

# Helping God keep his promise

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our reading this morning is from the book of Genesis, starting in chapter 11 and verse 27. Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot.

Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred in Ur of the Chaldeans. And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was barren. She had no child.

Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan.

But when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

[ 1 : 42 ] When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Morah. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land. So he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. Hear the word of the Lord.

Good morning everyone. Now I need to confess to some poor planning on my part. When I sort of broke up the book of Genesis for our next preaching series, I didn't realise that the first sermon from Genesis 16 would be given on Mother's Day. And I think if I had, I would have just pushed it back a week, because I don't think, I can think of very few passages in the Bible less appropriate to preach on Mother's Day than Genesis chapter 16. So that's entirely my fault. I'm sorry about that, but here we are, and we're going to press on. Let me pray, and then we'll get into the Word of God together. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can gather here, and that we can sing your praises, and hear your Word. Lord, we pray that this part of Scripture, even today, might, you might make it precious to us, and teach it, and instruct us by it, for the strengthening of our faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, before we get into chapter 16 itself, I want to kind of reorient us in the book of Genesis more broadly. But first, by way of introduction, the word Christian occurs three times in the New Testament, three times. And it began, the use of the word Christian, as a designation other people would give to Christians. Christians weren't calling themselves Christians. Other people were calling them Christians. In the first century, what Christians called themselves, well, they used other words. The most common four ways Christians referred to themselves in the New Testament are firstly as brothers and sisters, around 270 times. Secondly, as disciples, around 250 times. Then as believers, around 80 times. And fourthly, as saints, around 70 times. Now, disciples is a bit of a special case, because that really is just concentrated in the four Gospels. It's kind of the words that the Gospel writers and Jesus used. So, outside the Gospels, Christian most commonly referred to themselves, not as disciples, but as brothers and sisters, i.e. referring to our relationship with one another, and as believers, a way of designating our relationship with God.

Who are we? We are believers. A Christian is someone who has faith. A Christian is someone who believes. And so, the creeds in the early church, as they developed, creeds that would be declared by people who were presenting for baptism, or by the whole church when gathered together, quickly took the form of statements of faith. I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit. Now, in the Bible, the supreme model of faith is the Old Testament figure of Abraham.

[ 5 : 32 ] Galatians 3 verse 9 says, Those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. New Testament writers frequently refer to Abraham when they want to discuss the need for faith, or the nature of faith.

And it's this foundational figure of Abraham, whom we're going to follow, over the next few weeks, in this central part of the book of Genesis, from chapters 16 to 25.

Now, we have spoken on Genesis before at church, but we left off this series in chapter 24, in 2024 at chapter 15. So, if you've joined Grace since then, well, you missed out on those talks, but even if you were around in 2024, you've probably forgotten them.

So, let me briefly summarise what's come in Genesis so far. I mean, it's pretty familiar to most of us, so we'll keep it brief. Genesis is the book of creation. It tells us how God created the heavens and earth by his word, making all things good, with humans in a special place, as his image bearers. Genesis is the book of the fall. It tells of the sin and rebellion of humanity that plunged the world into disorder and misery and brought God's curse upon the world.

[ 7 : 08 ] And Genesis is the book of God's promises. It tells of the promises God gives to reverse the curse and undo the effects of the fall.

But the promises of God are placed within a narrative, within a story. Now, if we just had a list of God's promises, you know, if the Bible were just a list of all the things God promised us, well, that itself would be wonderful, because God's promises are wonderful.

But God has given us more than that. And we see God's promises play out in a story, a true story, an historical story, narrative.

And so we see real people receive God's promises, wrestle with God's promises, trust God's promises, and doubt God's promises, all in the midst of their messy experiences of life.

Now, I love biblical narrative, as we're coming to in Genesis, but we do need to come to biblical narrative with the right expectations.

[ 8 : 23 ] Biblical narrative, you know, tells stories, it engages in storytelling with an economy of words. Now, in this modern era, we're used to really lengthy, drawn-out stories.

You know, Harry Potter, The Wheel of Time, if anyone's ploughed through that, I haven't. How many seasons of The Gilmore Girls were they?

And they're all the same. I mean, that... And you think about it, like, if you're in the entertainment industry, you know, if you're producing TV series for Netflix, or something, it's actually a win for you if you can come up with something that goes on for 10 seasons.

Because you make more money if you can hook people on a long story that just drags on and on and on. But biblical narratives are concise.

Their literary power comes from conveying much, much meaning with few words. There's a simple elegance here that gives room for our imagination to soar.

[ 9 : 36 ] So what I want us to do is step through Genesis chapter 16, verse by verse, and it would be really helpful if you can have your Bibles open, because I want you to see the power of this story.

