

The Reality of Unbelief

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[0 : 0 0] over demons. Mark also shows us that Jesus is Lord over sickness.! And he's showing us these in succession. He shows us how this woman who! was plagued with an issue of blood for 12 years, spent everything she had on doctors.

And what the Bible says is instead of getting better, she got worse. And she said, if I can touch the hem of his garment, not even touch him, but touch the hem of his garment, even without his knowledge, I know I would be healed. And she did, and she was.

And Mark shows that. And these are accounts that if someone is fabricating a story, these are not good stories to fabricate, because they're verifiable. And Mark would have written them very close to the time that they would have taken place, where people who would have witnessed it and known about it would be able to testify to it. He was not writing a hundred years later. He was writing probably around 25 to 30 years after these things had happened.

And so many of these people would have still been alive. And then finally, Mark helps us to see that Jesus is Lord over death. When he raises the daughter of Jairus, the synagogue ruler from the dead.

And so Mark is painting a picture of Jesus and who he is.

[1 : 3 0] But when we look at Mark chapter 5, it ends in a kind of interesting way. Look at verse 43 in Mark chapter 5.

It ends by Mark recording, and he strictly charged them, meaning the father and mother of the girl who was raised, Jairus and his wife.

He strictly charged them that no one should know this. Immediately what we get to see is that Jesus is not interested in just having people to flock after him and follow him for the miracles and for the signs that he was actually accomplishing.

And this is especially true about the Jews who had very skewed ideas about Messiah and who he was and what he would do when he came. And so Jesus was very careful about that.

But what is clear is that Mark wants us to connect some dots. He's presenting Jesus in a certain way, and he wants us to make the obvious conclusion that Jesus is no ordinary person, but Jesus is the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead, God in the flesh who has come down as Messiah, as the Savior of the world.

[2 : 5 5] But he's painting an honest picture about Jesus, and one of the things we're going to see is that not everyone received Jesus. So with that backdrop, please follow along as I read Mark chapter 6, beginning in verse 1.

He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to preach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things?

What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon?

Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own household.

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

[4 : 1 4] And he went about among the villagers teaching. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.

And he said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast on many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.

[5 : 31] But others said, He is Elijah. And others said, He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old. But when Herod heard of it, he said, John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.

For it was Herod, who had sentenced, seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her.

But John had been saying to Herod, It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man.

And he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.

For when Herodias' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.

[6 : 52] And he vowed to her, Whatever you ask, I will give you up to half of my kingdom. And she went out and said to her mother, For what should I ask?

And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

And the king was exceedingly sorry. But because of his oaths and his guests, he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately, the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head.

He went and beheaded him in prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl. And the girl gave it to her mother.

And his disciples heard of it. They came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. Let's pray. Father, we're so grateful this morning that we are now able to sit under the preaching of your word.

[8 : 11] And Lord, we pause not out of tradition but out of a deep sense that we need you. We need you to prepare our hearts. We need you to cause us to hear as we ought to hear and then to obey as we should.

Lord, I pray that you would provide much grace to me as I proclaim your word and much grace to all of us as we hear your word. Lord, would you do this?

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. If you participated in the music camp this past week or you attended the performance concert on Friday night, you would have heard one of the songs that the younger choir sang is the song This Is Our God.

We sing it here at Kingdom Life and so some of you, if you weren't here, you would know the song. And actually, it's one of the songs that Doug Plank helped to write.

Here are the words of the chorus. We believe the Lord our God is one. Father, Spirit, Son, this is our God. We believe forever he will reign.

[9 : 27] Let the church proclaim this is our God. The words of verse 2 are Our Lord Jesus sent to save us, born unto a virgin, lived a perfect life, greatly suffered, dying for us.

From the grave he is risen, seated now on high. Holy is his name. And the bridge says, Jesus will come back again to judge the living and the dead, usher in the age to come.

let everyone sing. Let everyone sing. Amen. When you think about our ability to sing this song with conviction of heart, it is nothing short of amazing.

to be able to sing that the Lord our God is one, Father, Spirit, Son, this is our God.

to believe that forever he will reign. Now this is, again, our God is one, he's Father, Spirit, Son, but we believe that he will reign.

