

# John: The Word Became Flesh - John 8:12-20

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I have the pleasure of being able to read our scripture for today before Jay preaches. If you have a copy of God's Word, if you want to turn to John chapter 8, we'll be reading verses 12 through 20. If you are able, if you wouldn't mind standing for the reading of God's Word, and then we'll pray. John chapter 8 starting in verse 12. Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So the Pharisees said to him, you are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. Jesus answered, even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I'm going, but you do not know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one, yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law, it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me. They said to him, therefore, where is your Father? Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my

Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also. These words he spoke in the Treasury as he taught in the temple, but no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come.

Well, as we begin chapter 8, we actually come to a very familiar story. The woman caught in adultery verses 1 through 11. We know Jesus' famous words. He who is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone. This is a beloved story. It's a story I love. There's nothing in that particular narrative that is inconsistent with the heart of God, with the character of Jesus, or the typical behavior of the Pharisees. It's really a wonderful story of forgiveness. And yet, it's a narrative that does not appear in the oldest Greek manuscripts that we possess, which is why it is bracketed or footnoted in most of your Bible translations. This is where we get into the science of textual criticism. You're asking, Jay, what is textual criticism? Well, it's the study of particular documents and here the biblical manuscripts in an attempt to determine what the original reading actually was. This particular story does not appear in any of the Greek manuscripts prior to the fifth century AD. None of them. And if the oldest manuscripts do not contain the story, we can know that it was a later addition.

So how did it get in our Bibles? Well, scholars agree that this particular story, this event, it most likely occurred. It was part of the oral tradition of the early church. Someone decided that that story belonged in the New Testament, even though it was not in the original. And even in the manuscripts where it does show up, it often does so in different places in John's Gospel. It even shows up in one manuscript towards the end of the Gospel of Luke. So the early church knew that it did not belong. There's internal evidence that it doesn't belong as well. Both in the writing style is very different than John's. It actually sounds more like Luke. And even the flow of the passage itself. If you read the Gospel of John from chapter 7 verse 52, and you skip to chapter 8 verse 12, the story, the narrative, it flows quite nicely. And so you may be asking the question, Jay, are you suggesting that our Bibles are somehow flawed? No, I am not suggesting that in any way. In fact, the sheer amount of manuscript data that we have, almost 6,000 New Testament manuscripts from the first to the 16th century allow us to know what belongs and what does not. And there's actually two places in the New Testament here in John chapter 8 and then in Mark chapter 16 from verse 9 onward to the end there. We know that those were later additions.

What is brilliant is that we know this. The Holy Spirit has preserved for us what should be in the original. And so when we come to a passage like this, what do we do with it? I would suggest that we celebrate it as part of church history, part of our oral tradition. In John 21 verse 25, John writes, there are many things that Jesus did that are not even written down. This particular story got written down. But as we come to the preaching of God's word in good conscience, I want you to be

assured that what is proclaimed on a Sunday morning is part of God's infallible, inerrant word. And so we're going to pick up our narrative in verse 12 and just so that you're all knowing where we stand as a pastoral team. This is not myself alone, but I came to this conviction independently of Scott coming to this conviction independently of Eric coming to this conviction. So regardless of whether it's Jay, Scott, or Eric, we would all be preaching from verse 12 in John chapter 8 this morning. So that's a little preamble for those of you that noticed that we skipped a section. For those that did not, I have no words. But with that, let me pray and then we will dive in to our passage this morning. Lord, would you open our eyes today that we would behold wondrous things from your law? And Lord, as we have walked in a very dark world this week, would you refresh us with the light of your gospel?

[ 7 : 08 ] Lord, we thank you for the word that it is a lamp unto our feet and a light into our path. And so would you use it for our sanctification, for our help, for our growth? Might you have our heart and might we have? Hear your voice this morning. Lord, we count it a privilege to be your people. Would you meet with us now? And it's in Jesus' wonderful name and all God's people said. Amen.

