

The Sign of Jonah

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Preacher: Joshua Winters

[0 : 00] about how Jesus ran into some opposition. He had cast a demon out of a man. And at first the response seemed positive.

Right after doing this amazing thing of setting this poor man free from the demon which had possessed him.

We read in verse 16 of Luke chapter 11. Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. And we heard over the past two weeks how Jesus responded to this.

And today we're just picking up where we left off. In verse 29 of Luke chapter 11. As the crowds increased Jesus said.

This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign. But none will be given it. Except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was assigned to the Ninevites.

[1 : 20] So also will the son of man be. To this generation. The queen of the south will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation.

And condemn them. For she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom. And now something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation.

And condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And now something greater than Jonah is here. So just a few verses that we're going to look at this morning.

We go back up to the top to verse 29. We read that the crowds were increasing. So Jesus is talking to the people. And the audience seems to be growing as he was talking.

People I guess are just coming across this. And oh Jesus is speaking to people. Let's go and listen to what he has to say. And Jesus makes this very shocking statement.

[2 : 25] He says this is a wicked generation. Some translations say this is an evil generation. Same meaning.

We love to be complimented. We love to be praised. When we fall short. We love to be encouraged gently.

To do better. But this statement of Jesus. Is all negative. This is a wicked generation. He says.

And now Jesus is not being harsh. He's not being overly critical. He's not exaggerating.

Because he's upset. He gives no praise. No compliments. Because there are truly none to give. In this moment. He just simply states.

[3 : 21] What is true. But what leads Jesus to say this? What's wicked. About the generation of Jesus day.

Well Jesus tells us. Right here in the verse. This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign. But none will be given it. Except the sign of Jonah. This ties into what we just read.

Back up in verse 16. I don't have it on there again. Back up in verse 16.

We just read it. Others tested him. By asking for a sign from heaven. So Jesus is following up to that. With that. It's as if the people are saying.

Show us a sign from heaven. And then we'll believe you. Prove. Yourself. Jesus. Jesus. Now some explanation.

[4 : 23] I think is needed here. Because we might wonder. Whether God expects us. To simply believe. Without some form of proof. Or evidence. Like what if an imposter. Was to come along.

And claim to be sent from God. And say a whole bunch of things. Should we just believe him.

Without first. Some sort of. Confirmation. Or sign. That he is telling the truth.

But this is not that. In fact. God. God. Does not want us to just believe. Anyone who comes along. And starts claiming. That to be sent from him.

Without proof. The problem here. Is that they're asking for a sign. When they've already seen.

Many. Many. Many. Signs. And yet. Even after seeing. All these things. They are again. Still. Asking for a sign.

[5 : 18] There have already been. Countless. Signs. There were the. Miraculous. Signs. Surrounding. Jesus birth. Which we heard about. In chapters one and two.

Of Luke's gospel. There was. John the baptizer. Who was sent by God. And pointed the people. To Jesus. There was what happened. At Jesus baptism. They heard the voice of God.

Audibly. And they saw the spirit. Come down. Upon Jesus. There was the healing. Of all kinds of sicknesses. Diseases. Even disabilities. And not just a few people.

But even. If we're just looking. At Luke's gospel. More people. Than could be recorded. More healings. Than could be recorded. There was the casting out. Of many demons.

We've heard about. Quite a number of them already. There was the miraculous. Catch of fish.

There was the healing. Of a leper. The healing. Of a paralyzed man. There was the healing.

[6 : 15] Of the centurion. Servant. From a distance. The raising. Of the widow. Of Nain's son. From the dead. During the funeral. The raising. The resurrection. Of Jairus's daughter.

The healing. Of the woman. Who had been bleeding. For 12 years. The feeding. Of the 5,000. In the middle of nowhere. And then the sending. Out of the 12.

And then again. Of the 72. Who are also now. Doing many miracles. Healings. Casting out demons. There have already been. Countless signs.

These are just the ones. The ones recorded in Luke. Up till this point. In the gospel. And then on this particular occasion. As we just heard. Jesus has just cast out this demon.

That's made this man. Unable to speak. And so. If there are some here. Who did not see. Some of those other miracles. We know that they saw. At least this one.

