

Abimelech

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[0 : 00] We are, as a church, we are in the book of Judges right now. We're in a series. We're calling Judges, Longing for the King. This is an Old Testament book.

In terms of redemptive history, this is happening after Joshua. Israel is in the promised land. But what we've seen throughout the book of Judges is that the nation of Israel, they are giving themselves over to a sinful cycle.

If you go and you look in Judges 2, 11 through 23, you're going to see a blueprint for the book. So just by way of a recap, this is how the sinful cycle works in the book of Judges.

Step one, Israel does evil in God's sight. They abandon Yahweh and they seek after other gods.

Step two, God gives them over to their enemies and Israel suffers. Step three, Israel cries out to the Lord for deliverance.

[1 : 04] And then step four, God in his mercy and in his goodness, he raises up a judge, a rescuer, who delivers them and gives them temporary relief.

The land has temporary peace. And then the cycle flips and it starts up again and we repeat it. So last week we were in Judges 6 through 8 and we heard the story of Gideon, the cowardly lion.

God raises up Gideon. He uses him despite his fear to rescue the people of Israel from the Midianites. But we also saw that Gideon, he's quite a mixed bag, right?

That he allows towards the end of his days, he allows idolatry to creep back in to the nation of Israel. He says that he won't be king, but it's more of like a wink, wink, nudge, nudge.

And he actually acts like the king. He ends up having 70 wives, which if you don't know, or 70 wives, I'm sorry. He has 70 sons. And the way that he has that, which is a lot of sons, 70 sons.

[2 : 08] He has many wives. Maybe he had 70. I don't know. I'm not sure. But 70 sons and he has a concubine in Shechem who gives birth to his illegitimate son Abimelech.

And then at the end of chapter 8, Gideon dies and Israel immediately runs back to idolatry. And this is just a repeat of the cycle.

And we're getting into a new cycle here in Judges chapter 9. So if you're following that pattern, what we can expect this week is that we're going to have a new oppressor that's going to come into the nation of Israel.

So if you're like, okay, I just know that the Amalimidianites are going to show up and they're going to take over. That's the right expectation. But this is not just a purely repeat cycle.

Okay? That there are twists and turns to this. That there's a downward spiral that is happening that is building evidence of Israel's spiritual compromise.

[3 : 19] So the oppressor that we're going to see today is an oppressor that doesn't come from outside of the nation of Israel. It's an oppressor that comes from within the nation of Israel.

So we're not getting a new foreign adversary. We're getting an adversary right from within the house of Israel. And that man is Abimelech, the son of Gideon.

So what we'll see with Abimelech is that Abimelech, he has none of his father's good qualities. And he has all of his father's bad qualities. So this is the only point in the sermon in which I want to give you some room to feel a little bit of sympathy for Abimelech.

Abimelech, he, as we're going to see, is a wicked man. But if we think a little bit about his situation by birth, he was born as an illegitimate son in that society.

He would have been ostracized. He would have been ostracized by his own brothers, by his own family. He's born into this chaotic mess of a sinful family.

[4 : 25] And that's not Abimelech's fault. That's the fault of Gideon failing as a godly man at the end of his life. And when men fail their families, it always leads to collateral damage.

Okay? So let's get into this. If we think about this, like last week we did in terms of Acts, Act 1 is marked by political treachery.

So Judges 9, 1 through 2 says this. Now Abimelech, the son of Jerobal, Jerobal is Gideon, Gideon, Jerobal, same person. Abimelech went to Shechem, to his mother's relatives, and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, which is better for you?

That all 70 of the sons of Jerobal rule over you? Or that one rule over you? And remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.

So in these opening verses of Judges 9, Abimelech, he walks into Shechem, burdened with glorious purpose. And he says to his extended family, he asks them to talk to the leaders of Shechem and to ask them, Hey you guys, what do you think is better?

[5 : 41] You've been being ruled by the sons of Gideon for a while now. Do you think it would be better for you if you were ruled by 70 men? Or if you were ruled by one man?