In Genesis 16, we're picking up the story of Abram and his wife, Sarai, which began in chapter 11. Now in time, soon God will change their names to Abraham and Sarah, the names by which we better remember them.

But for now, they're still Abram and Sarai. In chapter 12, God called Abram to leave his homeland, his father's household, journey to the land of Canaan, and God gave Abram promises.

There were several promises, but they revolved around two main ideas. The first idea in the promises God gave Abram is the idea of nationhood, that God would make Abram into a great nation, give many descendants who would inherit the land of Canaan as their possession.

The second main idea in the promises God gave Abram is the idea of universal blessing. In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed, God promised.

[10:46] Through Abram's family, the curse of sin would be reversed and God's blessing would be restored. But time had passed and there was a problem.

Chapter 16, verse 1. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children.

How could Abram become a great nation and how could he be a source of universal blessing for all the families of the earth when he himself had not a single offspring?

For God's promises to have any hope of fulfilment, Abram needed a son. But Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children.

Indeed, that obstacle has been evident from the very beginning, before God even first called Abram, from the reading that Sean read out, Genesis chapter 11, verse 30, now Sarai was barren, she had no child.

[11:53] So the obstacle of Abram's and Sarai's childlessness has been ever-present throughout their journeying. But as the weeks and months and years ticked by, it weighed more and more heavily upon them.

And so when sometime after arriving in Canaan, the Lord spoke again to Abram in chapter 15, Abram cut to the chase right away. Just look back at chapter 15.

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be very great. But Abram said, O Lord God, what will you give me?

For I continue childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold, you've given me no offspring and a member of my household will be my heir.

Now on that occasion, God renewed his promise. As he promised, verse 4, the word of the Lord came to him.

[13:03] Chapter 15, verse 4, This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside and said, Look toward heaven and the number of stars, if you're able to number them.

Then he said to him, So shall your offspring be. And at that time, Genesis 15, verse 6, Abram believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness.

But still, the years passed. Still, the promise was unfulfilled. Still, chapter 16, Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children.

The words of the promise receded into the past, into memory. Perhaps it was time to speed things up a bit.

Perhaps it was time to help God keep his promise. So, Sarai came up with a plan. Chapter 16, verse 1, She had a female Egyptian servant, whose name was Hagar.

[14:17] And Sarai said to Abram, Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go into my servant, it may be that I shall obtain children by her.

Now, there are several things we might notice about Sarai's plan. Let's start with the personal. It's no surprise that Sarai deeply feels the grief of her childlessness.

Not just grief, but probably some shame too, given the cultural expectations of her day. She feels this.

It is painful for her. A deep grief. Notice in Sarai's words, she doesn't mention God's promise. She doesn't mention God's blessing.

Rather, she bitterly dwells on what God had withheld. The Lord has prevented me from bearing children. I don't think we should judge Sarai too harshly here.

[15:31] Someone, whether they're married or unmarried, who longs for children and whose longing for children is unfulfilled, someone in that position like Sarai will feel the passing of years in an acutely painful way.

And the Scriptures, as a whole, are tender toward those who experience the grief of childlessness. that said, it's worth noting that everything that follows in chapter 16 begins with Sarai's sense that God is a miser.

It begins with Sarai's sense that God has withheld something good from her, something which she strongly, and indeed rightly, desires. And with this sense that God has held back this good thing from her, Sarai takes matters into her own hands.

I wonder how many of our own sinful behaviours, actions, habits begin in the same way.

God hasn't given me this, so I need to get it for myself. But what about Sarai's plan itself, this plan she comes up with?

[17:00] Well, there were no fertility clinics in the year 2000 BC or thereabouts, so Sarai proposes a rather extreme form of surrogacy.

Abram would take Sarai's maid servant as a concubine or as a second and junior wife and Hagar's children would be counted as Sarai's children.

That's Sarai's plan. Now, this strikes us as extreme. It's worth realising, though, this kind of surrogacy was practised at times in the ancient world, at least among the nations.

For ancient people of this time and in this part of the world, what Sarai proposes here was an option. It was an option.

However, it's an option that the Bible never endorses, never endorses using a slave girl as a surrogate mother, and it certainly was using her.

[18:04] And there are a couple of clues in the text that Sarai's plan is not such a good one. The first red flag is just that little detail that Hagar is an Egyptian servant, an Egyptian servant girl.

It might just trigger a memory for readers of Genesis to back in chapter 12, where there was another episode where an Egyptian came between Abram and Sarai in their marriage.

