

Help From the Father

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[0:00] I'd like you to turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 14. And an activity in which there are more people engaged in its outcome than we may think.

Generally, we think, well, the preacher is up front and my responsibilities kind of sit there and listen and whatever. I want to appeal to you that the Scriptures make it clear that one of the duties you have is to be actively engaged in the preaching of the Word by prayer.

And I trust you're doing that. And I pray that in the flow of the sermon in those moments where you sense it is appropriate and necessary that you freely ask the Lord to help me and help you.

Because we are both mutually dependent upon having the Word make a difference in the way we think. If I could, over the years of ministry, 35 plus now, if there were one thing, one thing, that I could give to believers.

I'm not involved in salvation. That's the work of God. And I don't save people. I love talking to people that don't know Jesus about the only one who can make a difference in their lives.

[1:52] But when I am ministering to those who do know Christ, and a large part of my life ministry has been with people who at least profess to know Christ, if there is one thing that I could give to them, it would be this, an understanding of the love of Christ for them.

And we spend far too much time thinking about things that really don't connect to that truth.

And I introduced that here at the very beginning because what we are actually engaged in doing is working our way through a passage in which we find the love of Christ displayed to us in undeniable terms against the backdrop of the cross.

Now, you and I, if we were going into a suffering like the cross, probably we'd be obsessed with our self.

And I can tell you this from personal experience. Spending time thinking too much about Tim Kroyer is not only destructive and toxic for me, it's invariably harmful to other people.

[3:26] How many of you would agree with me? I mean, thinking about Tim Kroyer, right? But kind of play it over. Here's Jesus in the shadow of the cross with one particular interest, and that is the 11 who he's going to leave behind.

And he knows their hearts. He knows what they're thinking. Can you imagine the mess of the disciples' hearts? On the one hand, they were bickering with each other.

Their usual intramural team sport was arguing about who was going to be what? Number one. That's what they were all about. But on the other hand, there's this certain level of anxiety, uncertainty about, well, what is going to happen?

We've been following him for three years, and he's cutting out of here. He said it over and over again. And they're all worried. In John chapter 14, let not your hearts be troubled.

I've got to tell you something. It is a conscious and deliberate choice that people who know Christ can make to have troubled hearts or not have troubled hearts.

[4:48] If we do believe that the same one who grants us salvation through faith can be trusted for other truths as well, then there is something to be said for taking control of the way we think and framing our thought life in the picture of Scriptures.

So here is Jesus saying, let not your hearts be troubled, fact, but then he plays it out and gives us good reasons not to be overwhelmed and troubled.

And so in a broader look at the passage before we get into the details, I want you to understand that in the early part of chapter 14, he deals with the fact that the disciples can look forward to a certain eternity.

Hey, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if it weren't so, I wouldn't have told you. And I'm going there so you can what?

You can be with me. Does it get any better than that? Huh? I know how my story ends. I love Revelation chapter 4 and chapter 5.

[6:06] I mean, that is a blast, isn't it? You get into those two chapters and it kind of lifts your heart up. That's how the story ends. I am going to enjoy the presence of Christ forever. And you who know Christ are going to have the same delight.

This morning as I was in prayer, I was looking forward to the time of worship with you. And here's what I thought. My wife says I'm a little maudlin and a little bit too pessimistic.

I'm the glass half three quarters empty guy. That's my nature. But there's a time that it fits. And here I was. I was in prayer and I was thinking, Lord, I am going to enjoy worship with other broken vessels like me.

And I thought, and it's going to be good. And I'm going to delight in it. And it is going to give me a taste of what heaven's going to be like.

And I'm looking forward to it. Are you? And here's Jesus saying, Hey, guys, don't be bent out of shape.

[7:13] You've got a certain eternity. The second thing he says is, Hey, listen, understand. I'm with you. Okay? I'm with you. And his actual understanding that he eventually is going to help the disciples find is that this business of him being with them is referring to the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

He says, listen, you're going to have union with me. Third thing he says is that, and you are going to be involved in doing a great work. You're going to be involved in doing a great work.

Now, how could that be comforting to the disciples? Do you understand that at the heart of it, we all have a sense, we all have a sense that we've been created and we're here for some reason and we ought to be doing something of significance.

What am I doing? Why am I here? What's this all about? And here is Jesus speaking to his disciples and what we're really going to look here in the passage that we study this morning is that there's something going on that we are engaged in a great work and we have comfort in knowing that we are at that task for his glory.

And so as we look at this passage, I'm going to pick back up there in verse 12. It says, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do.

[8:53] Have you ever been in a home where you looked around and you realized that someone had invested a great amount of emotion and energy and resources in putting it a particular way and it had all now collapsed into chaos?

