Pastor George's wonderful preaching next week. But before we enter into this sermon, let's just ask God and pray to him this morning as we begin. Father in heaven, Lord, we thank you that you are a great God. We thank you that you are just. We thank you that you hear us. We thank you that you are our savior and God if we put our trust and our faith and trust in you. We thank you, God, that you hear our prayers for his sake. And we pray that this morning that you would be glorified. Help us to soak up the words of your promises this morning. Renew our faith in you.

[2:08] And we pray that you would help us and equip us to trust in Christ all the more and to walk in renewed obedience for his glory. We pray these things in his name. Amen.

Well, whatever people believe about God, just about everybody prays in certain times, especially when people are in trouble. But Psalm 143, which Hudson read for us and which I'll be preaching on this morning, it forces us to ask a question. It forces us to ask, why should God hear us when we pray?

Why should God hear us when we pray? Maybe we don't think about that. Maybe we take that for granted. You know, maybe for some of us, maybe the answer to that in our inclination in our heart is to say, well, of course God would hear me. But maybe for other people, when they ask that question, maybe the inclination of their heart is to say, if God knows me, if God knew me, there is no way that he would hear me. There's no way that he would want me to come into his presence. Of course God would not hear me. And so whichever side of that you fall on this morning, Psalm 143, I think it has for us a wonderful hope. It has for us a message that we need to hear. It has grace for us.

And so please turn in your Bibles to the 143rd Psalm. And if you don't have a Bible, there's some free blue and white ones down there at the front. Feel free to just come on down and grab one. It would be great if you open it up, because we're just going to go through it. And it would be great if you could have that with you to see, is what I'm saying faithful to the text? Because at the end of the day, you know, I'm just a guy, but the power behind preaching is God speaking. And if you can see that, if you can see it from the word, then I think that would be a wonderful encouragement to you.

[4:05] So turning to Psalm 143, let's read the first verse. Psalm 143, a Psalm of David. Hear my prayer, O Lord. Give ear to my pleas for mercy. In your faithfulness, answer me. In your righteousness. You can hear in David a tone of desperation. His enemies are coming after him.

And he asks God to have mercy and to intervene on his behalf. And he thinks that God should. And he thinks that God should because he knows that God is righteous, that God always does what's right.

And at this point, we could say, so far so good. Great. God is going to hear me. It's all going to work out for me. What a relief. But verse 2 surprises us. Enter not into judgment with your servant. For no one living is righteous before you. In a courtroom, I think this is called an admission of guilt. David is saying that he doesn't deserve God's help. And he says no one deserves God's help. And the implication here is that I don't deserve God's help. I'm not. I'm not righteous.

And neither are any of us. This is a recognition of a universal guilt before God. And so my first point is that God does not save because we are righteous. The Bible says, God says, that no one is good.

But if God is a fair judge, then how on earth can guilty people like David in this scenario, people like you and me who are guilty and we ought to be sentenced, how can we go to the judge and expect not to get a conviction, but instead to get help in our need? But David asks God to relate to him beyond the realm of law. And yet somehow in a way that's consistent with God's righteousness, but also even because God is righteous. That's a mystery that is going to be worked out as we move through this psalm by the end of it. But first we need to go on a journey with David. Next he tells God what's going on. What's going on in his life that's bringing him to this desperate cry?

[6:31] Hear my prayer. And he continues, for the enemy has pursued my soul. He has crushed my life to the ground. He has made me sit in darkness like those long dead. Therefore, my spirit faints within me.

My heart within me is appalled. These are pretty heavy words. And this is probably happening if you know your Old Testament. When Saul is after him with the army, he's been driven from his home. He's been driven into the wilderness. There's false accusations against him. His friends have abandoned him. He's alone. He's in danger. He's in darkness.

