

Jeremiah 32:6-15

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Preacher: John Adams

[0 : 00] Well, it's so good to see everybody today. We were just singing together. I'm one of those that when I'm singing songs of praise, I like to lift my hands. The scripture often talks about lifting your hands in praise.

And when we got to that line in there about, my hands are dirty, how can I lift them before you? And I was like... But then, praise the Lord, the song explains how. We don't lift our hands in our righteousness, but it's in what he's done.

How can it be? It's just the grace of God. That's how it can be. Well, it's a pleasure this morning to be able to welcome back to our church and to our pulpit the Adams family. Those of you who have attended church here a long time, you know about their ministry called Rehoboth Ministries.

Becky and I knew Pritchard and Dana when, before they got married, Becky and I were newlyweds and we were all attending the same church together and God was doing a great work.

I mean, he was really doing a great work. I mean, God does great works all the time everywhere, but this was a church where it seemed like almost everybody in the church was about college age.

[1 : 24] Praise the Lord, we did have some senior citizens among us to keep us level-headed and, you know, that was good, helpful, very helpful. But we were all like, God's doing a great work.

We were excited about it. We were sure that the Lord was raising up all kinds of new ministries that we were going to be involved in and he did. He did. And so many of those people went out and served the Lord in so many ways.

But Pritchard and Dana in particular ended up feeling the call of God to go to Haiti, of all places. One of the poorest countries in the whole world, certainly the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

And they didn't just go for a little while. Haiti's a place that eats missionaries alive. Most who go there don't stay too long. It's just too hard.

And they've been there and by the grace of God have ministered there for over 40 years and been through many things. You've heard them come and share before.

[2 : 28] Been through getting kidnapped. Been through brain aneurysms. Been through malaria. Been through dengue fever. Been through, but oh my goodness, the great work that God has done as they persevered and stood fast.

And so normally, in fact, not just normally, always we've had Pritchard or Dana come and share the message. But they have this young man who, when he was only a teenager, and they would come here, he would go with our youth group up to that crazy Burrito Brothers youth camp thing.

Some of you remember we used to have a thing. Anyway, he would go with his brother and sister.

And so John has been involved in their ministry and in other kinds of ministry a long time.

He was over the Bible college in Haiti. Currently he is back in the States. They're all back living in the Jacksonville area because you really can't be in Haiti right now very well.

So it's just too chaotic. It's too crazy to be there. And so they're here looking forward to their next chance that they can be back to work there with the churches.

[3 : 45] I won't go into a lot more because that's what John's going to be sharing with us. But today, for the first time, they're letting their son John come and bring the message and tell us about the work.

And John, you're how old now? 39, 38? 38. 38. And so we've known him since before he was born. And it's good to see what the Lord's done in only 38 years in your life.

Yeah. And he is a product born in Haiti. Right? Right. Wow. Brother John, come and share as the Lord leads. Welcome. Welcome. Well, good morning.

Good morning. It's good to be with you. Thank you for that warm welcome, Pastor Matt. I'd like to share with you from the word, from my heart. Before we do that, I want to tell you a little bit about what's been going on, give you kind of an update on the ministry in Haiti.

That's a picture of the Haitian flag and scripture verse underneath it says, I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

[5 : 01] I've always loved that phrase, partnership in the gospel. That's how we see our supporting churches. Each of us has a role to play. We each have a different part of the puzzle that we bring, but we are partners together in the work of the gospel.

We pray for you as well, and we thank you greatly for your support for many, many years. As Pastor Matt said, we've been coming to this church for a long time.

This youth group in this church played an instrumental role in my own journey of faith. I was kind of on the fence about a lot of the faith when I was a teenager. When I was 17, I went to summer camp with this church, and that had a big impact on me and my decision to continue following Jesus as an adult.

If we could go to the next slide. This is a picture of a pastor of our main church plant in Haiti praying for young leaders.

So Rehoboth Ministries was founded by my parents in 1983 to make disciples for a spiritual harvest in Haiti. That's our main focus is making disciples who can reproduce themselves in spiritual fruit.

[6 : 14] The name Rehoboth always kind of throws people off. It's hard to pronounce. Nobody really knows how to say it, but it comes from the Bible, from Genesis 26, the story of Isaac, where he kept kind of going from one place to another, digging new wells, and eventually he got to a place where his enemies didn't bother him anymore.