[10 : 48] And we believe that this world is not all that there is to life. We believe that one day it will come to an end and Jesus Christ will return and he will usher in the age to come and he will reign forever.

to truly believe that with conviction of heart is amazing. Not just mouthing words, not just going along with the crowd, but truly to be able to sing those words.

Not necessarily with full understanding because we don't fully comprehend how the Lord our God can be one and yet Father, Spirit, Son.

We don't fully plumb the depths and scale the heights of that. We don't fully understand that. But we believe that. And to believe that is nothing short of amazing.

But the sad reality is not everybody believes. Not everybody believes. And this passage that we have come to this morning is a vivid reminder of that.

[12:00] it reminds us of this cold, hard reality that not everyone who hears this message believes it.

And Mark gives us in the passage that we just read, he gives us these three very different examples of unbelief. And the first example is unbelief from unexpected people.

people. That's what we see in verses one through six. Mark tells us, starting in verse one, that Jesus returned to his hometown with his entourage of disciples in tow.

and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue and he began to teach. And the people who heard him were astonished. And they began to ask questions.

They wanted to understand how is it that this Jesus who we know, Jesus grew up among them.

They knew he was a carpenter. Tells us that in the text. They wanted to know how he knew the things that he was saying.

[13:09] how he understood these things. Where he got all the wisdom that he had from. They knew that he did not attend some rabbinic school. They knew that he had not been to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of any of the great teachers.

He was the carpenter in town. They recognized his wisdom. They were astonished by it. They acknowledged that he committed or he actually performed mighty works.

They questioned how could these mighty works be done at his hands. And the reason they raised these questions again is because they knew Jesus.

They knew his mother Mary. They knew his four brothers. They knew his sisters. They were all among them. And Mark tells us in verse four that they took offense at him.

Now I want you to see the contrast. They are absolutely astounded at what Jesus is saying and they want to know where he got it from. They are astounded at his wisdom.

[14:22] They are amazed at his miracles. They cannot deny them. But Mark says in verse four they took offense at him because they knew who he was and they knew who his family was.

They rejected Jesus and did not believe him to be God's Messiah sent into the world to save sinners. So how is it that after acknowledging the unique teaching of Jesus, the amazing wisdom of Jesus, the undeniable miracles of Jesus, that his hometown would reject him and refuse to believe on him.

Well, the most that we have in the text is what Mark records Jesus as saying in verse four. Jesus said to them, he responded to them, not in a debate, but really he spoke a parable to them.

And the parable goes like this, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown. And among his relatives and in his own household.

That's what Jesus responded to them when they were rejecting him. Now, a prophet, as they would have understood a prophet to be, a prophet would have been a man whom God called and God anointed to be his spokesperson to his people, to be his representative to his people.

[16:00] He was a man, but he was God's man. He was a man, but he was one whom God uniquely called and God anointed. God placed his hand upon him. So he was really, in a sense, no ordinary man.

And from the words of Jesus, what we see is that the people who have the hardest time accepting the prophet are those nearest to him, those who are in his hometown, his relatives, his immediate family, their knowledge of who he was, their familiarity with him.

We have a saying locally that familiarity breeds contempt. Their familiarity with him overshadowed the fact that he was God's man, that this prophet was God's man.

And so they did not receive him as God's prophet. And his ministry to them was of little to no effect.

And Jesus knew this so well because Jesus, we know in chapter 3, had really been rejected by his own family.

They thought he was crazy. They thought he was out of his mind. And they did not believe on him as the Messiah. I don't think that Jesus was saying that he was a prophet.

[17 : 27] I think Jesus was simply speaking to them a proverb to help them to understand what was happening as they were, on the one hand, acknowledging the things that they were astonished by, and on the other hand, dismissing him.

Jesus, though, was more than a prophet. And so their rejecting him was rejecting more than a prophet.