He has no hope for the future ahead. And he seems, it's as if he's been forgotten by everyone he once knew. And so when he says, my spirit faints within me, commentators who know the original language, who have that background, what they say is that there's an extra nuance here that he's saying that his soul has become numb. That everything he's gone through in his sufferings, it's traumatized his soul and driven it to a numbness to the point now where he's almost ready to just give up on life. That he is losing, he's losing the will to continue. And he is to the point of he's, he is not quite there, but he is almost to the point of despairing of life itself. And this is brutally honest. This is super raw. And you know, it's good news that the Bible is not superficial. It talks about real hard things, real honest things. And David models for us an honesty when we go towards God that we can and should be honest.

We can often sometimes think that on our prayers we stay superficial level and maybe, maybe we kind of assume a sort of a pious kind of attitude. But David is brutally honest and he tells him, I'm at the point of real despair.

[8:39] And while it might be for a different reason, maybe you've been here before, maybe you will get to a place like this in the future for a different reason, but whatever your circumstances, I'm thankful that this verse is in the Bible because it shows us, my second point is that God's greatest servants were tempted to despair. And if your soul is tempted into a despair that life is just extremely difficult right now, maybe it's because of your sin and you feel like you've got a guilty conscience, your sins are weighing on you, and you feel trapped, you feel rejected by God, you feel horrible about yourself or what you've done, or maybe it's different. Maybe for some other reason, life is just really hard right now. That you've got, you're in good company. You've, David is like this as well.

Job, Job, even our Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane, said that his soul is sorrowful even to the point of death. So I want to tell you that if you're in this place, that you're not a bad Christian. You know, we can often think that Christians got to be chipper, you know, and super positive all the time and optimistic. But the psalm shows us that it's okay if you're not in that place. If you're in a dark place, you're not a bad Christian. You have company there. We have a Savior in Christ who has been there and who understands and can sympathize and who prays with you. But what do you do when you find yourself in that darkness? Well, verse 5 shows us what David does, and it models for us a way for us to respond in that. He says, I remember the days of old. I meditate on all you have done. I ponder the work of your hands.

I stretch my hands out to you.

My soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Notice that when David is tempted to despair, he, first he remembers, and then he meditates, and then he ponders, or he reflects on all that God has done in the days of old. You know, it's fantastic if we develop a habit and a pattern in our lives of regularly reading the Bible every day. We are reminded of this. This is the story of the scriptures, that God is a Savior of his covenant people. David could look back and see how God saved the people of Israel time and time again. The exodus, the times under the judges, the times in his own life, all of these things, because the scriptures show us God has proven himself in history to be a Savior.

God has proven himself to be a Savior, and he needs to remember this and to chew on this and for this to become real in his heart. He needs to know, as we need to know, that our feelings aren't the truth.

God's Word is truth. Our feelings aren't sovereign. God is sovereign. And the Bible says that God is a Savior in desperate places. And we see here such a hint of the gospel, such a model of the gospel, of all that Christ has, all that God has done to save his people time and time again. And this side of the cross, we can see that even so much more clearly. I'm reminded of the lyrics of the hymn, when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within. Upward I look, and I see him there, who made an end of all my sin. Well, point three, God's servants are renewed by remembering that God saves. Look at that last part of verse five, and notice this play on words with hands. You know, the Psalms are great, great literature. They're from God, but there's sometimes such creative elements in that that are kind of fun to see, and it helps us understand it. But look at this. It says, it's only when David grapples with the fact that God's hands save, that God reaches down into history with a strong hand, you know, a strong arm, as sometimes the Bible says, and saves. It's only then when he sees that, that God, that David rather, can reach out his hands to God in prayer with the hope that he can save. But despite all of his danger, all of his immediate danger, his prayer evolves.

[13 : 26] And David now, he's reaching out to God himself. His soul is thirsting for God like a, like as if he's in a dry and a parched land. He needs, his soul needs a renewing rain. Things are difficult. Things are hard.

And he needs God to get through it. He needs God's presence. And so he reaches out to God himself. And this is my fourth point, that God's servants don't just want God's things. They want God.

God. The Bible says that we love God because he loved us first. And that is a wonderful, wonderful truth of the gospel, that, that God is the one who takes the initiative in saving us, that we see what he, what he did for us in the acts of, of history. We see what he's done for us on the cross. And that, and we see his great love for us, that what he went through in love to save us, and our hearts are ready, and they can't help but respond. When we understand, when we truly understand that, we can't help but to respond in love. But are you only loving God because you love the things that you get from him?