Well, back in 2000, I had a chance to go to Jerusalem, took a trip to the Holy Land. And the last day of our trip, I was spending time there in the old city. I think I was in the Jewish quarter of the city. And as I was just walking along, I had some time to kill and just observing the sights. I came across a cafe and there was a lot of commotion happening on this afternoon. There was some sort of argument occurring. There were loud words that were being spoken. Voices were being raised between these two individuals. It was a shop owner and someone else. And I realized something that I come from a very different culture. Voices were raised, hands were flapping. In fact, there was a chair that was thrown across the cafe and I was just, I was like mesmerized. I'm like, I'm in the wrong culture. This is, this is quite a sight. It's kind of exciting. And I watched this for a few moments and I just was curious like, what just occurred? And I never learned, but I just, I came across the scene after something had happened, right? Some word was spoken, something was done that perhaps shouldn't have been done. And I was seeing the aftermath of it. Well, I want us to use that lens this morning as we look at this particular passage at this exchange.

Jesus has said something, He's done something and it has then led to quite a response. And so this morning, what we're going to actually do is consider first the response of the Pharisees and we're going to begin, even though we're beginning in verse 12, we're going to actually pretty much begin in verse 13 onward. And then at the end, we're going to come back to verse 12 and really try to figure out what is it exactly that Jesus did or said that set the Pharisees off, where they became upset, where they became in fact belligerent. And we're actually going to get a clue as we get to the end of this section because I think it kind of ties everything together. So this morning, we're going to do a little detective work together. And so I think we're going to enjoy and try to figure out why the Pharisees threw a metaphorical chair at Jesus. So let's begin here starting in verse 12. John writes, again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So the Pharisee said to him, you are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. Now in Jewish court of law concerning legal matters, something needed to be, it wasn't deemed true unless there were two or three witnesses, in particular in capital cases. We learned this in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 17, verse 6, Deuteronomy 19, verse 15. In fact, in Deuteronomy 19, it says, a single witness shall not suffice. So what is going on here in terms of the response of the Pharisees? They're actually looking at anything that they can grab onto in order to dismiss Christ's words, to disqualify, to destroy the things that He is saying. You can't bear witness about yourself. They're essentially saying, Jesus, you're just one guy. Technical foul. It's like children at recess in elementary school, right? We're playing tag. You only tag me with one hand. You got to tag me with two hands. I'm not out. You were puppy guarding the base. That's essentially what we have going here with the Pharisees. They're trying to dismiss

[ 12 : 03 ] Jesus based upon a technicality. And you can recall Jesus has already given them plenty of witnesses. If we're talking about two or three witnesses, back in chapter 5 of John's Gospel, he in fact gave five witnesses as to why he's credible and we should listen to him. And in that section, verses 30 to 47 of chapter 5, he lists off these five. He says, first, John the baptizer. He, in verse 33, he's witness number one. In John 1-8, it says, he was not the light, but he came to bear witness about the light. There's my first witness. If you don't believe John, believe the miracles. John 5 36.

The very works that I'm doing, bear witness about me. We call that functional Christology. We know who Jesus is by that which he did. You raised the dead. You're not from around here. The third witness, God the Father, verse 37, recall that Jesus baptism in Matthew 3. The

Father says, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. And then the fourth witness, the scriptures themselves. In John 5 39, it says you search for scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life, but it is them that bear witness about me. You've had this material for a thousand plus years, and it's witnessed about me. And yet you dismiss. And then the fifth and final witness, Moses himself. John chapter 5 verse 46, you believed Moses. If you believe Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. You want two or three witnesses? Jesus says, I gave you five. I gave you five. Didn't we already have this conversation? Essentially, Jesus saying, you're not listening to me. You don't want to listen to me. In fact, you could imagine the Pharisees, they're like children, right? Petulant children, fingers in their ears, bellowing at the top of their lungs. We can't hear you. I'm not listening. I'm not listening. And that's the scene that we have here. And so Jesus responds. Look at verse 14. He answered them. Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true.

For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one.

And Jesus essentially says, I judge no one in the way that you do, as according to the flesh. Jesus essentially here is stating that, you know what? Even though, back in chapter 5, at another feast occasion, same leadership, same individual, same Pharisees, even though I gave you witnesses, he's saying, I don't actually need these witnesses in order for my assertions to be true. He says to the religious leaders, hey, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from. Where did Jesus come from? It's not a trick question, church. It came from heaven. If you're from heaven, not a trick question, who are you? You're God. And that's what Jesus is saying here. As God, what I proclaim, it stands on its own. It's true.