They were rejecting the Messiah. They were rejecting the Savior King, whom God has sent into the world. And so Mark tells us in verse 5 that Jesus could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Now, I don't think that Mark is saying that Jesus absolutely could not do anything because these people tied his hands. Mark is not saying that. He's not saying that at all.

I think a better way to understand what Mark is saying. And what this verse would mean is that Jesus was unwilling to perform mighty works that were rooted in who he was, who he was uniquely, because the people of his own town did not receive him for who he was.

[18 : 55] In other words, Jesus refused to act, and performed consistent with who he was, because the people were not receiving him as that.

He, in essence, really just conducted himself in a rather ordinary way. And there was nothing extraordinary that he did among them.

And Mark tells us in verse 6 that Jesus marveled at their unbelief. And he just went among them, and he was just teaching.

I think Jesus marveled at their unbelief because humanly speaking, if there's anyone who should believe, it should be the people of his hometown. It should be the people who would have perhaps heard first the story of the virgin birth, who would have first heard about the prophecies about John the Baptist and about Jesus himself.

They had a front row seat to all that had taken place. They had, humanly speaking, the advantage of that information above all the other people, and yet it made no difference for them.

[20 : 15] And Jesus marveled at their unbelief. No doubt there are some present this morning or who will listen to the recording who are what we can term as unexpected unbelievers.

They're people who you wouldn't expect, all things considered, that they would be unbelievers. perhaps the person grew up in a Christian home, was raised by godly parents who not only instructed them in God's word, but led a godly example before them.

Perhaps they attended a Christian school, went to a Christian university. Their Bible knowledge probably exceeds the knowledge of many other unbelievers, unbelievers who we would call expected unbelievers, some who perhaps didn't have a practice of attending church, didn't go to a Christian school, didn't have these advantages, very much like the people of the hometown of Jesus.

And they are what we would call unexpected unbelievers. And if you're here this morning and you would really be an unexpected unbelievers, you're listening by recording and you would acknowledge, yeah, in some ways people would think that I should be a Christian because of my upbringing and because of all these other things that happened in my life.

And I would say to you this morning, don't be like the people in Jesus' day. The people in Jesus' day ignored the divine evidence that was in front of them. They were so captivated by the humanity of Jesus that they ignored the divinity of Jesus.

[22 : 14] And they allowed their recognition of his humanity to overshadow his divinity. And it's amazing when I hear people talk about Jesus and we have the divine evidence right next to the human evidence.

He was both God and man, but they tend to center on his humanity and ignore all of his divinity. And that's you this morning. I encourage you, don't ignore the evidence of who Jesus is.

Focus on it. Again, the Gospel of Mark is a truthful account. The Gospel of Mark is a believable account. Because the miracles that are recorded in Mark, again, they took place so close.

Mark's writing about them took place so close to them actually happening that it's unlikely that he was making this story up as he went along.

And again, Mark is going to conclude with the resurrection. And the resurrection is really what some have called the hinge upon which Christianity swings.

[23 : 24] And I would encourage you to consider the resurrection, consider the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus from Scripture. Because if Jesus did not arise from the dead, then none of this matters.

But if he did, every bit of it matters. And so I'd encourage you to focus on the divinity of Jesus and not allow the humanity of Jesus to overshadow it.

Now, not only do we see in this passage unbelief from unexpected people, in this passage we also see that there will be unbelief from unidentified people.

And we see this in verses 7 through 13. In these verses we have Jesus sending out his twelve disciples two by two.

And he gives them authority over unclean spirits. And based on the charge that Jesus gives to his disciples, he prepares them for two realities.

[24 : 35] He prepares them for the reality that some people will believe, but he also prepares them for the reality that some people will not believe. The way we know he prepared them for some who would believe is that he told them that when they go on their journey they should not take the usual necessities that a person would take going on a journey.

He said to them don't take any extra bread or a bag, don't take any money, don't take an extra change of clothing.

And he told them whenever you go into a house remain there until you leave. But we see in verse 11 that he also prepares them for unbelief.