I'll never forget. How many of you know Mount Everest? You've heard Mount Everest. I'll never forget when on a camping trip in Missouri, in India, about five of us spent three days on Lord Everest's dilapidated, decaying, ruined estate in India.

He was the Lord's surveyor for all of the empire in India and he had a palatial, gargantuan home built on the very crest of a mountain where from there on a clear day he could see Mount Everest.

And before, of lasers and all those other kinds of things, he was able to compute within feet the height of that mountain. You can Google it to check on me.

And here, we slept in these large, some of the rooms were probably half this size. They were huge.

[10:35] And I slept in a sleeping bag in a building that had belonged at one time to a man who was unbelievably respected in the empire.

And he built this wonderful mansion. And there I slept and looked around on the walls and I saw the plaster falling off and there was still some furniture sitting there.

Amazing. And the place, the ceiling was falling in in some places and the plaster had fallen off the walls because of water damage and the entire place was just goats.

Inside the home were little deposits that goats had left. And I'm not talking about pairings from their hooves. You know, it's all over the place.

And I thought to myself, you know, this was somebody's dream. and it was gone and done. And here is Jesus saying to his disciples, now listen, you're going to do bigger things than I did.

[11:42] How is that? One, it will come about through the work of the intercession of Christ. It is really stunning when you stop and read what we do there in verse 12 and he says this, he says, you're going to do greater works than I do.

And he wasn't talking about raising the dead. He wasn't talking about feeding the 5,000 or walking on water. He was really speaking primarily about the part that you and I play and will play in Christ's great work of redemption.

Now listen to me carefully. If in your life you cannot look back and see the part that you have played in Christ's work of redemption, there will be sorrow and loss and disappointment.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that? The truth of the matter is when Jesus said you are going to do greater works than I have done, he was speaking about the blessing of being part of his ministry of reconciliation and leading people to the cross.

And as we think about that responsibility I trust that one of the things that you and I take delight in is ministering to people and helping them know that through the gospel, through the Lord Jesus Christ, ruined and destroyed lives may be transformed by the power of the cross.

[13:20] Isn't that right? Last Monday I had the opportunity of talking with an individual and in the flow of conversation one of my favorite lines is this, I know the only person who can turn a mess around.

And I can say and I know why I believe that, it's because of what he's done in my life. He brings salvation, light and peace and blessing and transformation.

And so here we are, you and I are engaged in that work. And I want you to understand that at the heart of what really helps us as his witness is the fact that Jesus has gone before us, he has dealt with the issues of salvation on the cross, he has satisfied the wrath of God, he has brought to us not only forgiveness but he has absolutely made the matter and the way of salvation secure and I trust that one of the things that you take pleasure in is knowing that those he saves, he saves to the uttermost, isn't that right?

There's no question, there's no doubt. The fact is also that we're on the victor's side. I love what Peter said in his sermon on the day of Pentecost and I want you to turn there just for a moment, keep your finger there in John because we're coming back to it but go to Acts chapter 22 verse 22 through 24.

Acts chapter 2 verse 22. Remember how the sermon starts out and Peter makes it clear, you know, you guys crucified the Lord Jesus but Moses in verse 22 it says, Moses said, the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers and you shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

[15:12] I'm sorry, I'm in verse 3, chapter 3. Verse 22. Men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst as you yourselves know.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

And over there in verse 34 we read this. For David did not ascend into heavens but he himself says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

Now here's the point. I want you to understand the fact of the matter is we know how the story ends and Jesus wins. I have to confess that I had a grossly inaccurate view of what would happen after the elections were over.

I thought everything kind of calmed down, everybody go back to their corners and it is worse. Truthfully, I am so glad that I know how the story ends.

[16:27] And it is not going to be solved in Washington. It is going to be solved when the Lord Jesus returns. And I had to stop and think to myself, you know, I would imagine 100 years ago, 200 years ago, whatever the time was, it was just as messy ultimately because you have sinners in conflict with one another in every situation.

And so I want you to stop and recognize that the day is coming, that Jesus is coming back and we are on the victor's side and that is a comfort and an encouragement to us. In addition to that, I want you to recognize, going back to the passage in John chapter 14, that what is going on today is Jesus is interceding for us.

You look there and here's what he says. He says, I'm going to the Father, the last part of verse 12, whatever you ask in my name, this I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. Who's going to do it? Jesus. Who's going to do it? The Father. Why is he going to have it done? It is because he is interceding for us. He is our advocate.

He is our mediator. He is our judge. And if you are sitting here this morning feeling a little overwhelmed by your life and the baggage that you have, I would, listen to me carefully, write this down because you can hold on to it.