Or do you love him for his own sake? Do we love God just because we like the, the sense of peace that we maybe get in our prayers and devotional lives? Do we love God only because of the benefits that we associate with salvation or the church or things like that? Or do we love God for who God is, for his own sake? Well, the psalm pivots on this. Psalms are, were often meant to be sung in liturgical worship. Maybe there's a choir, there's instruments. And then there's this word at this point in, at least in the ESV and in the original, it says *selah*. And this is probably a word for an intermission. It's a take a pause, change the band, bring out the different choir. We're going to, and when they come back, the song is going to continue, but it's going to be in a key change.

The, the, the song is still the same song, but there's new notes to be sung. There's a pivot here.

Well, verse seven begins to bridge into this. Here's what it says. Answer me quickly, O Lord, my spirit fails. And before continuing on, just, this is just a helpful point, I think, for us.

[15 : 52] I want to point out that just because David remembered God, that in his desperation, he remembers God, that God is a savior. He reaches out his hands and he, and he prays and renewed prayer.

Just because of this doesn't mean all of David's problems just went away just like that. And it doesn't mean that David right away felt better or that everything was okay in his life and he was in a place of stability and, and comfort and security or anything like that. It doesn't say that he automatically feels better. And this Psalm is not really telling us how to feel better. That's not really

its point. The message of the Bible, the message of Christianity, it's not mostly therapeutic. Now, it's true. There are things in here that are wonderful medicine for us, therapeutic in that sense. But really, at the, at the heart of it, the message is not therapeutic. It's salvific, that we need a savior, and that we have a savior. The Psalm isn't telling us how to feel better. It's telling us, where do you go to get a hope that can endure suffering?

Well, continuing on, David says, hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit, down into, you think of like a grave, down into the grave pit. Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift my soul. Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord. I have fled to you for refuge. Before David was sitting in darkness, in the, the nighttime of the soul, he's not sure if he's going to make it to the day. He says, says, if God, if you don't save soon, I'm not going to make it. But now, he's remembered God. He's gone back, and he's remembered God, that God is a faithful savior to his covenant people, and he prays, and something has changed in him, and now he believes that God will bring him safely to the morning.

[17 : 51] Now, he believes that there will be a morning. Faith is a, is a popular word in our culture, and sometimes we hear people say things like, you need to have faith. You need to just have faith, and, but it's sometimes, it's less clear always, um, what we should have faith in, and what even really is faith, to begin with. I mean, it's so important in the Christian life, we should think about what is faith. But this, this psalm gives us three pictures of what biblical faith is.

And in doing so, he also shows us why should God save him? What's his claim upon God? Well, these two go together. Verse eight, because in you I trust, because to you I lift up my soul, or the NIV, I just think puts it really nicely, help me understand it. It says, to you I entrust my life. Verse nine, I have fled to you for refuge. Save in faith, it's, it's about a trust, but it's not about a bare trust, but just about a trust in, in general. And it's not even about how much you trust. It's not even about a quantity or something like that, but it's about who you trust.

You know, it's, it's like, I think there's an old analogy that says, in some ways, faith is kind of like a rope, you know, that you're, you're holding on to. It's not just that you kind of believe, oh, this exists, but you trust. You trust that the rope you're holding on to is going to be able to support your weight, that you're not going to fall. And why can you believe that? You're not trusting in the rope. You're not trusting, you're not having faith in faith. You're having faith in the one who holds the rope. You're having faith in God who holds the rope, that you can entrust your soul to him. And when, when you're in desperation, when you're in a hard place, when you're under conviction of sin, you can run to God for refuge because you put your faith and trust in him that he can hold you, that he can hold your weight. And that's point five, that God saves those who trust in him.

But knowing that God will save him because David goes to him in faith, we see a new prayer request emerge. This is part of that key change. He says, make me know the way I should go. And jumping down to verse 10, he says, teach me to do your will for you are my God. Let your good spirit lead me on level ground. Verse six showed us that David didn't just want God to do something for him. He didn't just want something transactional out of God. He wanted, he needed salvation. He needed to be saved. Absolutely.