On that occasion, it was an Egyptian man, Pharaoh, and God opposed Pharaoh by striking Pharaoh's household with plagues so that he couldn't insert himself between Abram and Sarai in their marriage.

Well, now we find another Egyptian, a servant girl, about to be placed in between them. There's a second warning sign, perhaps, and that is when Sarai says, it may be that I shall obtain children by her, the expression obtain children is literally the verb to be built.

It may be that I will be built through her. And it's the same verb that's used in Genesis chapter 2, verse 22, when the Lord God literally built a woman from the rib taken from Adam.

[19:31] If Sarai is to be built in terms of bearing children, well, it is the Lord who will build her, not Sarai's scheme.

In any case, this is Sarai's plan, and you might notice that Abram doesn't argue, he doesn't put up a fight at all. Verse 2, and Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

Just as another husband had been at a critical earlier moment in Genesis, Abram is passive and silent and entirely complicit.

Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So after Abram had lived 10 years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram, her husband, as a wife.

10 years. I mean, we can understand why Sarai was tired of waiting. But notice in verse 3 that the words Abram's wife and her husband tell us no new information.

[20:47] I mean, you could have, you could cross those words out of verse 3, it wouldn't change the sense of it at all, except that, what are those words doing? They're just there to draw attention to what is relevant, the information that's relevant.

Sarai, Abram's wife, gave Hagar to Abram, her husband. Can you feel the text's horror at what is taking place here?

Likewise, the Egyptian, her servant, adds no new information. It just tells us the things we need to know about Hagar.

The two things we need to know about her, that she's an Egyptian, an outsider, and that she was a slave girl, she was powerless. This is something done to her, not by her.

But do you notice something else about verse 3? Let me just read part of it together and see if you can pick up an echo here. Abram's wife took Hagar and gave her to her husband.

[22:02] Does that remind you of anything? You know, just as with the expression, Abram, listen to the voice of Sarai, we have another echo of Genesis chapter 3.

Genesis chapter 3, the woman took some of the fruit and gave it to her husband. Do you hear it? Abram's wife took Hagar and gave her to her husband.

With just a few words, Genesis 16 has been framed as a parallel to the fall in Genesis 3. And once we realise that, the similarities are striking.

There's the same suspicion on the part of the woman that God has withheld something good.

There's the same passive capitulation on the part of the man. There's the same taking of matters into their own hands.

The only thing missing is the serpent. The faith of Genesis 15 is immediately followed by the faithlessness of Genesis 16.

[ 23 : 17 ] And Genesis 16 is to Genesis 15 what Genesis 3 is to Genesis 2. We know how badly things turned out in Genesis 3.

Well, what's the outcome here? Verse 4, and he, Abram, went into Hagar and she conceived. Immediately, Hagar becomes pregnant.

It seems almost effortless after all the waiting Abram and Sarai had had to that point. This would, you think, be what Sarai had hoped for. She wanted Hagar to bear children so that those children could be Sarai's.

And Sarai's grief and shame would come to an end as Hagar bore children for her. But when we rely on ourselves and our plans, we never make things better and quickly things turn sour in Abram's household.

Verse 4 again, and when she, that's Hagar, saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, may the wrong done to me be on you.

[ 24 : 35 ] I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me. And Abram said to Sarai, behold, your servant is in your power, do to her as you please.

Then Sarai dealt harshly with her and she fled from her. Notice the progression in verses 4 to 6, from Hagar to Sarai to Abram, then back to Sarai, then back to Hagar.

First Hagar looked with contempt on her mistress. The servant girl understandably starts to imagine that her rank in the household has increased. Her status has risen because she's the one who's been able to fall pregnant to Abram and bear a conceiver child for him.

Rather than relieve Sarai's torment, Hagar's pregnancy has only increased it. Sarai then, feeling tormented by Hagar, blames everything on her husband.

You know, this is your fault, the Lord judged between you and me. And Abram is once again completely passive, he refuses to accept any responsibility, he just tries to appease his wife and he says, well, you go and do whatever you want.

[ 25 : 53 ] so Sarai treats Hagar so harshly that she runs away. I mean, Genesis 16 verses 1 to 6 is an absolute train wreck.

Abram and Sarai blow it big time. Everything they say and everything they do is deplorable. Doubting and forgetting God's promises or tiring of waiting on them, they take matters into their own hands.

They try to do for themselves by very dubious means what God had already promised. Galatians chapter 5 verse 6 says that faith works through love.

In Genesis chapter 16 when faith fails, love goes with it. Not once do Abram or Sarai pause to consider Hagar her needs, her well-being, her dignity.