[7 : 15] Now we might wonder. You know. Can we call all of Jesus' miracles. Signs? Well if we flip over. To the gospel of John. That's the same word. That John uses. To describe all of them.

Jesus uses that word. As well. To describe them. They are all. Signs from heaven. And so truly. Jesus has already done.

Countless. Signs. Later on. The Jewish council. We read in the gospel of John. They'll even acknowledge it. Verbally. At the meeting. That he is doing. Many signs.

And everybody's. Following him. But the problem is. That after seeing. All these signs. They are still asking. For a sign. As if the things.

Jesus has done. Haven't happened. Or. Aren't good enough. And this is why. Jesus. I believe. Calls them. Wicked. And evil.

[8 : 13] Because with all the things. They've witnessed. This isn't. Honest skepticism. It's willful. Rejection. It's stubborn.

Hearted. Refusal. To listen. To listen. To Jesus. And to acknowledge. The countless. Clear signs. He's already given them. This is.

The people. Knowing. That they are wrong. And that Jesus is right. And yet. Deliberately. Putting their fingers. In their ears. And saying. I'm not listening. I'm not listening. Have you ever had.

A moment like that. In a conversation. With someone. Maybe you just know. A hundred percent.

That you're right. And they're in the wrong. And you try to put the proof.

Right in front of them. And what do they do? Well they close their eyes. And they just. I don't want to see that. I'm not going to listen to that. That's what's going on here. With the people.

[9 : 11] And that's why Jesus makes this statement. This is a wicked generation. Their wickedness. Is seen in their hard heartedness. It's seen in their stubborn refusal.

To accept Jesus words. As true. Jesus says that no sign will be given. To this generation. Except the sign of Jonah.

Jonah. So now Jesus. Tells them to think back. To. Remember what God did. In the days of Jonah. And also of the days of Solomon. And to really make sense of those words. We kind of have to know. The stories of those two men. And if it's a little fuzzy for you. Or maybe you've never heard these stories.

We're just going to take a few minutes. To go back and remember. What happened with these two guys. So let's start with Jonah. Jonah was a prophet of God to Israel.

[10 : 08] About 760 BC. Or about 250 years. After King David. Was king in Israel. And in Jonah's days. The kingdom of Israel.

Was already divided into two halves. In the northern half. There was Jeroboam the second. Who was reigning as king. And then in the southern half.

There was Azariah reigning as king. For those of you who are in our Sunday school class. In Micah this past while. Jonah came on the scene as a prophet. Just before Micah came on the scene.

And the story of Jonah from the Bible. It goes like this. God spoke verbally to Jonah. Just as he did to other prophets like him. And he told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh.

And preach against it. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. Go to the great city of Nineveh. And preach against it. Because its wickedness.

[11:05] Has come up before me. Now Nineveh wasn't just any old city. It was a large and prominent city. In the heartland. Of the Assyrian Empire.

And at this time. The Assyrian Empire was no friend. Of Israel. They had already come down with the army. And collected tribute. From Israel.

Which is kind of like saying. Hand over your wallets. And your purses. Your crops. Your flocks. Or we'll attack you. And take them by force. And so the Assyrians.

Were Israel's enemies. At this time. And God was basically telling Jonah. To travel over 600 miles. On foot. First north. Kind of around that green.

Region. You see on the map. And then east. Into the heartland of the enemy. To one of their. Most prominent cities. The people of that city.

[12:04] Were wicked. And God wanted Jonah. To preach. Against the city. And so what did Jonah do? We read in the next verse.

But Jonah ran away from the Lord. And headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa. Where he found a ship. Bound for that port. After paying the fare.

He went aboard. And sailed for Tarshish. To flee. From the Lord. So Jonah didn't want to go do. What God told him to do. He did the exact opposite. He went to a port city.

On the Mediterranean. And you see the red arrow there. He got on a boat. And he went the complete opposite direction. Many of you probably know. How things go for Jonah.

When he gets on the boat. It's a familiar story. To most of us. God sends a great storm. Which threatens the lives. Of everybody on board. And it becomes known. To those sailing with Jonah.