Notice what he says to them in verse 11. He says, and if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

Now Orthodox Jews, or very strict Jews in Jesus' day, when they would go through Gentile territory, they would, when they came out of it, they would literally dust their feet off, shake the dust off their feet because they did not want to be contaminated by these unclean Gentiles.

[25 : 59] And Jesus uses that particular practice, and he says to them, when you go into a town, if they don't receive you, and they don't listen to what you have to say, then what you are to do is you have to shake the dust off of your feet.

And interestingly, when you look at it, he's not really saying do it in their faces. He says, as you leave, you are to do this. And he says, it will serve as a testimony against them.

And the implication is that that rejection of Jesus will not go without being called into account. That rejection of Jesus will be called into account, and the picture is almost like a court of law, where there's testimony given, and the testimony is going to be against them.

And clearly, we know that the disciples are not going to be the judge. The disciples are the ones testifying. The disciples will be the ones saying, yes, we preached the gospel to this person, to this village, and they rejected it.

But Jesus himself will be the judge. He will be the one who will be calling into account those who refuse to accept the gospel.

[27 : 16] When we look at verse, when we look at verse 12, we can see that they did what Jesus told them to do. They went out, in verse 12, it says, they went out and they proclaimed that people should repent.

This is the same message that we have Jesus proclaiming in chapter 1, that he goes out and he calls people to repent. And to repent is to think differently afterwards, it's to have a change of heart, it's to turn from sin and to turn to Christ.

And their message was to call people to repent, and they did that. But there were people who refused, and there will be people who actually refused.

refused. And I wonder this morning, as these people are not named, they are unidentified, whether there would be any who really fall into this group because they are rejecting the gospel.

They are refusing to believe the gospel that they have heard. And the sober word that we have this morning from this passage is that rejection will one day come up and be a testimony against you.

[28 : 36] It isn't just something in your past. It will go before you, and on the day of judgment, it will testify against you that you rejected the message.

You rejected the call to repent because you did not want to live under the authority and the lordship of Jesus Christ. You wanted to do your own thing, living for yourself, pleasing yourself, rejecting God in his own world.

And that's you this morning. I urge you, do not be among these people on that day who would reject the gospel.

Obey the gospel, repent, turn from sin, turn to Christ, put your faith in him, put your hope in him, solely because he is our only hope before a holy God.

God. And then finally, in verses 14 through 29, we see a picture of unbelief from hardened people.

[29 : 53] It's a picture of unbelief from hardened people, numerous hardened people. Two of them are named, but there are many, many hardened people in this story. We see in verse 14 that King Herod heard of it.

What is it? King Herod heard of the ministry of these apostles, how they went out. It had become known, the name of Jesus.

They didn't go in their own name, they went in the name of Jesus, and it had become known. It was well known. And there were people though, Jesus' name was well known, there were people who were confused about who he was.

Some said he was John the Baptist, who had come back to life. And they said that's why these miraculous signs are working in him, because he has come back to life.

Others said that he was Elijah, and then still others were saying that he was one of the prophets, like one of old. But Mark tells us in verse 16 that when Herod heard of it, he said, John, whom I beheaded, has come to life.

[31 : 00] And I guess in one sense, that's probably the best of the three options for Herod to choose, because if John had come back to life, it kind of like dampened his murderous act of killing John, that John still is not dead, John has come back to life.

So Herod seems to choose that particular one because it's more preferable to him. To some degree, he might think that, he might have thought that it exonerated him if John indeed came back to life.

But when we consider John and Mark tells us that Herod was a contradiction. Herod was perplexed when he heard John, but he still loved to hear John.

He gladly would hear John. And John was a faithful preacher. John was faithful to say to Herod, the most powerful man in the land, you're wrong for what you're doing.

You have your brother's wife. And this was really an incestuous, adulterous situation where Herod had taken his brother Philip's wife and had made her his wife.

[32 : 25] And John says it's not lawful for you to have her. And I want you to understand that John was not just meddling. John wasn't meddling. John was preaching a message of repentance.

And repentance means not just that we just think about things. Repentance means that we actually act upon those things. And John evidently was teasing out for Herod, saying, Herod, you need to repent.