And he said, he called it Rehoboth, which means broad places in Hebrew. He says, for now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. My parents felt that the Lord impressed that scripture on them a long time ago, that the Lord would make us fruitful and make room for us in a very difficult country.

So today the work consists of five local churches, three schools, and a Bible college that I've worked in for nine years. If we could go to the next slide.

The last few years have been exceptionally difficult in Haiti, and that's really saying something. But the president was assassinated in the summer of 2021, and since then the country's kind of just fallen apart.

The government gangs control about 80% of the capital. They fund themselves through kidnapping and extortion. Haiti, Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, has become the kidnapping capital of the world.

[7 : 29] About 2,400 people were kidnapped, I think, in 2022. About 1,000 have been kidnapped through the first half of 2023. The country has also just been in a spiral.

You can't buy fuel in the regular way. All the fuel is sold on the black market. I spent the last year that I lived there buying fuel on the black market every two weeks, working contacts, seeing if I could get another barrel of diesel fuel to keep the lights on at the mission.

You never know what kind of quality fuel you're getting. You just know that you're paying over \$7 a gallon for it. And so that was part of the reason that we chose not to continue living in Haiti.

It just felt like kind of a waste that that money could have been, is better spent elsewhere. But there's 34% inflation. It means the currency inflates by 34% every year.

So the cost of food has just gone through the roof. In recent months, the last month or so, they've gotten into a dispute in the border with the Dominican Republic, their neighbor.

[8 : 34] They're digging a canal on the Haitian side that is taking water from a river that the two countries share. The Dominicans say that this breaks a treaty that they signed a long time ago.

The Haitians disagree. But the Dominicans have shut the border down over this dispute. Right now, they're kind of trying to work to reopen it. But that causes food to become even more limited because a lot of their food is imported from the Dominican.

And so that's causing increased suffering on the Haitian side. If we could go to the next slide.

Despite the problems that we are experiencing, the Lord has been faithful to continue to provide for our mission, for his work.

We are no longer dependent on fossil fuels for electricity at our main compound thanks to these solar panels, which have just been installed this week after about two and a half years of waiting and one roadblock after another.

But Moncure Baptist Church played an instrumental role in getting those panels and getting them delivered to Haiti. So the installation crew that was supposed to come and stall them from the states would never come because their organization wouldn't give them permission to fly to Haiti because they thought it was too dangerous.

[9 : 49] So they were eventually able to locate a crew of local installers who came to the compound and installed them this week. So we praise the Lord for that. That is a huge lifted burden for us.

The church services at night will be able to go without needing to buy fuel for a generator and many other activities can go on as well. If we could go to the next slide.

Another example of grace in the wilderness for us is that an organization called Orphan's Promise out of Virginia Beach continues to give us about over \$7,000 a month to support buying food to serve to our school children every day.

So our kids get a free meal every day that they can look forward to. And for a lot of them, that's probably the majority of the calories that they get in a day. And so it's a very, very important program.

And we thank the Lord for that. We could go to the next one. The Lord has also continued to give us sponsors for different school children like this little boy. His name is Emerson. His mother is blind and she has not been, she was not going to be able to keep paying his school tuition.

[11 : 01] But a sponsor stepped up from the States and took over all his responsibilities for the year. And there have just been many examples of people who have come in at the right time and met a need so that children like this can continue to go to school, even though their parents aren't able to afford to send them.

If we could go to the next slide. Our ongoing needs, our biggest prayer right now is for that law and order would be restored in Haiti. It's kind of like the Wild West at the moment.

The area where we live in is not as bad. It's kind of separated by mountains from the capital. So they don't have kind of the kidnapping problems that the capital has. But it's still, you know, very chaotic.

And so the ongoing border crisis also makes it very difficult to get fuel, to get food. And the prices are very high. The UN has authorized a mission to go in, but it's still kind of hung up on a lot of different details.

And so we're at least at a minimum six months away from the mission actually getting to Haiti. We pray for protection for our properties and personnel. A lot of our staff in Haiti handle a lot of money that comes, that is sent from the U.S.

[12 : 16] as in the transfers. And so we pray for their safety because you never know when somebody is going to notice that you're going to the bank and, you know, decide to kidnap you and hold you for ransom. We pray for finances to continue meeting the needs of our mission, to continue paying our staff and sponsors for our school children and Bible college students.