She is used, abused and abandoned. After the magnificent sweeping promises of Genesis 12 and 15, Abram and Sarai quickly proved themselves to be utterly unworthy of the promises they had received.

[ 27 : 09 ] And as we read this chapter it is plain as day to us that the greater obstacle to the promises of God would not be their childlessness but their faithlessness.

And the questions these verses raise for us are can the plans of men derail the plan of God? does our faithlessness nullify God's faithfulness?

When we wobble in faith as Abram and Sarai wobbled does God wobble in his commitment? In one sense Genesis 16 leaves those questions hanging unanswered.

In another sense though they'd already been answered. In Genesis chapter 15 when God renewed his promise to Abram when God Genesis 15 verse 18 made a covenant with Abram the Lord bound no one but himself he gave an unconditional promise promise that would not be revoked that could not be undermined not even by the faltering faith of those who received the promise what God had promised he would do and friends brothers sisters I don't know about you but I actually find the betrayal of Abram and Sarai in this chapter something of a comfort to me

I mean here is the Bible's great hero of faith the one the New Testament will hold up as the example of faith committing this complete blunder this catastrophic failure God and what we're going to see in Genesis in the weeks to come is we are going to see Abram Abraham as he will be grow in faith he often gets things wrong but gradually over the course of his life he learns that God is trustworthy and he learns what it means to trust a trustworthy God all of us every single one of us who believes in Jesus we're like the man in the gospels who exclaims to Jesus I do believe help my unbelief like

[ 30 : 03 ] Abram and Sarai we who believe are believers who still have a lot of growing in faith to do but when we wobble in our faith in God he never wobbles in his commitment to us what secures our future is not the strength of our imperfect faith but the unbreakable might of his unfailing word Jesus said all that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out God does not need our help to keep his promises God keeps his promises so take heart take heart brothers and sisters take heart believers in the unfailing promise of God but what of

Hagar Hagar who'd been abandoned by Abraham who'd been mistreated by Abraham who'd been mistreated by Sarai forced to flee what would become of Hagar well let's let's briefly consider in the second half of this chapter what becomes of Hagar verse 7 chapter 16 verse 7 the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness the spring on the way to Shur now Shur is in the northern end of the Sinai peninsula it stands between Canaan and Egypt so Hagar it seems is fleeing back to her homeland back to Egypt if Abram's still living in Hebron which is the last place that he'd been sort of given that we've been told he's living in Genesis if he's still living there she may already have covered around about 110 kilometres on her journey back to Egypt she's pregnant she's vulnerable she's alone and she's been travelling through inhospitable terrain but she's not forgotten not by

God the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness in verse 8 and he said Hagar servant of Sarai where have you come from and where are you going she said I'm fleeing from my mistress Sarai now the angel of the Lord presumably knows exactly where she's come from and exactly where she's going he addresses her for starters as Hagar servant of Sarai he knows who she is he came looking for her he found her the Lord found her so he knows the answer to the question before he asks it but by asking!

the angel of the angel of Sarai to share her own mind Hagar's voice is heard for the first time in the chapter a dignity that Abram and Sarai never afforded her but the angel's next response might surprise us verse 9 the angel of the Lord said to her return to your mistress and submit to her the angel sends Hagar back to Sarai in fact the language here is even more striking in Hebrew than in English I won't go into the details but verse 9 directly echoes a couple of phrases in verse 6 where Abram says to Sarai your servant is in your power and where the narrator tells us Sarai dealt harshly with her well the language here is echoing those phrases!

He makes it clear that what he's asking Hagar to do going back to Sarai to submit to her would not be easy so what's going on here if you were to adopt the most critical stance you might say God is sending her back to a potentially abusive household enabling her mistreatment but if we don't adopt that stance and I want to be very very clear this is absolutely not a general command that women fleeing abusive homes should be sent back to them that's not what's going on here this is a specific situation it's descriptive not prescriptive but it's still surprising even unsettling so what do we make of it well I think this little section this section here from verse 9 to 12 of chapter 16 vaguely parallels [ 35 : 05 ] Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 to 3 so you remember in Genesis chapter 12 verse 1 the Lord sent Abram he commands him to go out from his country his people his father's household to the land of Canaan well now here in chapter 16 verse 9 the Lord sends Hagar turns her back from her native country from the people of Egypt back to Canaan back to rejoin Abram's household both sendings that in chapter 12 that in chapter 16 were difficult to obey both sendings called for faith and in both chapter 12 and chapter 16 the sending is followed by a promise here in chapter 16 return to your mistress and submit to her verse 10 the angel of the Lord also said to her I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude and the angel of the Lord said to her behold you are pregnant and shall bear a son and you shall call his name Ishmael because the