And part of repentance is you need to give up that wife that you have because she is not your wife. It's not lawful that you should have her.

It seemed like that didn't bother Herod at all. Herod still would hear him, but it bothered Herodias. And we're told that Herodias, when John preached that message of repentance, Herodias held a grudge against him.

And her grudge was so deep that she did not just want to harm John, she wanted to actually kill John. And she nursed that grudge against him.

[33 : 35] And we're told in verse 21 that an opportunity came for her to fulfill that desire. Herod had a birthday, he had her daughter who historians tell us her name was Salome, had Salome to come and she danced for him and his guests and pleased him so much that he gave a rash vow and said to her, I will give you whatever you ask for up to half of my kingdom.

And she asked her mother what she should ask for and her mother, without thought it seems, says to her, asked for John's head. And she does. And you would think, having read about Herod, that he feared John, that he was perplexed about him, that he heard him gladly, you would think that Herod would not carry out that particular act, even though he spoke rashly.

But what we see is that Herod feared his guests more than he feared John and certainly more than he feared God. And he gave orders that John would be executed.

What we have on display in Herod and in Herodias and even in their guests is hardness of heart. We see the depths of unbelief that Herodias would be confronted with her sin, would be called to repent. And her unbelief and her hardness of heart are so deep that rather than repenting, she

doubles down and she goes even deeper and she is willing to commit murder because of her refusal to repent.

[35 : 26] repent. And then we see Herod who would, if you would ask him, he probably would think he was better than Herodias and better than some of the other people because at least he feared John, recognized he was a holy man, he was a righteous man.

He was protecting him so that nobody would harm him. He would hear him gladly. but it seems like what happened to Herod is that rather than hearing the word of God benefiting him over time, it hardened him over time.

And that's one of the dangers of hearing the word of God, hearing the call to repent and refusing to repent. It doesn't make us better, it makes us harder.

And so Herod is able to carry out this atrocity of having John executed. We see the hardness of heart of all of his nobles and other people around him who are supposed to give him advice and to counsel him and to guide him.

And the hardness of heart causes them to shrink back. And none of them would say to Herod, don't do that to this innocent man, don't do that to this righteous man.

[36 : 53] But as I pondered this account of John's death, I was soberly reminded that every single one of us who names the name of Jesus Christ has been called as his disciple, has been sent into the Great Commission, has been sent to proclaim the gospel, to call people to repent.

That even though it is unlikely that we will face the kind of danger that John faced for his message of repentance, for his preaching, the reality is that it does put us in a place where it's a dangerous message to proclaim.

We're not just saying to people, come to church, read your Bible, turn over a new leaf, adopt some new habits. No, we're calling them to repent, to turn from sin.

And sometimes that is a very difficult thing to do, and it is met with hostility as it was the case for John. And so those of us who have been named by the name of Christ, who have been called by his name and into the Great Commission, we are called to proclaim this message and to say to whomever, whenever, wherever, God calls you to repent.

He calls you to turn from sin. He calls you to put his faith in him. And sometimes we don't know the consequences of what our call to repentance might lead to.

[38 : 32] I was also soberly reminded about this whole issue of unbelief in the sense that every single person who is an unbeliever will bear the consequence for their sin of unbelief, everyone without exception.

But when we understand the hardness of the human heart, when we understand the depth of unbelief and the grip of the sin of unbelief on our hearts, in the same way that the Bible makes it very clear that unbelievers will bear the sin of their unbelief, the Bible also makes it very clear that no one moves from unbelief to belief without the mercy and the grace of God.

My mind reflected back to the last sermon when we looked at the demoniac. And here's a man who is possessed by thousands of demons, so many demons that they could go into over 2,000 pigs. And this man is cutting himself, and this man is just a terror in the community. How does a man like that decide, okay, I'm going to change my life.

I'm just going to believe and I'm going to come to God. He doesn't, and he didn't. That man found himself seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind because God had mercy on him.

[40 : 11] And God rescued him and delivered him from the chains of sin and bondage and brought him to himself. As we said last time, although none of us would identify with the depth of sinful captivity of this man, this man to some degree or another is a picture of all of us.