And just pray for wisdom and grace. We're kind of in a transition season right now. My parents are no longer there full time. They kind of ran the mission for almost 40 years. And we're kind of transitioning over to local leadership and pray for us as we work out the details of what that looks like.

And the Lord has given us some really good people and we thank the Lord for that. But we thank you for your partnership in the gospel and for your prayers for our mission. So thank you.

I think there's one more slide with contact information. So if you want to stay up with us through the year, my mom sends out a newsletter on a regular basis.

You can subscribe to that at their website. You can also give online, set up a recurring donation online at that website. And you can like us on Facebook if anybody still uses Facebook.

[13 : 32] I don't know. All the kids are on TikTok now. If you guys would open your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 32.

We're going to be in Jeremiah 32 verses 6 through 15 today. And I wanted to share from this passage. I want to read Jeremiah 32, 6 through 15.

And then we'll pray. So Jeremiah 32 verse 6. And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came to me, saying, Behold, Hanamel, the son of Shalom, your uncle, will come to you, saying, Buy my field, which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.

Then Hanamel, my uncle's son, came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours.

Buy it for yourself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money, 17 shekels of silver.

[14:52] And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open.

And I gave the purchase deed to Baruch, the son of Neriah, son of Messiah, in the presence of Hanamel, my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed, and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days.

For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity to be gathered, Lord, in your presence with your people pouring out your praises.

We thank you for the gospel, for what Jesus Christ accomplished for us, overcoming death and bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. And we just ask you, Lord, to speak to our hearts this morning, through your word, by your spirit.

[16:09] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. So, about 20 years ago, when I was in college, I saw a movie called Big Fish.

I don't know if anybody's ever seen that movie. It was a good movie. But it's about a man named Edward Bloom and the stories from his life.

And at the beginning of the movie, he's a kid, and he's kind of creeping through the darkness with several other neighborhood kids in rural Alabama. And they're going to the home of a woman who's reputed to be a witch.

And a local legend says that anybody who meets the witch and looks into her glass eye will see their future and will know how they're going to die. And so all the children want to know if that legend is true.

And then when they get to the door, only Edward Bloom has enough courage to actually ring the doorbell. All the other children scatter and run away when the door opens. But he meets the woman.

[17:07] He ends up having a conversation with her. And during the course of their conversation, he explains to her why he's there. And he says, you know, I was thinking about death and all and about seeing how you're going to die.

And I mean, on one hand, if dying was all you thought about, it could kind of screw you up. But it could kind of help you, couldn't it? Because you'd know that everything else you could survive. So eventually the woman lets Edward look into her eye and he does see how he will die.

And that moment changes his life forever. Because for the rest of the movie and for the rest of his life, he lives with a kind of courage and daring that nobody else around him has because he's already seen the end of the story.

And so, you know, when he grows up, Edward sets out on a journey to go see the world. And the first town he comes to is arming itself to go do battle with the giant who's harassing the town.

And everyone else is terrified of the giant. But Edward has seen the end of his story and he knows that death by giant is not how his story ends. And so he goes and ends up befriending the giant and makes a traveling companion out of him.

[18:14] And then a little bit down the road, Edward comes across a village that's terrified of a werewolf. And once again, Edward has seen the future. He knows that he doesn't die by werewolf. So he volunteers to go and tame it.

And he succeeds and he ends up making it into, making it behave like a normal dog. And then a little while later, he's drafted by the army and has to go off to war. And he's fallen in love with this girl back home.

And so he wants to get the home as soon as he can. And he knows that death as a POW or death in war is not the end of his story. So he volunteers for the most difficult mission in the war, parachutes behind enemy lines, and gets back home early before anyone else so that he can marry the girl of his dreams.

So as the title of the movie suggests, Big Fish is kind of a movie full of stories a little too good to be true. But I think embedded within the fantasy in that story is a serious point.

Which is that if we know the end of a story, it changes the way we see the middle of the story. And one of the things that makes movies fun to watch is that no matter how dark or twisted the plot gets, we know that somehow the hero of the story is going to make it to the end.

[19 : 31] Or if they don't, we trust that the author will somehow bring the story to a conclusion that justifies the time that we've spent watching it. So when we know that a story is going to resolve, we have hope that a story will resolve, we can make it through the conflict in the middle without being crushed by it.