That's the argument that he presents to them. And then he tells his family, he says, you guys remember, I am your flesh and blood here. This is who I am. I'm your family. Do this for me. Go to them and deliver this message. And so his family does that. They deliver the message to the Shechemite leaders. And the text tells us that the hearts of the Shechemite leaders incline to Abimelech, that they're drawn to him.

And then more things happen, except that I lost my place in my manuscript. Hold on one second here. Let's see. Let's see. Sorry, everyone.

Oh, there we are. Okay. All right. So message delivered. We got that? Okay. Message has been delivered. So this is a political move and it works. It works really well. It works perfectly. In the hearts of Shechem inclined to Abimelech, the leaders, they take money from the temple of Baal-Bareth.

[6 : 59] And what they do is they grab 70 pieces of silver. That's one for each of Gideon's sons. And Abimelech, the son of Gideon, he goes and he hires mercenaries.

Now we're going to pause for a second here because the location of Shechem, this is important. This is not just a random location within the nation of Israel. Shechem, this was where the first altar to worship Yahweh was set up in the promised land by Abraham.

You can go read about that in Genesis 12. Shechem was where the bones of Joseph, the son of Jacob, were laid. Shechem was where Joshua renewed the covenant of Moses with Israel.

So Shechem is a place in the promised land, a city in the promised land that should be devoted to the worship of the one true God.

But instead of an altar there to the Lord, what we have is a temple that is devoted to the Canaanite god of Baal-Bareth. And the leaders of Shechem are using blood money from the temple to purchase the betrayal of Gideon's sons.

[8 : 13] Gideon being the last judge that the Lord had raised up. So this is just Canaanization that is settled in to the nation of Israel.

And what we have next is the betrayal. So Abimelech, with his mercenaries hired, he goes to Gideon's sons at Orpha, where they were functioning sort of as foe kings.

And the text tells us that he murders them one by one on a single stone. And that stone maybe was a ritualistic killing.

We don't necessarily know the cultural significance. But what we do know is that this is barbaric and that this is treachery and that this is murder. We see Abimelech's heart on display.

So this is Abimelech, the anti-judge, the oppressor who has risen up from within Israel. And that's the end of Act 2.

[9 : 14] And next, what we see is that Abimelech, ruthlessly as efficient as he was, he did not manage to actually get all of Gideon's sons.

There is one who got away. His name is Jotham. And Joshua gets away by hiding. Presumably when the mercenaries are rounding up all the other Gideon's sons, he goes, he hides somewhere, he runs away.

And then someone that is still loyal to him comes and tells him the news that he had feared that all of his brothers are dead, which is just devastating.

And we wonder to ourselves, what's Jotham going to do from here? Is he going to attempt to do some kind of political move? Is he going to try to hire maybe his own mercenaries and he can go

toe-to-toe with Abimelech?

Is he maybe going to pull a play out of Ehud's playbook and attempt an assassination? What's he going to do? And what he does in verse 7 is Jotham goes to Mount Gerizim, which is the mountain where the blessings of the covenant had been spoken over the nation of Israel.

[10:30] But rather than a blessing, what Jotham does is he speaks a fable of judgment over the leaders of Shechem and over Abimelech for what they've done to him and for what they've done to his father's house.

And this fable that he tells, this story that he tells, it begins to reveal to us that God is at work behind the scenes in all of this mess.

So he begins his speech, Jotham starts his speech with these words. He says, listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

So just by saying that, Jotham is recognizing that there is a God who is still present in all of this, even in the face of great loss that he has experienced.

And he speaks before the Lord and he invites the leaders of Shechem to hear it, to listen to him. So this is the fable that he tells. He talks of these trees that go out and they're looking for a king to reign over them.

[11:37] They go first to the olive tree and the olive tree refuses. And it says, should I leave my abundance that honors God and men and go and rule over you trees? So then they go to the fig tree and the fig tree likewise refuses them and asks, should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go and rule over you?

And then they go to the vine and the vine refuses and says, should I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go rule over you? And then the trees go to the bramble and the bramble replies to them, if you're asking me in good faith to be your king, then come on in and take refuge in my shade.