[12:58] That he is running away. From the Lord. And they sort of realize. And agree together. That the only way. To save their lives. From this storm. That God has sent. Is to throw Jonah overboard.

Since his rebellion. Is the. Is what's causing all this. And so they do that. They throw Jonah overboard. As Jonah is sinking down. To his death.

He cries out to God for mercy. And God answers his prayer. And sends a great fish. To swallow him. That's a miracle right there. And it takes Jonah back.

And it vomits Jonah. Onto the beach. Back the way that he. Where he came from. And so God then speaks to Jonah. A second time. And tells him.

To go to Nineveh. And proclaim his message. To the people of that city. This time. Jonah obeys the Lord. He goes to Nineveh.

[13:55] And he starts proclaiming. God's message. Forty more days. And Nineveh will be overthrown. And he declares. To the people there.

He goes through the city. For three days. With this message. Basically. God's going to wipe you out. Because of your great evil. And what happens?

Jonah 3.5. The Ninevites believed God. And a fast was proclaimed. And all of them. From the greatest to the least. Put on sackcloth.

Those are cultural symbols. Of grieving. And mourning. When Jonah's warning. Reached the king of Nineveh. He rose from his throne.

Took off his royal robes. Covered himself with sackcloth. And sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation. He issued in Nineveh. By the decree of the king.

[14:54] And his nobles. Do not let people. Or animals. Herds. Or flocks. Taste anything. Do not let them eat. Or drink. But let people and animals.

Be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone. Call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways. And their violence. Who knows.

God may yet relent. And with compassion. Turn from his fierce anger. So that. We will not. Perish. And when God saw what they did.

And how they turned from their evil ways. He relented. He relented. And did not bring on them the destruction. He had threatened. That's the story of Jonah in a nutshell. It's surprising. The people of Nineveh. Wicked though they were. Believed God. They responded to Jonah's preaching.

[15 : 50] They repented of their evil ways. And God. In his mercy. He relented. He didn't go through with destroying the city. Well now back to Luke.

And to what Jesus said. Luke 11 30. For as Jonah was assigned to the Ninevites. So also will the son of man be. To this generation.

So Jesus is using what happened there with Jonah. And the people of Nineveh. As an example. As an illustration. He's saying. Just like God gave Jonah to the people of Nineveh.

He was assigned to them. Of what was going to happen. As he preached against the city. In the same way. God has given the son of man. Jesus.

To this generation. To give his message. To the people. And the question is. How will they respond?

[16 : 47] We know how the Ninevites responded. We just read that they believed God. But did the people of Jesus generation.

Believe God. No. They're asking for a sign from heaven. Even after Jesus has already done. So many. They're refusing to listen to the prophet.

To the one that God has sent. Well Jesus goes on to give them another illustration. This time from the life of Solomon. The next verse.

The Queen of the South. Says Jesus. Will rise at the judgment. With the people of this generation. And condemn them. For she came from the ends of the earth.

To listen to Solomon's wisdom. And now something greater than Solomon is here. So if we go all the way back to King David. Who lived about a thousand years before Jesus.

[17 : 46] His son Solomon. Most of you probably know. He was like one of the wisest people that ever lived. As the story goes. Solomon became king.

When his father was old. But then Solomon felt utterly inadequate. To rule the kingdom. And so he humbled himself before God.

And Solomon prayed to the Lord. And he asked. Give me wisdom. So that I can do this the way that you want me to. Do a good job. Do the right thing. Administer justice.

For this great people of yours. And God was. Very pleased with Solomon's request. And he granted it. God gave Solomon wisdom.

And not just a little bit of wisdom. But a lot. Of wisdom. He made him wiser than any. Who had ever lived before him. And any who. Who lived after.

[18 : 42] To summarize how things went with Solomon. I'm just going to read a little. Chunk. Right out of the Bible. In 1 Kings chapter 4. The people of Judah and Israel.

Were as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They ate. They drank. And they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms. From the Euphrates River. To the land of the Philistines. As far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute. And were Solomon's subjects. All his life. Solomon's daily provisions.

Were 30 cores of the finest flour. 60 cores of meal. 10 head of stall fed cattle. 20 of pasture fed cattle. And 100 sheep and goats.