Jay, are you suggesting that God can just say whatever and it stands as truth? Well, no, I'm not saying that. I'm not saying that God could say an untruth and then that makes it true because He's God, because in fact God is actually bound by His character. That's important. So we know that when God speaks, it is true. Titus 1, 2 says that God never lies. It says in Hebrews 6, 18 that in fact it is impossible for God to lie. And I love this. We should love this because that means that what the Lord has spoken and recorded in the Word, it means that it's the truth and we can count on it. I love that. I love that in John 10.10, Jesus says, I've come to give you life to the full or in some of your passages, translations, abundant life. Come to give you life abundantly. That's the truth. We can be assured that a life devoted to service of the Lord is anything but boring. There's a richness to it. There's a joy to it regardless of the trials or the disappointments in life. Amen? Because God always tells the truth. It's a promise from the Lord. Versus Satan, who speaks lies, no following God is constraining. You're limited. It's boring. It's lame. There's a better way. Just a lie that he brought in the garden to Eve. God is holding out on you. Throw off his words and really live. Forth, we are daily in a war of belief, of who we're going to believe today. And based upon it, it will affect the choices that we make and the joy that we experience. A young woman who I pastored for many years as a youth who sort of got off the rails in her life and then she came back to faith in the Lord and pursued a life of holiness and then later just sexual purity and chastity. And it was interesting because she got married, married a godly man, and as a married woman she came back and she said, Jay, thank you. Thank you, Pastor Jay, for telling me the truth.

[ 18 : 47 ] Thank you for calling me to holiness. I get it now. You were telling the truth. We're in a battle for belief every day of who we're going to believe and God always tells the truth. And Jesus here says, my testimony stands because of who I am. But then check this. He gives us something verse 16 to 18. He says, yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I am the Father who sent me. And your law, it is written that the testimony of two men is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself and the Father who sent me bears witness about me. So even though Jesus back in chapter 5 gives five witnesses, and he says here, I can just testify based upon who I am as God, He graciously restates a second witness for the Pharisees related to His declaration of being the light of the world. Yeah, the Father, He testifies to me as well. My additional witness, the Father who sent me. Church, He didn't have to do that. He didn't have to do that. He said, hey, stick it in your beak, right? Go pounds saying, I am not as God, what I say is enough. He actually accommodates to us. And He accommodates to the religious leaders here.

And He gives them this second witness. It is a gracious move on Jesus' part. It is a kind gesture as He's dealing with some very hostile individuals. And I think He has set a pattern for us, church. Amen. He has set a pattern for how we're to behave to the world around us, to one another, and to the unbeliever that we are to walk and we are to speak in gracious words, gracious tone. Colossians 4-6 says,

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so you may know how to answer each person. There is a patience and a graciousness to Jesus speaking even here to the most unkind. Church, when we cease to be gracious in our words, number one, we destroy community. We hurt the church family. When we're not gracious towards one another. But then secondly, as we're outward facing to the world, when we are not gracious in our words, we're not witnessing to the light. We have no witness. And so Jesus gives us a marvelous example here as He interacts with some folks that are just really unkind. And maybe that's why if you've ever seen a street of Angelus with a bullhorn and maybe a sign and they're on the corner and there's just something in your spirit that's like, that's not. There's something off there.

And what's off oftentimes is the tone, that there's a belligerence, that there's an anger, there's a vitriol. Like that doesn't represent the Jesus I know. That doesn't represent the heart of the gospel, that God is merciful, that His kindness leads us to repentance. And so we're called to be a people that exercise words in a tone of grace. Amen? Well, even with Jesus engaging in compassion here, they still respond harshly. Look at verse 19. They said to Him, therefore, where is your father? And Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father also. Now there's a couple of layers happening here. There's still this ignorance on spiritual realities that

Jesus is speaking about. Often when He spoke, folks misunderstood. You need to be born again. I can't go back into the uterus of my mom. That's weird. What are you talking about? And Jesus is talking on a spiritual level. They're thinking fleshly, right? I have living water. Well, where's that water? I have food to eat that you don't know. Jesus has a lunch. What? Right? And folks often misunderstand what He's saying. And here He's talking about His heavenly Father. They're thinking on an earthly level. That's the first layer. But additionally, they may also be accusing, be smirking the name of Jesus and in particular Mary, His mother, who was pregnant, if you recall, by the Holy Spirit, but she was unwed.