But if you're not asking me in good faith, then let fire come out from me and consume you. So each of those trees, olive tree, fig tree, vine, each of them kind of beautiful in their own way.

They all bear fruit. These are good trees. The bramble or the thorn bush, it gives no shade. It is ugly and it's really good for catching fire and burning other trees down.

That's kind of what a bramble is. So Jotham, he gives this very sarcastic interpretation just in case the leaders of Shechem and Abimelech weren't picking up on what he's saying to them.

[13:01] And he basically, what he's saying is, if you guys have acted in the integrity of your hearts by making Abimelech king, and if you have respected my father and his sons, remember my dad who risked his life for you and he saved you from the Midianites, and then you went and you killed all of his sons in cold blood and made the son of his slave woman a king.

And he's saying, if you guys did all of that in good faith, then go ahead and rejoice in Abimelech and let Abimelech rejoice in you because you guys are just absolutely perfect for each other.

But if you didn't act in good faith, then we get verse 20. He says, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the leaders of Shechem and Beth Milo, and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and from Beth Milo and devour Abimelech.

So through this fable, he is pronouncing a curse from Mount Gerizim before God, and he is saying, let God give you what you deserve.

And then Jotham flees, and he places justice in God's hands, and he's gone. We don't see him again. That closes Act 2.

[14:25] We start Act 3 with verse 22, which just simply says, Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years.

And that one sentence, that covers a lot of time of heartache and of suffering and of unrepentant sin. This is three years of Jotham, the only surviving son of Gideon, living as a wanted man.

This is three years of Israel living under a tyrant. This is three years of Abimelech seemingly free of the consequences of his crimes that he has committed.

But then the narrator, he gives us these words, and these are important. The narrator writes, And why did God do this?

So that the violence done to the 70 sons of Jeroboam, of Gideon, might come. And their blood be laid on Abimelech, their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers.

[15:38] Verse 24. So Abimelech seems to have the upper hand, but he does not. God does. And God sends a spirit of treachery amongst these traitors, which is very fitting.

And God takes the weapon of treachery, and he causes them to point it at one another, both the leaders of Shechem and Abimelech. So it might look like he is not there, but God is already stoking the fires of judgment against Abimelech and against the leaders of Shechem.

And that takes us to Act 4, where we're introduced to Gal, the son of Ebed, who shows up seemingly out of nowhere with his relatives in Shechem.

It seems kind of random, but again, nothing is random in this story. We're not given any backstory on Gal, the son of Ebed, but we know that he is a Shechemite.

We know that the leaders of Shechem seem to know him to some extent, and they instantly fall in love with him. The text says that they put their confidence in him.

[16:52] And things move really fast, and all of a sudden, they're having a party. They're drinking wine. They throw this festival. There's this feast. They have this drinking party in the temple of Balbereth.

And Gal says in the midst of this revelry, he asks the leaders of Shechem, who does Abimelech think that he is? He's not a real Shechemite like us.

He's Gideon's son. He's not a true Shechemite. And if I was ruling over Shechem, I would kick that guy out.

I'd tell him, bring your little mercs and let's go. So he's just talking a big talk right now. And it should sound familiar because he's playing the we're family card that Abimelech was playing earlier when he's making his play for the throne.

Unfortunately for Gal, the son of Ebed, Abimelech's officer, Zebel, he overhears, and he sends a message to Abimelech.

[17:59] He basically says, hey, we've got a problem over here. Gal and his brothers showed up. They are stirring the whole city against you. And he gives Abimelech a whole plan for how to lay an ambush for the city and draw Gal, the son of Ebed, out into battle.

And if you're wondering where Abimelech is in all of this, he's probably out at his father's house in Ophrah. And he's just playing king. So he set himself up as this true Shechemite who is going to care for the people of Shechem.

And he's not even there. He's just off playing king. So Abimelech, he gets the message. He takes his forces to Shechem. And then under cover of darkness, they set an ambush.

And early the next morning, Gal and his troops, they step outside the city gate. And Abimelech attacks. And the battle does not go well for Gal at all.

His men are decimated by Abimelech's army. And Gal, who was just talking really big a few verses ago, he flees the scene. He abandons Shechem.