As well as deer. Gazelles. Roebuck's. And choice fowl. That was his daily provision. So you can think of. Every day this stuff was showing up. At the palace. Lots. For him.

[19 : 39] His family. The administration. So lots. For he ruled over all the kingdoms. West of the Euphrates River. From Tifsa. To Gaza. And had peace on all sides.

During Solomon's lifetime. Judah and Israel. From Dan. To Beersheba. Lived in safety. Everyone under their own vine. And under their own fig tree. Solomon had 4,000 stalls.

For chariot horses. And 12,000 horses. Horses. The district governors. Each in his month. Supplied provisions. For King Solomon. And all who came. To the king's table. They saw to it.

That nothing was lacking. They also brought. To the proper place. Their quotas. Of barley. And straw. For the chariot horses. And the other horses. And here's sort of.

The summary paragraph. God gave Solomon. Wisdom. And very great insight. And a breadth. Of understanding. As measureless. As the sand. On the seashore. Solomon's wisdom.

[20 : 39] Was greater than the wisdom. Of all the people. Of the east. And greater than all. The wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser. Than anyone else. Including Ethan. The Ezraite.

Wiser than. Heman. And Calcol. And Darda. The sons of Mahol. And his fame. Spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3,000 proverbs.

And his songs numbered 1,005. He spoke about plant life. From the cedar of Lebanon. To the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals.

And birds. Reptiles. And fish. From all nations. People came. To listen to Solomon's wisdom. Sent by all the kings of the world.

Who had heard of his wisdom. Just skipping ahead to chapter 10. The weight of gold that Solomon received. Yearly was 666 talents.

[21 : 34] Which in the footnote is about 23 metric tons. Of gold. Each year. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem. As stones.

And cedar as plentiful. As sycamore fig trees. In the foothills. So there's a snapshot. Of how the wisdom God gave to Solomon.

Translated into success. And wealth. And fame. For Solomon. And then here's the key moment. In 1 Kings 10. This visit.

From the queen of the south. When the queen of Sheba. Sheba. Sheba is. Was a kingdom located around. What is now. The country of Yemen. In the southernmost tip.

Of the Arabian Peninsula. So when the queen of Sheba. Heard about the fame of Solomon. And his relationship to the Lord. She came to test Solomon. With hard questions.

[22 : 31] Arriving at Jerusalem. With a very great caravan. With camels. Carrying spices. Large quantities of gold. And precious stones. She came to Solomon.

And talked with him. About all that she had. On her mind. Solomon answered. All her questions. Nothing. Was too hard. For the king.

To explain to her. When the queen of Sheba. Saw all the wisdom of Solomon. And the palace he had built. The food on his table. The seating of his officials.

The attending servants. In their robes. His cup bearers. And the burnt offerings. He made at the temple. Of the Lord. She was overwhelmed. She said to the king.

The report I heard. In my own country. About your achievements. And your wisdom. Is true. Indeed. Sorry. But I did not believe these things.

[23 : 27] Until I came. And saw with my own eyes. Indeed. Not even half. Was told me. In wisdom. And wealth. You have far exceeded the report.

I heard. How happy your people must be. How happy your officials. Who continually stand before you. And hear your wisdom. Praise be to the Lord.

Your God. Who has delighted in you. And placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel. He has made you. King.

To maintain. Justice. And righteousness. And she gave the king. A hundred and twenty talents of gold. Large quantities of spices. And precious stones. Never again were so many spices.

Brought in as those the queen of Sheba. Gave. To king Solomon. So that's the visit. That Jesus is talking about. With the crowds. In Luke's gospel.

[24 : 23] Now let's hear what Jesus said again. About that visit. He said. The queen of the south. Will rise at the judgment. With the people of this generation. And condemn them.

For she came from the ends of the earth. To listen to Solomon's wisdom. And now. Something greater than Solomon is here. And so what is Jesus saying here?

He's saying that the queen of Sheba. Will rise from the dead. On judgment day. And she will condemn the people. Of Jesus generation. Now that doesn't mean.

That she'll be the judge. On judgment day. But that she'll point out. What's wrong. With the people. Of Jesus day. On judgment day. Why?