Jeremiah lived through some of the darkest days in the middle of the story of Israel. By the time we get to chapter 32, which we just read, he's been a prophet for nearly 40 years.

His life has been threatened countless times. He's been run out of his hometown. And in 40 years, he's only managed to make two converts, his scribe Baruch, and a foreign palace guard named Ebed-Milek.

And he's delivered his message to the king, and he's seen the king take his message on paper and cut it into pieces and throw it into the fire one by one. And he's been beaten, and he's been put in the stocks, and he was even let down into a cistern and left to sink into the mud.

But by chapter 32, near the end of Jeremiah's life, everything that he's preached for years is coming true. The Babylonian army, the most powerful army in the world, is right outside the gates, and they're about to break in and destroy his nation.

[20 : 47] And Jeremiah, at the time of this passage, is in the king's own prison. The king has put him in the palace prison because Jeremiah has been preaching a message that the king sees as unpatriotic, that Babylon's going to win.

You might as well just surrender to them now because this is the will of the Lord for you, you know, as a result of your unfaithfulness to the covenant. Babylon is going to take the city.

Israel is going to go into exile, and the king says, Jeremiah, you're lowering morale at the time when we need it most. And it's at this point that the word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah.

And he gives him a bold message of hope, and he gives him a sign act to live out to embody that hope. It's not to say that Jeremiah's message was ever exclusively negative.

Jeremiah had always prophesied that after the Lord is done dealing with the sin of the people, the Lord will restore the people. After exile, the Lord will bring the people back.

[21 : 45] He will make a new covenant with his people. He will write his law upon their hearts.

Jeremiah had always prophesied that the nation will have to suffer a kind of death and be buried in exile, but that after that, there will be a resurrection.

But what Jeremiah does in this passage kind of commits him, or it illustrates the message in a way that commits him personally to the fulfillment of what the Lord has said.

And so the word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah and says to him, your cousin is going to come to you soon, and he's going to make you an offer that you shouldn't refuse. He's going to tell you, you know, Jerry, the creditors are on my back, and they're after my house, and according to the law of the land, you have the right to buy it and redeem it because you are next of kin, and you're the only one who can save the property and keep it in our family.

And as sad as it probably would have been to see your cousin and his family evicted from their house, by any objective measure, buying that property and that house at that time would have been a terrible investment.

The most powerful army in the world is right on the other side of the wall. I mean, imagine like your Ukrainian cousin. I'm sure you all have a Ukrainian cousin somewhere. Imagine your Ukrainian cousin comes to you and says, you know, cousin, I've got this piece of property.

[23 : 16] The only problem is it's in Russian-held territory, but I really think you should buy it because you're the only person who can and keep it in our family.

Or if you have an Israeli cousin somewhere, Hamas has taken over this piece of Israel, and our family property is there, you should redeem it, and you would probably, you know, be moved by the person's predicament, but at the same time, you're thinking like, there is no way I'm going to pour my life savings into this property.

You know, if an enemy that doesn't even respect our life, our right to live, is taking over this land, there's no way they're going to respect a piece of paper with my name on it. You know, anybody with any sense probably would have told Jeremiah, you know, use your head.

You know, it's better to save whatever money you have left for the coming storm. And that way, at least you'll have something to feed yourself with and the people who are closest to you in the days ahead.

But the text says that Jeremiah had heard the word of the Lord. And so, as a result, Jeremiah knows the end of the story. And so, he concludes the passage by saying, houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

[24 : 33] So, what does Jeremiah do? He gets the money, he weighs it out, he gets witnesses to come over, and he signs the deed. And he stores the deed and the copy of the deed in an earthen jar, just kind of like the ancient Near Eastern equivalent of a safe deposit box for future generations.

And he lives his life differently from everybody around him in the middle of the story because he knows how the story ends. And Jeremiah models for us what it looks like to live a life of faith.

Now, unlike Jeremiah, most of us today, probably all of us in this room, don't have a literal enemy at the gates. But we do live in a world in which the mortality rate is still 100%.

And as, you know, the prophet Isaiah called death the shroud over all peoples, the veil spread over every nation. So whether we're rich or poor, whether we're a slave or free, whether we're loved or hated, death awaits us all.

There was a novelist named Saul Bellow who said in the 1960s that death is waiting for all of us as a cement floor waits for a dropping light bulb. And Henry David Thoreau, who lived in the 19th century, observed that this awareness of mortality drives almost everything that we do.