[17:51] I want you to memorize two different passages of scripture that will help inform your thinking and draw you out of the swamp. Romans chapter 8, verse 31 through 38.

And Ephesians chapter 3, verse 14 through 19. Whenever you find yourself consumed by things that are not productive and healthful, I want to encourage you to get your hands and your head around these two passages.

It reminds us of this fact. Jesus loves us and he is on our side. The fact of the matter is, Jesus stands today before the Father and he intercedes for us.

And that's what we find here. Jesus says, you're going to do great works. How am I going to do them? I'm going to be praying for you. I'm going to be interceding for you. I'm going to be helping you. And you can have confidence in how the story ends.

Now there's another truth that I want you to get your hands around this morning. Look at verse 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Great works not only come through the intercession of Christ, great works also come through our loving obedience.

[19:01] Let me try that again. Great works come through our loving obedience. Now in order to help you think this through, I want you to recognize that it is important for us to put together several different thoughts that flow here.

You look there in verse 15. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. Verse 21. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. Verse 23.

Jesus answered him, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. Verse 24. Whoever does not love me does not keep my word. So do you get the picture? If you love me, what happens?

You keep my commandments. Now incidentally, when we think about his commandments, we can sometimes think about his commandments as being burdensome, difficult, obligations that we kind of have to perform if we want the story to end well.

Right? And there's an aspect to that which is true. Several years ago, I found out that having the brakes done on my car would cost me about \$450.

[20:17] Have the pads changed? And just being a little perverse, I thought that I would check and see what brake pads cost. Does anybody know that they're reasonably inexpensive? They're really kind of almost close to dirt cheap.

And I thought to myself, why am I paying somebody else about \$100 plus to do brake pads? I'd never done them before. But I am of the mind that if you can watch YouTube, you can do brain surgery.

Not entirely true. Don't quote me. But, first of all, I got Dwayne Covert to coach me because I didn't want to take a dry run and end up in the ditch, you know.

And so he kind of watched me through this. But I actually have tools now for doing brake pads and I do them for entire family. You know, it's like, is this hard to do? No. Just follow directions.

Got to say that again slowly. Just follow directions. Do you know that directions are actually good for you? And as we get older, we actually can learn some things.

[21:31] I am at the stage where before I decide I'm going to put a kit together or build, you know, whatever. I actually read the directions.

Yeah, it's like, oh, you can teach an old dog new tricks, you know. Well, I've had so many times where I've had the parts over on the side that I didn't use and I didn't know what they were for until I discovered that it just didn't fit.

So now here's the point. We look at this statement. Okay, if you love me, you keep my commandments. And we tend to think about this and say, well, what is Christ doing here?

Is he pointing to his disciples and saying, if you're really one of mine, you'll obey. And that has a ring of truth to it. But remember, when Jesus said this, he was not challenging his 11 remaining disciples as to the question of whether or not they were saved.

What was he trying to do? He was trying to encourage them. He was trying to lift their spirits up. He was trying to say, if you just follow the YouTube directions, your breaks will work.

[22:45] It'll work. Trust me. The things that I want, I'm not going to use the fancy Greek terms here, but you can take two little thoughts and if you want to write in your Bible, you can put condition and consequence.

Condition goes over if you love me. Consequence goes over keep my commandments. Condition, consequence.

And what we find in this passage is Jesus is driving home the logic that the fact of love in our lives will bring us to obedience and obedience will help us do great things.

Let me have you see this in a very similar pattern over in John chapter 21. Turn there, if you will, just for a moment. John chapter 21, not very far away.

Can I tell you that in John chapter 21, verse 15 through 18, we have a passage where I am convinced that Jesus is not testing Peter's love. When they'd finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?

[24:07] He said, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Did Jesus know that he actually loved him? What's the answer? He did. Jesus knew. And he says, well, okay, feed my lambs.

He said to him a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said, tend my sheep. He said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was grieved because he said to him a third time, do you love me?

And he said to him, Lord, you know everything, right? You got it. Yes, you do. You know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my sheep. Condition. I love him.

Consequence. I obey him. Let me drive that home for you because sometimes this morning I think we get lost in the facts that, you know, the truth of the matter is, is I have a tendency to sometimes think that the commandments he gives are burdensome.

They kind of, they interfere with what I want. But it goes back to doing breaks. If you don't follow his instructions and all of them are good.

[25:17] Would you agree with that in theory? Just say with me. Yeah, in theory. In theory, what God tells me is actually, now don't anybody send me an email because I'm using a little bit of sarcasm here.