Because in her day. She responded. To God's man. Appropriately. She acknowledged. That God was really speaking. Through Solomon.

[25 : 23] And she showed that she believed. Because she herself. Even though she was a queen. She was willing to make the journey. All the way. From the southern tip. Of the Arabian Peninsula. To Jerusalem.

To listen. To Solomon's wisdom. Jesus uses a kind of a figure of speech. She says. She came from the ends of the earth. To listen to Solomon's wisdom.

In our lingo. Halfway across the world. Let's remember that in Jesus day. Travel was on foot. Or in her case.

Maybe a cart. Royal cart. Pulled by camels or something. And of course. I couldn't help. But look this up on Google Maps. And see how long it would take. To walk from Yemen. To Jerusalem. That's pretty hard to see. Probably. But it's about 2,700 kilometers. That's the same. As the distance. From here in Davidson. To Toronto. On foot.

[26 : 21] According to Google. It would take about. 600 hours worth of walking. Or 26 days. Straight. Walking. To get there. I don't know.

If this is accurate or not. But. One of those AI chat tools. I asked it. What it thought. Would be a caravan travel time. For this journey. And it came up with.

Around. Four to five months. One way. Because of course. You got to stop in the dark. And sleep at night. And. With a large caravan. Things move slower.

Right? So. From the ends of the earth. Is not really an exaggeration. She gave eight to ten months. Of her life. Just to go listen. To Solomon.

And why? Because she recognized. Just as people. All over the earth. Did in her day. That God. Was speaking.

[27 : 18] Through Solomon. She heard. And she recognized. That he had. Supernatural wisdom. Even what she overheard.

From far away. In her kingdom. Was enough. To bring her. All the way. Up. To hear more. To ask her questions. And so. Jesus says. She will rise from the dead.

On judgment day. And basically say. What's wrong with you people. To the people. Of Jesus generation. Why?

Because with the coming. Of Jesus. Is something. Something. Greater. Than Solomon. Is here. And yet.

They are utter fools. And they refuse. To listen. And draw near. Someone wiser. Than Solomon. Has come. A kingdom. Greater.

[28 : 13] Than Solomon's. Has broken. Into the world. I mean. We think back. To Solomon's times. And God put on. Quite a demonstration. Of his wisdom.

All those years ago. But he's putting on. An even bigger. Demonstration. Of his wisdom. And his power. Through Jesus. In the days. That Jesus first came.

Think about this. There's nothing. In the Bible. About Solomon. Casting out demons. We're healing people. We're raising people. From the dead.

Dead. Solomon never did miracles. Like Jesus did. Jesus isn't tooting. His own horn here.

Either. When he says. That someone. Something greater. Than Solomon. Is here. The proof. Is in the pudding. Look at what God is. Now doing.

[29 : 09] Through Jesus. All those things. I listed off earlier. All those signs. The power of God. Is on display. Like never before. The wisdom of God.

Is being shared. To people. To man. Like never before. And it's all through. One man. Not Solomon. But Jesus. The son of man.

And yet the people. Of Jesus day. Are stubborn. And they refuse. To listen. They refuse. To acknowledge him. Jesus goes on.

In verse 32. He says. The men of Nineveh. Will stand up. At the judgment. With this generation. And condemn it. For they repented.

At the preaching. Of Jonah. And now. Something greater. Than Jonah. Is here. They were very wicked.

[30 : 06] In Nineveh. So much. That God gave them. Forty days notice. Till their destruction. And they believed God. They repented.

Of their sins. The wicked Assyrians. In Nineveh. Humbled themselves. Before God. And had a real change of heart. They turned from their evil ways. Those guys.

In Nineveh. Says Jesus. Are going to rise from the dead. At the judgment. And they're going to say. What. Is the matter with you. To the people. Of Jesus generation.

Why? Because with the coming of Jesus. An even greater prophet. Is here. One who has come to warn. Just like Jonah did. And call the people.

To repentance. And yet. They are utter fools. And they refuse to listen. These are shocking words. Aren't they? I mean.

[31 : 07] Jesus is basically saying. To the crowd. God. Your ancient enemies. Will fare better. At the judgment. Than you will. Because they had faith.