[26 : 03] It's at the base of almost all human behavior. And he wrote that the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. He said, unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.

The author of Hebrews speaks of the same phenomenon when he calls the fear of death a kind of slavery to which all men apart from Christ are subject all their lives.

It says that in Hebrews 2, 14 and 15. I used to struggle with that passage because when I look at most people and how they actually live their lives, they don't always look like they're afraid of death. Like a lot of people live their lives kind of on the edge of death all the time, tempting fate on a regular basis. You know, I've heard it said that it's human nature to whistle past the graveyard. But the more I think about it, the more I reflect on it, the more I've come to see the truth of that passage. Because people who are afraid don't always look like they're afraid.

[27 : 06] And sometimes people who are afraid aren't even aware that they're afraid. But I think the fear of death works its way to the surface of people's lives in a thousand different ways.

You know, why do we, who live in the richest country in the world right now, have a fentanyl epidemic? You know, why do we have a multi-billion dollar plastic surgery industry?

Why do we idolize youth to the extent that we do in our popular culture? Why do we tell the young people, we're constantly telling young people to enjoy the best years of their lives while they last? Why do we even have phrases like the best years of your life unless we're anxious at that knowledge that we're running out of time? I think another way the fear of death manifests itself a lot of times is through a fascination with death.

Now that I live in the United States again, this time of year has started to bother me more than it used to. Our neighborhood in Jacksonville right now is littered with lawn decorations depicting ghosts and goblins and skeletons and grim reapers and witches and dragons.

[28 : 20] Why are people fascinated by death? I think subconsciously a lot of people are trying to calm their anxiety by staring it in the face and maybe even turning it into a little bit of a joke.

And it's a brave effort but ultimately it won't work. Whistling past the graveyard doesn't mean you won't end up there one day. You can stare death in the face all you like but death always wins the staring contest.

And the author of Hebrews says that that's why Jesus came. Hebrews 2.14 and 15 says, Since the children share in flesh and blood, he also partook of the same things that by dying he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death have been slaves all their lives.

Christ's triumph over death is the heart of the gospel. 1 John 5.11 says, This is the testimony that God gave us eternal life and this life is in his son.

And in 2 Timothy 1.10 near the end of his life the apostle Paul writes that Christ came to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel.

[29 : 44] So if you are in Christ that is the true end of your story. Life and immortality. And if that is the end of our story if we know that if we're confident in that it ought to affect how we live in the middle of the story.

So what does that look like in our nation in our community in our family and our life? What does it look like to buy your cousin's field even though death is waiting?

What does it look like to bear witness to resurrection clearly in a world that is living under the shroud of death? As the apostle Paul put it, how can we faithfully be the aroma of Christ among those who are perishing?

I think the life of Jeremiah offers us just three simple lessons for how to do that. I think a life of effective witness begins with an encounter with the living word of God.

It's interesting to me how verse 6 is worded. And Jeremiah could have said I heard the word of the Lord. But he doesn't say that, does he? What does he say instead?

[30 : 54] Instead, the word of the Lord came to me. He speaks of the word as though it were a person. And of course in the full light of revelation after the coming of Christ we know that it is.

It's the person of Jesus. Does the word of the Lord still come to us today? I believe that it does. Jesus is still calling us by his word and spirit.

He still asks us to make a decision. Your death is certain but I offer you eternal life. I have overcome death. Will you trust me?

Will you put your faith in what you cannot see? That's not to say that the Lord asks us for blind faith. There are many moments in scripture when the Lord allows or even commands people to test him.

To doubting Thomas Jesus said come put your hand in my side. If this is what you need to get to the next step of faith this is what I will give. To doubting Sarah the Lord said you can bank on it.

[32 : 01] This time next year you will have a son. And to doubting Israel the Lord said through the prophet Malachi give generously to what I am doing in your generation this rebuilding of the temple and see whether I don't open the windows of heaven over you and bless you.

we don't know whether Jeremiah was doubting in this passage the text doesn't explicitly say so but it's interesting to note that the Lord does give him a kind of benchmark by which he can measure his word and then he meets it.

In verse 8 you see the effect that that fulfilled word had on Jeremiah's faith. He passes from believing to knowing. It says in verse 8 then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.