Lord has listened to your affliction he shall be a wild donkey of a man his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen before we look at the details of the promise notice in passing three times verse 9 verse 10 verse 11 we read the angel of the Lord said to her again another example of repetition that isn't actually required to make sense of what's taking place here but it's it's repeated three times so that we realize that here the Lord who on multiple occasions had spoken to Abram is speaking to this lowly lonely Egyptian slave girl but what are the promises that the Lord makes to Hagar here some are positive some are a bit ambivalent the positive verse 10 offspring that cannot be numbered for multitude it sounds a bit like the promise given to Abram in chapter 15 could it be that God's promises to

Abram would be fulfilled through the son of Hagar also positive is verse 11 the name that Hagar is to give her son Ishmael means God hears and the explanation is because the Lord has listened to your affliction the birth of this son the promise of that he would become a multitude of descendants these were God's kindness and mercy to Hagar in the midst of her hardship he listened to her affliction this son would turn out you see not to be a gift for Sarai as Sarai had planned but rather a gift to her slave girl Hagar more ambivalent is the promise in verse 12 a wild donkey of a man hand against everyone you remember from chapter 12 that

Abram's family line was to be a source of blessing for all the families of the earth Hagar's son Ishmael would be a much more divisive figure a focal point not of blessing but of hostility who would dwell over against all his brothers universal blessing you see would not come through this line the line of Ishmael rather like the rest of the nations the descendants of Ishmael the hope for blessing for Ishmael's line would be the line of another son of Abram and so I think the significance of God sending Hagar back to Abram and Sarai is not just the physical and material security that that household would provide for her that I mean she was in a very vulnerable position pregnant runaway slave nothing no possessions or anything to her name very vulnerable position but the significance of her returning to

Abram and Sarai's household is less that material security but that God is sending Hagar back to the place of blessing back to the family through whom God had promised to bring blessing to all the families of the earth she had been driven out by Abram and Sarai's cruelty she was invited back by the Lord's kindness and Hagar responds in verse 13 so she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her you are a God of seeing for she said truly here I have seen him who looks after me therefore the well was called Beelahairoi that means the well of the living one who sees me it lies between Kadesh and Bered Hagar powerless mistreated afflicted this nobody in the story of

[ 40 : 22 ] Abram and Sarai was seen and heard by God I'm going to return to that in a moment but first let's just briefly consider the outcome in verses 15 and 16 Hagar does clearly return to Abram because we read in verse 16 and Hagar bore Abram a son and Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar bore Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram notice the number of times we hear the names Abram and Hagar in these two verses the one name we don't hear is the name Sarai there's no mention of her Sarai's plan had failed this son is Abram's and Hagar's not Sarai's Sarai no doubt continued to feel the grief of that but as things would turn out that was not because the Lord was being unkind to

Sarai or miserly toward her it was just that God had in fact planned better things for Sarai although Sarai herself didn't realise that yet but that's to get ahead of ourselves I want to close with a contrast we see in chapter 16 between those two women Sarai and Hagar Sarai focused on what God had not given her taking matters into her own hands and her plans failing Hagar!

Hagar enabled by God's promise to her to go back into a difficult situation in obedience to his command it was enough for Hagar to say God has seen me God has seen me you know I think I believe verse 13 may actually be the only place in the entire Bible where someone other than God gives a name to God where God is named by someone other than God himself there are many times of course when God gives new names to people he'll do that for Abraham and Sarai shortly there are places where God declares his own name so that we can call him by the names he gives us but here alone do we have a human given the honour of assigning a name to God verse 13 so she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her you are a God of seeing for she said truly here have I seen him who sees me it is this desperate Egyptian slave girl who wondrously came to know that God saw her even in her loneliness and desolation and affliction what a comfort it is that the Lord God is the God who sees the God who sees will you pray with me heavenly father you have given us many great and precious promises in your word and through the Lord Jesus Christ we thank you Lord God that you are faithful and you will keep every promise you have given us we know that our faith is imperfect so thank you that when we wobble in our faith you never wobble in your commitment to us please as you taught Abram and Sarai to trust you we pray that you would teach us grow us in faith show us that we can believe you in everything you have said that we might cling to you we thank you Lord God that you are the God who sees you see our affliction you do not leave us alone in our affliction but you are with us you comfort us and you give us your promises as a hope to which we may cling we thank you for the way that in your son you entered into this world and into our affliction and our suffering so that the curse of sin might be removed and we might receive your promised blessing and so we pray that we might dwell and

delight in your comfort and the certainty of your word to us in  
[ 45 : 35 ] Jesus name we pray! to