There were stories circulating. And I think this statement, where is your father? It may actually have been a very hostile insult towards Jesus. And if you connect this statement with verse 41, which we'll get to in a couple weeks, says in John 8:41, Jesus says, you're doing the works of your father. They said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality. And the nuance there is like you. So they're throwing an insult at Jesus. Your mother, she ran around. She got pregnant out of wedlock. Essentially, they're saying Jesus, you're an illegitimate kid. And they're just besmirching the name of Mary, this choice servant of the Lord. And so you really see here this just vitriol in the heart of the Pharisees. They're so angry at Jesus. They're so belligerent. Why? Why? Why?

[ 25 : 15 ] Well, verse 20 gives us our clue. Let's look at it together. It says here, these words, he spoke in the treasury as he taught in the temple. But no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come. The Pharisees are upset with Jesus because of where he is speaking and when he is speaking. He's making these claims of being the light of the world in the wrong place at the wrong time. So let's first consider the where. Jesus is not some remote village. He's not on some hillside away from the religious establishment. Rather, it says he is where? Let's say he's in the treasury. There's your clue. He's in the treasury.

What's the big deal with the treasury? Well, the treasury is located in the temple. Specifically, it is located in the court of the women. The court of the women was the inner court. And if you know anything about the temple, you have three courts you have outside. You have the court of the Gentiles where the nations come and they hear about the Lord. And then inside of that is the court of women, which was the main court. And then beyond that, there was the court of the priests. The women couldn't go and the men couldn't go if you were not a priest. But here they are in the court of the women. The court of the women was the central courtyard in the temple where worshipers gathered. And within this court lie the treasury. We know from writings, specifically the Mishnah, the oral traditions written about 200 AD, recording what was there in the court of the women. That's where the treasury was located. And the treasury was 13 receptacles. They were trumpet shaped, narrow where you put in your your currency and then kind of ballooned out and they were just

located around this this courtyard. Kind of like how we have these black boxes sort of literally, you know, just kind of posted in different places in our facility. And so we know here that they're in the court of the women. Now that's the where. Let's talk about the when. This is during the Feast of Tabernacles. In fact, we know it is the end of the feast. It very well could have been the final day of the feast. And recall what we know about this feast. What is the the Feast of Tabernacles? It is this feast commemorating Israel's 40 year wilderness wandering.