But he also loved God and he wanted God. And now he's out of his love for God. He wants God to teach him how to be a better servant. We saw before he says, nobody is righteous before you, God. I'm not righteous before you. I'm not a righteous servant. And now he's asking that God would teach him and help him to do his will because he wants to live in a way that pleases God. He wants to live in a way that pleases God because he loves God. The same faith that goes to God for salvation loves God and wants to live in a way that pleases him. But notice how powerful, how powerless rather, David is to actually do these things. And this is true of us as well. You know, when he says, when he says, show me the way I should go, teach me, lead me, all of these things. It's, David is acknowledging and confessing that he doesn't know the way. He doesn't know the way to do God's will or what God wants. And even if he did know it, he wouldn't, he wouldn't know how to do it. And even if he did know how, he wouldn't be able to do

[21 : 44] God's will. That he's prone to stumble. And I think that's one of the things about this text, when he asks God to lead him on level ground, it's because he knows if the ground's not level, if there's any bumps in it, I'm going to be tripping all over the place, I'm going to fall and I will not be able to stand. I won't be able to walk in your will. And we're exactly like that. I think of the hymn that says, prone to wander.

Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. And so he asks God to teach him the way that he should go. And he asks God to train him to do God's will. And finally, he asks God's Holy Spirit to lead him, to shepherd him, to hold his hand as if crossing this level ground by God's grace. And that's my sixth point that the psalm models for us, that God's servants can't serve God without God. We can't serve God without God's help.

You know, when we do good things for God, we're just giving back what God's already given to us. You know, that's a wonderful miracle of grace that if we understand that... I'm a student at Ryle there, and we read this book at one point called On the Holy Spirit by St. Basil the Great. And it's a wonderful book. And he...this is just an aside, but he was saying that there's something wonderful to see in that, that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is called the Holy Spirit. And one of the things this teaches about us is that if there's any holiness in us, it's because of the Holy Spirit, because there's gracious influence in our lives.

Everything we do for God, even if we do it for God's glory, and even if God rewards us for it, it's more...it has more of the character of a gift than it does of merit, because everything that we do for God's sake is first from him. We give to God his own.

Well, every moment of Christian existence, it depends on the prior, the present, and the future grace of God. And because of this, we can see that every moment in our relationship with God, it's characterized, frankly, by the irrelevance of what we deserve. It's rather characterized by this all-encompassing great love and graciousness of God, free and undeserved kindness to people who are not righteous, just wrapped around them in a gracious love. It's not just. It's gracious. And how is this possible? So how can we reconcile that God can save and look on us graciously when we trusted him, even though, one, God is righteous, and two, we are not? No one's righteous in God's sight. In other words, how does God's justice not break his grace? Well, I think we're back to the question of verses one and two.

[24 : 48] You know, how can we legitimately ask God to save in a way that's consistent with his justice, and not only consistent with it, but even because, like that's David's prayer, because of your righteousness? The scandal of the message of the Bible is not, how could a just God condemn me?

The scandal of the Bible is, how could a just God forgive me? How could a just God save me? How could a just God save the unjust? How could God do that for me? Well, verse 11 brings us to, starts to bring us into an answer for this, as the psalm concludes. He says, for your sake, O Lord, preserve my life. In your righteousness, bring my soul out of trouble, and in your steadfast love, you will cut off my enemies, and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant. The foundation of David's prayer, and the reason why he believes God will answer him, save him, and teach him how to do God's will, is because David knows that God has committed himself to David in a covenant relationship. It's not because David is good.

It's not because David is a particularly obedient servant. Far from it. Verse 2 says, I'm not an obedient servant. But it's because God brought David into his covenant and made him his servant when David ran to God in faith. That word steadfast love here that's mentioned, it's a word for this special, never-ending, committed love that God has towards his people. God loves everybody. God loves his people. God loves all creation. But God has a special, particular love for his people. God has, we call this a covenantal love. That there's a special obligation that God has taken upon himself to love, and no matter the sins of his people, that he will cover them with his love.