And that's the second lesson the passage teaches us. The Lord will build our faith if we ask him to. You know I'm a 7th grade teacher right now, 7th grade social studies teacher and there are some kids who get the lesson right away.

You know they're strong readers they plow right through it. And then there are other kids that struggle. And you know when kids struggle they teach you as a teacher that you need to scaffold your lesson for them.

[33 : 16] It's called scaffolding. You give them kind of a stair step up. Maybe you simplify the language for them. Maybe you modify the assignment a little bit for them. You give them kind of a lower stair so they can get their first step up.

And then a lot of times once they have that point of contact they can get the rest of the way. I think that's what the Lord does for us a lot of times. Maybe like our whole problem everything we're struggling with in life is overwhelming and so a lot of times what we need to do is just ask the Lord just help me in this one area.

Give me some tangible measure by which to know that you are in my life. And he'll do it. A lot of the times the Lord will give us the step that we need to kind of get where we need to go.

I read a book a few years ago by a man who had converted from Islam to Christianity. And the book kind of impressed on me what a huge journey that is.

Like it wasn't a one step okay now I see it's true I believe in Jesus. He believed in the truth of the gospel long before he actually was able to join the church.

[34 : 30] But just the pain of making that break with your family and kind of disappointing everybody who's known you your whole life and what the Lord would do for him is at different crucial moments in the story like he would have a dream or somebody would come to him with a word for him or something would happen to encourage his faith so that he could make the next step and get to the next step in the story.

After he puts his hands in Jesus' side then Thomas says my Lord and my God the step was what he needed to get to the next step. I think the third lesson in the passage is that when we believe faith can't remain in the mind.

Conviction has to be translated into action. Faith without works is dead and that's what we see Jeremiah doing in verse 9. Jeremiah says so I bought the field. Once Jeremiah is sure of the word of the Lord that he knows the end of the story he begins to live differently in the middle of the story. Verse 11 says so I took the purchase deed and I both that which was sealed according to the law and custom and that which was open you know and he says and I gave it to the people and I signed it before all the people and you notice that Jeremiah doesn't respond to the word in private he doesn't kind of like believe it in private and hold on to it and trust that well let's see if it really happens yeah he goes public with it he's like I'm going to sign this deed in front of everybody he says even in front of all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard in verse 12 and he even saves the deed so that future generations can remember what he's done for better or for worse you can only imagine what a lot of the other people who saw him do this were thinking I have no doubt that a lot of them were mocking him they were probably sure that this was going to go down in history as one of the biggest follies anybody has ever done of course with the benefit of hindsight we know that he was right Babylon eventually was conquered by Persia and Persia had a more favorable policy to the Jews and after 70 years in exile just as

Jeremiah had predicted Persia allowed the Jews to return home and even gave them money so that they could rebuild their temple I don't know where you're at in life this morning maybe you're fighting discouragement at a dead end job maybe your marriage is on the rocks maybe you're broken hearted over your children maybe you've lost someone who was near and dear to your heart no matter where you're at in your journey I want to encourage you with this passage this is not the end of the story this is the middle and the Bible promises that all things even the things we're worried about right now will work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose and it says at the end of scripture that the Lord himself will wipe every tear from every eye and if you find that hard to believe this morning ask the word to come to you the Lord will come and if your faith is weak ask the Lord to give you the next step up to confirm his promises to you in a way that lets you know at a soul level that it's true and if your faith is true died on the cross

[39 : 02] I know you Alta all fine you have called church and faith was■■■ uh be a little more people using their faith maker and this might move most of your own harmony as well. Yahweh Vali notClier but ever lived in a way from the■■ of Catholic rented me mercy and nighed out of mor■■u in this could follow their own kind.

and I think the Lord can do the same thing right here in Montgeer, North Carolina. Would you pray with me one more time? Lord, we've heard your word.

We are encouraged by it, Lord. You always know what to say to us. You always know exactly what to say to keep us walking, to keep us fighting the fight of faith.

And I just pray, Lord, that wherever we're at this morning, you would speak to our hearts and encourage us, Lord, so that we can continue to walk until we get all the way to where we're going, which is in heaven with you.

And I just thank you for that in Jesus' name. Amen. May the Lord bless you this morning. I had planned to lead us in a song different than I think, but we're going to be actually saying, so you're going to need your handbills in front of it.

[40 : 31] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.