Specifically celebrating God's provision, His protection during this time. And how would you celebrate this feast if you were part of the Jewish community? You would set up a makeshift tent for a week. Think of it guys, it's like a bunch of hunting blinds. Surrounding the temple, there off in the Kidron Valley, surrounding Jerusalem. And for seven days you would live in these makeshift tents. If you read the end of Leviticus 23, it talks about some of the materials you might use, the sticks and the leaves and so forth. And you would live in in in these tents around the temple complex for the entire week, reenacting that period of wandering. As part of the celebration of this feast, there was a ceremony called the illumination of the temple. It again is recorded in the Mishnah, which involved the ritual lighting of four golden oil filled lamps in the court of the women, which is where Jesus is currently teaching. These lampstands, these four lampstands were huge cantalabras. They were like 75 feet high. Each of these cantalabras had four branches. At the top of every branch was a huge bowl and young men bearing 10 gallon pitchers of oil would climb these massive ladders to fill the golden bowls and then light them. And note, back in the day there was no city lighting in ancient Jerusalem. Yet during this week in particular, the Feast of Tabernacles, the temple lit the city. I'm sure it was remarkable. I'm sure it was awe-inspiring, like a diamond in the middle of the city, just like emanating. And remember, they're reenacting the wilderness wandering, where the pillar of fire by night, which served as a guide through the desert, it was there and they just surrounded it. Are you getting the picture? Why the Pharisees are so angry with Jesus? It is perhaps evening, the massive lamps were lit, blasting light from the temple. And Jesus all of a sudden proclaims, verse 12, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Pharisees, they're gobsmacked. They're like, did he just say what I think he said? Who is this guy? And I want us to understand church, Jesus is offending on multiple levels here. Because first, Jesus is identifying himself as the promised Messiah. Well, let's say in Isaiah chapter 9, it says, verse 2, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness on them has light shown. Jesus has just announced to you, light has shown. I am the light. But it's so much worse than that. It is 10,000 times worse than that if you're a Pharisee. Because the second way Jesus offends is he's actually claiming to be the very shekinah glory of God. And you have to see that with this image here. He is standing in the central courtyard of the temple with lights ablaze shouting, I am the light of the world. Israel is reenacting the desert wandering with the pillar of fire by night in their midst. And Jesus saying, God is here. In fact, I am the pillar of fire. This is what Jesus has been declaring for the last three chapters of this gospel church. He's been declaring, I am God. I am the God of the Old Testament. Back in John chapter 6, the man of the Fed you, what did he say? I'm the bread of life. John chapter 7, the rock that gave you drink as you wandered. What does he say? Hey, come drink for me. If you're thirsty, I can give you drink. And now here in chapter 8, I was the pillar of fire that led you for 40 years and is now standing before you now. Believe, believe.

[ 34 : 04 ] I mean, the circuitry in the Pharisees is just burned up at this point. They're just, they're beside themselves. Jesus is present. I am God. The God of the Old Testament, that's me. The pillar of fire, that's me. I am the light of the world. The promise of sight, it's me. And yet in the face of such extravagant kindness and crystal clear teaching, all the Pharisees could do is accuse. That's all they could do. Oh, and there's a third layer of offense here, right? Jesus says, what? I am the light of the what? The world. I'm the light of the world. The light of Israel only. No, the world. It was always in God's heart to bring salvation to the nations that's in the Abrahamic covenant from Genesis 12. That all the families of the earth would be blessed through you as you declare the hope and the mercy and the good news of the Messiah. And Isaiah 42.6, it reads that you will be a light to the nations Israel and the religious leaders missed it. They didn't want to be a light to the world. They didn't want to go to the Gentiles, to the Goy, they didn't want to go to the Samaritans, the half-breeds. This should be for us. And you see these leaders, they loved their status. They were proud individuals, self-focused individuals, used to being in charge, not willing actually to follow God. And it's tragic. It's a tragic scene as Jesus is there declaring, I'm the light of the world. Let me end here with three implications of this statement.

This I am statement that Jesus makes saying I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. We're not the Pharisees trust that we have responded better. But what are the implications for us? Firstly, Jesus continues to be the light of the world. Amen? He continues to be the light of the world. God's exclusive means of salvation. Jesus did not say I am a light amongst others. He said I am the light. I am the source of spiritual truth. Peter in Acts 4 said hey there's one name under heaven by which men are saved. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2.5 there's one God, there's one mediator between God and men, the man, Jesus, Christ Jesus. There's one mediator. This is God's soul means of salvation. Consider the image of fire in the desert. The only way that

Israel was going to get to the promised land was to follow the pillar of fire by night, the cloud by day. You follow that you will get to the promised land. We cannot get to the promised land back to Eden unless we follow the same light church. God has sent Jesus the light of the world. That is God's plan A, B, C, D, E, F, G. That's it. There's one plan and it's Jesus. And yet the lie, the spiritual darkness of this world is that no, there are many plans. There's many ways. There's lots of lights that you can follow in this life. Pick the one that requires the least from you. Or man just be good, be a good person. It's another plan. Be better than the next guy. Live by the scales and God will invite you in. It's a lie. Not if God is God. Not if God is holy, holy, holy. Not if God dwells in unapproachable light. We need a Savior. We need help. It's not about being just a good person. Isaiah 64 of our righteous deeds are like politic garment. Even the good things that we do. And I get it church, the Gospel confronts. Light exposes stuff that we prefer to remain hidden. But when that is exposed, we recognize finally we need a doctor. We need a great physician. And we're finally in the place where we're like, I need a Savior. Amen. And that's the good news. That there is a great physician. That there is a faith savior. God's exclusive means of salvation. Second implication of this statement on the life of the world is Jesus is a light. Guess what? He's called his people also to walk in light in this life. Which actually explains why many people avoid Jesus. Right? Didn't Jesus say that in John 3? Lights come, but men love what? Darkness. Because their deeds are evil. And you know that used to be us church. That used to be us before we placed our faith in Christ. We began life in spiritual darkness. Paul says in