[19:06] And we do not see him again. And once more, it looks like things are going pretty well for Abimelech. And what we see after this is that things get darker in the story, as if they're already not dark enough.

What Abimelech does is he sets up another ambush the next day. He sets it up for the citizens of Shechem. He doesn't set it up for military forces.

He sets it up for innocent people. The citizens of Shechem, they need to get out. They need to work in the fields. They assume that the danger is gone. The big battle from the previous day is out.

And you've got to make food. So they go out and they begin doing their work. And Abimelech and his men, they spring out and they slaughter everyone.

So now we have innocents being killed on the battlefield. And then Abimelech, he goes to war with the city.

[20:11] And by the end of the day, most of the city is in ashes. He just brings this city to absolute ruin. And then he sows the ruins with salt, which is like putting a curse of infertility on the land.

And this is just, this is another anti-judge move by Abimelech because what we've been seeing with the judges is that they give the land rest, at least for a while. But Abimelech doesn't give the land rest.

He ravages it. He brings it to ruin. He's the Israelite who is oppressing his own people. But there's apparently one part of the city that Abimelech has not yet destroyed.

And it just so happens to be the temple of Israel's false god, Balbereth, which also functioned as a defensive stronghold.

So this is a place where the citizens could go into as kind of a last resort, where they could go into a defensive position. They're acting out of the wisdom of Proverbs 18.10, which says that the name of the Lord is a strong tower.

[21 : 24] The righteous man runs into it and is safe. But there's a couple of problems with that, though, because the leaders of Shechem are not righteous men. And this strong tower is not under the name of the Lord.

It's under the name of Balbereth, the false god. So they are not safe in running into this temple stronghold. The house of their god is really just functioning as a bunch of kindling at this point. So seeing his betrayers trapped Abimelech, he goes and he grabs an axe, and he cuts down some wood, and he tells his army to do the same.

And what we see next in verse 49 is this. It says, so every one of the people cut down his bundle, and following Abimelech, put it against the stronghold and set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem also died, about 1,000 men and women. And the first part of Jotham's curse, like a horror movie of inevitability, comes to completion, and the leaders of Shechem are brought into judgment.

[22 : 43] But that still leaves Abimelech. And things have gone pretty well for Abimelech so far. It looks as though he has triumphed over his enemies. He just wiped out an entire city.

He just burned alive 1,000 men and women in a tower. He is looking pretty untouchable at this point. But Jotham's curse wasn't just against the leaders of Shechem.

And God's justice is not just against the leaders of Shechem. It's going to go against Abimelech as well. So the question isn't, is Abimelech going to get away with this?

The question is, how is God going to bring Abimelech to justice? Is God going to raise up another judge to strike Abimelech down?

Are we going to have an end of the story with kind of this epic villain versus hero battle? What's going to be this wicked man's downfall? And in verse 50, we're told that Abimelech, he takes his army and he makes his way to another town, which is Thebes, to continue his murderous rampage.

[23 : 58] The text doesn't say why he assaults another town. There doesn't seem to be a clear reason for doing so. But at this point, I think it's just safe to say that Abimelech, he's just got a lust for power and a lust for violence that has settled into his heart.

And this battle functions like a mirror image of what just happened in Shechem. The leaders of Thebes and the citizens of that town, they run into the strong tower in the city and Abimelech comes to the base of the tower to set fire on it, just like he did with Shechem.

He thinks this is going to go great. But tragically for Abimelech, there's a woman at the top of the tower and she has a millstone, which would have been used for crushing grain.

And from the top of the tower, she takes this millstone, which would have been quite heavy, and she throws it down and the stone lands on Abimelech's head, crushing his skull.

The man who murdered his brothers on a single stone is crushed by a stone. But it doesn't kill him instantly. The stone lands on his head in such a way that he doesn't die right away, so he has time to tell his armor bearer, please kill me so that history doesn't see me as the man who died by the hand of a woman.