That's the love that's being talked about here. It's a covenantal love. That's the context. So what's the foundation? What's the bedrock of this relationship? Why can David go, knowing that he's, that he doesn't deserve anything from God? How can he go to God for help? Well, point seven, God saves his covenant people because he is faithful and righteous to keep his word.

[27 : 17] That God will never stop loving us in Christ because God is always faithful and righteous to keep his word, to keep his covenant. That he's committed himself to us in covenant. And he will not go against his own word. He will not go against his own character. He will not break his promises. That our status with God is absolutely secure. And it's not secure because of us. It's secure because God is right, and God has made a promise, and God will never break that promise. As sure as God is God, he will not break his promises. That he is for you if you are in Christ.

Well, that might sound good, but maybe verse 12 gets to a point here, and you see this part about God destroying David's enemies in that verse, and it doesn't really sit very well. Maybe it sounds like the Bible, this is just vindicating the Bible's all about righteous us versus the them. And what do we make of this? This doesn't sound very New Testament-ish, you know? What do we make of

this?

Well, I think the answer is really buried in this word for I am your servant. What does this mean? Well, on one level, everybody that God brings into his covenant, into his people, are his servants. On one level, I'm God's servant, and Jono's God's servant, and Hudson's God's servant, and Deborah's God's servant, and Shannon's God's servant, and we could continue. Everybody in God's covenant is his servant, and in the Old Testament, Israel is called God's servant.

But David, in particular, was a different kind of servant. All of that is true for him, but there's also something unique about him, because God chose David and anointed him to be king, to be this messianic figure for the people of God in the Old Testament, that he was set apart to be king of God's people on earth in Israel, that God would reign in Israel through David, his servant, as he tried to follow God's word, that God would reign through his appointed king.

[29 : 30] And when David's enemies, then in this psalm, when they set themselves up to try to kill David, well, then insofar as David's representing God's rule as God's appointed king, then they're declaring war against God, that they're setting themselves up against God, and against God's purposes to save. This verse is not saying that because you're a Christian, then, and your boss is mean, that God's going to smite your boss. It's not saying that we should call down fire on those that we don't like, or who are causing us pain, or something like that.

And it's not even saying that God will always save your physical life from danger, although I think this psalm models for us that we should pray for things like that. But what it is saying is it's saying that God's kingdom will never be overthrown, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against God's kingdom, that his kingdom has an everlasting foundation, that it is sure, and nothing will overthrow it. Nothing will stand in the way of God's purposes for his people. Well, maybe you're asked, well, aren't we supposed to pray for our enemies, not to pray for their destruction? And again, I think the answer is in what this servanthood means. You know, if on one hand, David's servanthood, it, his, and his kingship go together. But on the other hand, you read David's psalms, like so much of the psalter, and over and over again, you hear this refrain, hear me, O God, save me, O God, for I am your servant. Almost all the time, the context when David prays these words is, overwhelming hostility, oppression, rejection by people, desperation, and gut-wrenching suffering on David's part. But centuries later, in a time of great darkness for God's people, you know, God's people have been formed on the psalter. They've been, this is their prayer book. Israel has been formed on prayers like this from David, and they are aware of this concept of, of a servant, the servant of the Lord in suffering, that before exaltation, there's the road of the wilderness, the road of the exile, the road of suffering. And the prophet Isaiah prophesies that from the stump of David's cut-off family tree, there's going to be a branch that grows out, that God is going to raise up another, another servant of the Lord, a suffering servant. And this time, not one who's just going to come and, and save God's, the righteous, but one who will lay down his own life to save the unrighteous. One who will give his life as a ransom for many. One who, in his suffering, the wounds of the unrighteous will be healed.

And that suffering servant, that anointed one of God who would represent God and man. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, you read the book of Mark. This is Mark's thesis. This is Jesus. Jesus is the suffering servant of the Lord. Think of all that Christ endures, all the rejection and hostility he faces, all the way up to the, to the cross. Even the, the gospel text, which we read. He goes into his own city, and it should be a celebration. But God's people reject him.