Ephesians 5, 8, for at one time you were in darkness. But now you are light in the world. And he says, walk as children of light. Walk as children of light. And now as believers for the first time we have an appetite for light church. We never had that before. But we desire that our resources be useful to the Lord. We understand what purpose is. We understand how to live life. The ethic that God wants us to live by. The fact that we now become selfless. Think about others. We know how to handle our sexuality like light. We're not stumbling around trying to figure out what does this mean? How do we do this? And there's an appetite for the first time. I for the first time want God to receive glory in my life. For the first time I actually want to be used of Him. I think the best example of this are plants. Plants are phototropic. Did you know that? Which means plants wherever the light is, that's where they lean to. They're drawn to it. And as those alive in Christ that possess His Spirit, we are now alive to

[ 41 : 17 ] God His words. We now long for that. Which is why we gather weekly to hear from Him. We're called to walk in light. And then third implication here. If we're people who now possess the light of the gospel, guess what? We're actually also called to carry that light. Amen? What is fascinating of these 7 I Am statements that Jesus makes? This is the only one where we're actually called to imitate it. It's different than the rest. Never are we told in Scripture, hey, you need to be the bread. You need to be the door. You need to be the vine. You need to be the resurrection. The only I Am statement that we're told to imitate is this one. We have also been called to be light. In fact, let's say it this way.

God has now repurposed our lives. Amen? It's wonderful that we were delivered as a sense of colossians one from the domain of darkness and now we're here to advance light. Why do you think we're planting a church? To bring light to another part of the city. Jesus says in Matthew 5, 14, you're the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Church, that's joy for us to participate in the work of God. He's now repurposed our lives. It's amazing as I wish you could have the view that I have because as you look at at all of you, we don't have time for everyone to come up here and take a turn. It's remarkable to think about who we are today and who we would be without the gospel. We're very different people today than we would have been. Amen? And some of us need them. Yes, we're on the journey. Sanification, daily, we're battling, but we're very different people

today. God has repurposed your life. He's repurposed all of our lives in Christ. I don't think there's a better example from church history of a life repurposed than the slave trader turned pastor John Newton, 18th century, wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. And I love what he says here about his own transformation as he comes to the light of the gospel. He says, I can see no reason why the Lord singled me out for mercy unless it was to show by one astonishing instance that with him nothing is impossible. Praise God that we get to serve as a body. We got to celebrate the leadership the Lord has brought together here. We're here on mission. We're here to actually see light move into the city and people come to the knowledge that there is a Savior who died on their behalf. That's why we're here and what a joy to do it together. Amen? Father, thank you that you are indeed the light of the world. That you delight to rescue centers. Lord, we love the psalm assess it. Lord, you're my light and my salvation. Because of that, whom am I going to fear? Father, let us walk in courage and joy today. Father, would you strengthen our commitment and our worship of you today that we would walk close to you? Lord, we know that to walk with you we need to have light. We possess you, but we also possess your word, which is that lamp and light. Lord, we know we're not going to receive direction today reading billboards or watching commercials. We're going to hear your voice as we open your word. And so Lord, here even at the front end of the year, we want to resolve to spend more time with you. That indeed we could be your people. We could walk in light and we could carry that light. Lord, I pray that you would be preparing conversations even for each of us this year. Father, whether that be here or down in the Moran prairie, Lord, we would love to see your activity working through your people for your glory. And Lord, we commit ourselves to that end and it's in Jesus' name and all guys people prayed. Amen.