[25 : 23] And his armor bearer gladly obliges and thrusts him through with a sword. So good effort for Abimelech. But he obviously doesn't get his wish because we are all here talking about how Abimelech died by the hand of a woman with the ancient Near Eastern equivalent of a KitchenAid mixer.

So that's how that worked out for him. And then we get the epilogue, the summary of all of these 57 verses.

Verses 56 and 57 tell us, So what does this mean for us today?

All of this violence and this rampage and this wickedness, what does this mean for us today? First, there's this theme that's been played out throughout the book of Judges.

We'll continue to see it as we spend time in this Old Testament book, which is a, there's a warning, there's a strong warning here against spiritual corruption and compromise.

[26 : 48] We've seen the nation of Israel just sinking in deeper and deeper into spiritual compromise. In this story, we see it in Abimelech's murderous play for the throne.

We see it in Shechem's, the leaders of Shechem's wicked betrayal of Gideon's sons. We see it as Shechem itself, which should have been functioning as a sort of spiritual center for the worship of

Yahweh, instead becoming a home to the temple of Baal.

We see it in the murder of civilians. This is rampant violence and wickedness that is horrifying to behold, and all of it is a testament to the evil nature of idolatry.

And we can read this story, and we can think to ourselves, thank goodness that I am not like Abimelech, and that I'm not like the leaders of Shechem.

And if we think that to ourselves, we're actually gravely underestimating the power of idolatry, which this text is warning us of. Because the reality is that you and I are capable of far more wickedness than we can imagine, apart from the grace of God.

[28 : 10] So we shouldn't turn up our noses at this barbarism and think that we aren't capable of this same kind of evil, because we are. 1 Corinthians 10, 12, Therefore let anyone who thinks he stand take heed, lest he fall.

And then what we're also seeing with this theme of corruption is the slippery slope of sin. So remember how this story is deeply connected to the story of Gideon, how Gideon ends his days in spiritual compromise, and the consequences, they just flow downhill into the pit that is his son's power-hungry wickedness.

So I would encourage us soberly to take stock and ask if there is spiritual compromise that has settled into our lives.

And ask if our hearts are numb to the Lord. Is your heart numb to his word? Does sin seem like a small thing to you?

Because sin can seem really small, but it can snowball into this avalanche so quickly. Psalm 16, 4 says, The sorrows of those who run after another God shall multiply.

[29 : 33] And that's what we've been seeing throughout the book of Judges. But I would say that the main point of Judges 9 for this particular episode within the book of Judges is that God will bring all evil into judgment.

God will bring all evil into judgment. That there is no injustice which will not ultimately be held accountable by him.

It's justice that is going to be done in his own good timing, whether it's in this life or in the next. So right in the middle of the narrative, the narrator, he makes this clear in verses 23 through 24.

He says that God sends the spirit of treachery between Abimelech and the leaders. And he does it so that they would come into judgment for their sin against Gideon's sons.

And then verses 56 through 57, we saw the story get wrapped up with the verses that say that God is the one who brought the leaders of Shechem and Abimelech into judgment.

[30 : 44] And he does that through human agents. He does that through somewhat seemingly normal circumstances. But make no mistake that God is the one who is bringing about justice through this chapter.

And this is a chapter that gets at a hard reality. Because for much of the story, it does not look as though God is there.

This looks like it's wickedness that is out of control. It's bleak. It doesn't seem like there is hope. And we can look around right now at world events that are happening in our day that can make it look like everything is out of control.

Like God isn't there. Or on a more personal level, there are injustices that maybe you have experienced within your own life that have caused you to wonder, where is God in this?

[31 : 54] How could God allow this evil to happen to me or to happen to someone that I care about? And that is a fair question. So there's two realities that I want to point you to.

And the first reality is that God sees and that God knows. Proverbs 15.3, The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

So for those of you who have had evil done to you, I want you to know that God sees it. That you are not alone.

That he cares. Psalm 34.18 says that God is near to the brokenhearted. And just because you do not, maybe at this point, see the purpose or see what God is doing, it does not mean that God is not with you in this.

It does not mean that he does not love you. And then the same point can be made to those of us who have done the evil.

[33 : 20] That God sees and God knows. And that should be a terrifying reality to us.