[32 : 47] That he is the suffering servant rejected by man, but chosen in the sight of God, the cornerstone. That he came into this world not to preserve his life, but to lay it down for mine, to lay it down for yours. Who did not save his own soul from the trouble of the cross, but who faced death to bring us peace with God. Who in his steadfast love did not cut off his enemies, but laid down his life so that while we were still sinners, while we were still enemies, while we were running away from God, and doing our own thing, and not caring about God, and hurting the people that God loves, that he would lay down his life for us, that we might be called God's friends, and brought into his family by his grace, because this is who God is, because God is a savior. For the man Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the ultimate suffering servant of the Lord. And so why should God hear our prayers? Why should God save you? Why should God save me? Well, everybody needs to make a choice at some point. God will not hear you because you are good, because you're not, because I'm not. God will not be on your side because you deserve it, because you don't, because I don't either. But God will be on your side.

God will be for you. Not because you can do anything for him. But if you are reconciled to God through his servant Jesus Christ, whom he has appointed to be the bridge between God and humanity.

If you are reconciled to God through his servant Jesus Christ, who gave his life to pay the penalty for our unrighteousness, yours and mine, that through faith you might reach out your hand to God, and to remember there's, God has a hand that saves, and I want to reach up and take hold of that. God, save me. Lift me up out of darkness. Bring me into your covenant family. Then you can be absolutely sure that God is for you in Jesus Christ. That's the gospel. That's the good news that of God's steadfast, unfailing, never-ending love that does not depend on your performance, but that depends on the finished work of Jesus Christ and the character of God, our God who saves. That's who God is like. That's what God is like. That while we were unable, God is able. And if you don't know this, if you don't know God, if you don't relate to God like this, and know him as Savior through Jesus, reach out your heart to God.

Reach out your heart to God and ask him, God, I want to know you like this. I want this, my relationship with you to be not one of ambivalence or hostility or abandonment, but I want you to save me because of what Jesus did on the cross, not because of myself. Lord, give me the faith to hold on to your promise, to hold on to that rope known that you are holding the other end, that you promise to save everyone who makes Jesus the reason that they come towards you. Forgive my sin. Bring me into your family and teach me to live a life that pleases you by grace alone, through Christ alone, in faith alone, to the glory and honor of God alone. And if you are a Christian, if you are in Christ and your circumstances and your sins and the hard stuff you're going through and maybe the guilt that you feel and you just feel awful about maybe who you are or what you do or what you keep on doing and you wonder, will God hear me?

Or does God even want to hear me? Then remember that the strength of your relationship with God does not depend upon your performance, but upon the love of God for you through Jesus Christ and in the blood of his new covenant, the covenant of grace, that he has brought you into his family by grace, that he loves you, that you are loved by God, that you are a child of God through faith, and that God has committed himself to you, to be for you in a covenant relationship that is more stable than the very creation itself because its surety, its guarantee, its foundation is the character and righteousness of the unchanging, all good, eternal God. Let's pray.

[37 : 25] Father in heaven, Lord, we confess before you that we don't know what one another are going through.

We don't know who's going through really, really hard times. We don't know who's done what and who feels what, and we don't know the weight of others' consciences, and we sometimes even barely know what's going on in our own hearts, but we know, God, that we need you. We know, God, that for many of us, we do thirst for you like a dry and parched land, and we can get by, but only if you bring the rain, that only if we have you are you yourself. So we pray, Lord God, I pray that you would refresh us this morning with your grace, with an assurance of your love, an assurance of salvation through Jesus Christ. And for those who don't know you, I pray, Lord, that you would savingly unite them to your Son through faith, and that you would teach us all and train us all to fix our eyes on Jesus, and in love for you to strive to become servants who do your will, trust in you, knowing that you are the one who by your grace has first saved us and now carries us forward through the rest of our Christian life, that you began our salvation and continue it, and you will bring it to an end. You will bring us safely home, Lord, because you are faithful. And so we trust this gospel truth once again this morning. We put our hope and our faith in you, through Jesus Christ alone. Amen.

Amen.