That if we come to saving faith, that God is the one who must come and rescue us. He is the one who must subdue us and bring us to soberness of mind and cause us to believe in him and cause us to want to believe.

It takes the mercy of God to do that. And what we see is that, yes, we call people to repent and we recognize that they will bear the consequences of their lack of repentance.

But we must also recognize that the mercy of God needs to be their portion as well. And in addition to calling them to repent, we're calling on God, God, would you have mercy on them?

Open their eyes, open their hearts, cause them to see, cause them to believe. Because if not, we would all remain in unbelief.

[41 : 36] It is only because of the mercy and the grace of God that any of us overcomes the reality of unbelief.

God's love. And so this morning, if you're here and you have come to know Christ as Savior, you are one of those who can sing the song with conviction, this is our God.

God, realize that it wasn't ultimately your decision to do that.

It wasn't ultimately your own power, your own goodness. The difference between you and the unbeliever is not that you're wiser and smarter and better and more holy.

The difference is a merciful God has had mercy and brought you from unbelief to a place of belief.

[42 : 39] Mark wants us to see that not every single person placed their faith in Jesus Christ. And the gospel of Mark is not the end all and be all about Jesus.

When we read the full witness of the New Testament, we see that it is God who saves people by his grace.

He is the one who grants the gift of repentance, the gift of faith, so that they might be able to believe.

And so this morning if you're here and you know that you can sing with conviction, this is our God, this is my God, then you should rejoice. But if you're here this morning and you don't know Christ, then you would acknowledge that you cannot sing with conviction, this is my God.

I say to you this morning, cry out to God to have mercy. Cry out to God to open your eyes, to bring you from unbelief to believe. Cry out to God to enable you to obey the gospel and to repent and to turn away from sin.

[43 : 53] And if you do, he will. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for the mercy that you have shown us, those of us who have put our trust in Christ, bringing us from unbelief to a place of belief.

Lord, I do pray that you would help us to truly rejoice in what you have done this morning. And for those who don't know Christ, those who have not yet repented, would you bring them to yourself in saving faith?

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I stand amazed in the presence, of Jesus the Nazarene, and wonder how he could love love me, and say that I can't doubt and claim.

I'm singing how marvelous, how wonderful my song shall ever be.

how marvelous, how wonderful, this my sin is going to be.

[46 : 00] He was in the garden. He aimed in the garden. He in the and Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

First one. First one. Thank you. Yes.

[48 : 34] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. How wonderful is my Savior for me?

How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

[49 : 58] Amen. Amen. Oh, Father, we thank you for the Savior's marvelous love for us. We thank you, O Lord, that when we were dead and trespasses and sins, when we were steeped in unbelief, through the gospel our eyes were opened.

Through the gospel we received faith to believe, and we were enabled to repent and turn from sin and turn to Christ.

Lord, I pray that we would never grow tired of singing of the marvelous love that was displayed on Calvary's cross for believing sinners.

And, Father, we pray this morning that unbelievers would be likewise amazed by the grace of God that comes to all who believe.

Would you do your work in every heart this morning? Lord, I pray that we would leave those of us who have put our trust in Jesus.

[51 : 34] Lord, I pray that we would leave rejoicing that we can know and sing with conviction that you are our God. And you are our God not because we chose you, but because you chose us.

You granted us the gifts of repentance and faith when you brought us to yourself. Lord, may this be the theme of our song this day and every day.

We ask now that as we go our separate ways that you would watch over us and keep us. Father, we especially pray for our brothers and sisters from our Sovereign Grace Church family who will be getting on airplanes this afternoon and traveling back home.

Father, may your good hand go with them. May they sense your pleasure as they leave. Lord, may they hear your well done in their hearts.

We pray, Lord, that you would grant them safe passage and you would grant them joyful reunions with their families. Lord, may they ask you to go with them, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

[52 : 51] Amen. Amen. God bless you. You're dismissed. If you're here and you need prayer, as the others leave, please come. We are joy to pray with you.