That if there is a sin that we have committed against another, if we think that we have gotten away with it, that we should repent of that right now and ask God for his forgiveness.

And if it's a sin that we have managed to hide, if it's a sin that has not been exposed, God is mercifully allowing you to get that sin out into the light yourself.

We should not fool ourselves into thinking that sin is somehow private and that it does not affect other people because all sin does collateral damage.

All of it. So if you haven't been caught yet, repent, make it known, and as far as you are able and as far as wisdom dictates, seek to make peace and seek to make restitution and to make it right.

[34 : 38] And then the second reality that I want to point you to is that God will bring about justice. That he will do that. Proverbs 16, 4 through 5, the Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Be assured he will not go unpunished. So that's his promise, that he is going to bring all injustices into justice.

And it's going to be done in his timing, which might not be the timing that we want it to be, but he has his good reasons and his good purposes, and he does bring all things into judgment.

So we see a picture of that in terms of judgment happening in this life, justice happening in this life, in the chapter that we just read with the leaders of Shechem and Abimelech being brought to justice for their betrayal, for the murder of Gideon's sons.

But then we ask the question of, what about those who do seem to get away with it? For those that do seem to escape.

[35 : 53] And the truth is, is that God brings all things into judgment, both in, if it does not seem like he brings it into judgment in this life, he will absolutely bring it into judgment in the next.

There's a verse in 2 Thessalonians 1, 7 through 10, which says that there will come a day when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. And what that means is that there is no sin that will escape God's judgment on that final day.

That for those who refuse to put their trust in Christ as their Savior and refuse to obey his gospel as their Lord, that their wickedness will be brought on their own heads.

If you are not a Christian, this is the most important part of the message that you can hear, which is that the God who made us is a holy God.

[37 : 27] He does not shrug his shoulders at sin. He brings sin to justice. And no one is good enough to stand before God.

So you can't compare yourself to a Bimelech and think, well, I'm not murdering thousands of people, so I think I'm doing pretty okay because God's word says to us in verses like James 2, 10, whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

Which begs the question, how would anyone escape God's justice? And the answer to that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That Jesus Christ, who was fully God and fully man, he came to take the punishment of justice that we deserved and to take it upon himself.

This is 2 Corinthians 5, 21. For our sake, God made him, Jesus, to be sin who knew no sin so that in him, in Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God.

[38 : 41] And this is the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53, 5 through 6. He, Jesus, was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. That God in his goodness has made a way for my sins and for your sins to be brought to justice 2,000 years ago on a Roman cross.

So if you have not yet put your faith in Christ, this morning, this is God's promise to you. This is from Romans 10, 9. This is the best news in the world.

He says, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Praise God.

[39 : 49] So if you decide this morning, if you have not yet put your faith in Christ, if you decide that you want to do that, or if you have questions about what that means, what that looks like, after the service, please come down.

And we would be so happy to talk to you, either me or Pastor Mike, please come down. We'd love to talk to you about the gospel and about Jesus Christ who has rescued us from our sins, not because we're good, but because he is.

We'd love to do that. And if you are a believer this morning, you can worship and find great joy in the fact that God's justice against you has been satisfied already at the cross.

Romans 8, 1. There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And if you are a believer who has had evil, done to you, we can follow the example of Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, who placed justice in God's hands.

We trust him to work in his good timing, and we forgive knowing that God in Christ has forgiven us. And that doesn't mean that we don't work for justice in this life because we should do that.

[41 : 17] It doesn't mean that there are no boundaries. We should have those. But at the end of the day, we entrust true justice to our Father in heaven.

And we give it to him. We trust him. We trust his timing, knowing that he is good and that he is faithful and that we can hold to him as our refuge.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are grateful that you will one day make all wrongs right.

We thank you that for those that have put their faith in you, that the sins that we have committed have been paid for by our Savior.

Father, Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are a God who is at work, that you're a God who wakes us up to our sin.

[42 : 26] Lord Jesus, we thank you for going to the cross. We thank you for saving us. Lord God, we pray that you would help us to increasingly trust you to run to you as our refuge.

We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.