They believed. They listened. To God's word. In far less significant moments. In history. They were gifts of grace.

They were gifts of mercy. To the people of. Their generations. And now. The ultimate sign. The ultimate gift of grace. And mercy. Has come. The one whose whole life.

Is filled with signs. Too numerous to count. From his birth. To his death. To his resurrection. The ultimate gift. Of grace and mercy. Has come. But this. Is a wicked generation.

Because their hearts. Are stubborn. And they're unwilling. To listen. After all they've seen. They demand a sign. From heaven. John sums it up.

[32 : 08] Quite well. In his gospel. John 12. 37. Even after Jesus. Had performed. So many signs. In their presence. They still. Would not believe in him. Well I wonder.

What Jesus would say. About our generation. Today. Compared to. The one of his day. Compared to the people. Of Nineveh. Or the one of.

Solomon's. I mean. She traveled. Four to five months. One way. Just to hear. The word of God. From God's man.

And we have it. Right here. In our Bibles. Many of Solomon's words. Plus more. And will we even. Travel to the coffee table.

To pick it up. And listen. I don't know. What Jesus would say. About our generation. In particular. Probably. He wouldn't say.

[33 : 07] That we're a righteous generation. Probably. That we are more. Or less wicked. Today. Maybe. What we think.

He would say. Depends on. Whether we're. Sort of. The glass is half full. Or the glass is half empty. Kind of people. Are we worse. Than the people. Of Jesus day. Maybe.

Maybe not. I mean. We haven't seen. With our own eyes. Or heard. With our own ears. The things that Jesus. Did. We just have. The written records. Of what went down. But that can't be.

An excuse either. Because we do have. Knowledge of who Jesus was. And what he said. And what he did. Well. Whatever Jesus would say.

About our generation. This generation. Today. 2026. I think what matters most. Is simply this. What's my response.

[34 : 09] To Jesus. What's your response. To Jesus. Is the way. That I have been.

Responding to Jesus. Similar. To the way. The crowds. Responded to him. That day. How have you.

Responded to Jesus. Jesus said.

They were wicked. Because they wouldn't. Listen to God. Have you. Been listening to God. And if not.

It starts with us. Listening to these. Same words of Jesus. Jesus. Is God's. Man. He is to us.

[35 : 07] Like Jonah was. To the Ninevites. The one. The one. The one. Who brings the warning. That we need. So that we're not destroyed. Because of our sins.

Not only that. But he. Offers. Blatantly. Openly. The promise of mercy. And forgiveness. For our sins. If we will. Repent.

Jesus. Jesus. Is God's man. He is to us. Like Solomon was. To the nations. Of the world. God has put the full measure. Of his immeasurable wisdom.

In Jesus. All the things. That. If we were to learn them. Would make all the difference. In our life. We have all of it.

In Jesus. And we don't have to travel. Four. Months. To hear. The words. Of God. Through Jesus. We don't have to bring. An offering of gold. The best that we've got.

[36 : 06] To gain an audience. With him. We have a collection. Of his very words. Right here. Printed. Bound. In our own. Language.

Will we draw near. And listen. To God's man. Like the Queen of Sheba did. What's your response. To Jesus. Will you listen.

To him. Do you hear. The voice of God. Speaking to you. Through him. Will you believe. Will you obey.

His words. Though the generation. That we live in. Is. Much like the people. Of Jesus day. Think we know it.

We feel it. We see it. May none of us. Be found. Sticking our fingers. In our ears. Or pushing.
[37 : 04] Jesus away. There is a judgment. Day coming. Jesus said so. Now. And many. Will be
condemned. For their response.

To God's grace. On that day. May we not be among them. Let's pray.
Father in heaven.

Thank you. For your word. I pray. That it would go. To our hearts. All the way. Into our hearts. And
that we would respond. Lord.

We even think of. People we love. And. And know. Who have not. Responded to you. Favorably
yet. We lift them up to you. And we ask. That you would.

[37 : 59] Get through to them. Open their hearts. To your word. Give us an urgency. For those
people. Stir in our own hearts too.

Lord. That we would not neglect. Our relationship. With you. And the words. That you have given to
us. We ask these things.

In your name. Amen.