So just get this point, okay? When God tells us to do something, it's good. Why is it good? Because he's good. So when it says, if you love me, keep my commandments, the purpose of that instruction is this.

So that as we obey him, we will do good works. We'll accomplish great things. We'll be involved in doing things that in the rear view mirror we look back and say, wow, how did that happen?

It was me following his counsel, obeying him, and enjoying the outcome as the result of that. So let's kind of work this through to place it in our mind. Our love produces obedience.

And that's how he is glorified and how we do great things. Great works on our part, let me have you understand this, never happen apart from obeying him.

[26:24] Great works on our part never happen apart from obeying him. You know, sometimes we're all cut up and fantasizing what it would be like to do great things for God.

Oh, I would like to see drug addicts saved. I'd like to be involved in bringing the gospel to people whose lives are really messy.

I'd like to help draw homeless people out from under the bridge. Those are all good things. They really are. But you're not going to make it out of kindergarten if you're not willing to obey in the things he's already put on the plate in front of you right now.

You're a little bit like the farmer who loved the idea of a good harvest, but he really didn't like the idea of getting out in the morning and doing the fields and caring for the responsibilities that go with it. I got to make this point clear.

There is a connection between the seeds of obedience that we sow and the fruit of blessings that we reap. On the face of it, obedience is actually harder than we'd like to admit.

[27 : 41] Wouldn't you agree with that? I mean, truth of the matter is, is every one of us here, we have a problem on a regular basis with obedience in our life. How many of you have kind of struggled with something that the Lord's been drawing to your attention?

Well, not right now. I don't want to do it because so-and-so, you know, we've got all kinds of reasons. I come to the third point. Great works happen through the enabling of the Spirit of God.

Remember, Jesus is encouraging his disciples, I'm leaving. Don't be worried because the story ends well and you're going to be with me. And by the way, in the intermediate time, you're going to do some phenomenal things, you're going to be involved in something unbelievable.

How's that? Well, you're going to obey my word. And how's that? Through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 16. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever.

Now remember, the disciples were pretty troubled because they were beginning to get the idea that Jesus was going to be crucified and he was leaving them.

[28 : 55] And here is Jesus saying, listen, I'm going to be going away. And you can understand their anxiety and their uncertainty and their concern for what their future was going to be like.

And here is Jesus saying to them, you're going to have another helper. Now the word another is a word in the Greek, I'm not going to dive into it, but there's a couple different words that are used in Greek.

Another can be like different. Or another can be just the same. And here is Jesus saying that you're going to have another helper just like me who is going to be with you and his role is going to be to be your helper.

Now it's very interesting and we'll get to this later in our preaching through the book of John. I don't know if Pastor Shearer gets to do this or I do. Well, it's John chapter 16 verse 7.

Look at it just for a moment. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is for your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you.

[29 : 57] Hey, try that. It's actually going to be better for you if I'm out of here. What? Here's Jesus back in 14.

He says, I want you to understand that the Father is going to give you the helper to be with you forever. Even the spirit of truth, verse 17, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him or knows him.

You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you. Now, I want you to understand that what Jesus was encouraging the disciples to recognize is that after he left, we would receive the Holy Spirit and the indwelling spirit is profoundly significant to the spiritual life.

Would you agree with me? Let me put it this way. The amount of attention to you that you give to living a spiritual life is paired, is coupled to your sensitivity to the need of the Holy Spirit.

Does that make sense? Do you follow what I'm saying? Do you follow what I'm saying? You cannot live a spiritually productive life apart from the enabling of the Spirit of God.

[31 : 39] And my sensitivity to living a spiritual life leads me to have a desperate dependence upon the Holy Spirit. And here is Jesus saying to his disciples, you guys are going to knock it out of the park.

I mean, you guys are going to be involved in witnessing and sharing the gospel. In fact, later in the book of Acts, it says, the men who have turned the world upside down are here? Huh?

I got to tell you. The best news in the world is not material.

It's spiritual. It's spiritual. No amount of money can solve the problem of the darkness of a person's heart. Do you understand that? And apart from the enabling of the Spirit of God, nothing can change a man.

And here's Jesus saying, you know, your great works are going to flow out through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, in relationship to that, Jesus makes that statement in verse 18.

[32 : 50] He says, And I'm not going to leave you as orphans. I'm not going to leave you as orphans. The fact of the matter is, is that he is going to be in us and he is going to make his home with us.

Look at verse 20. In that day, you will know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you. So, where's the Holy Spirit today? He's in me.

That is a great blessing and an undeniable truth. Now, does that mean that I kind of just walk around under the Holy Spirit's control constantly?

No. Because I can be disobedient to the Holy Spirit and I can what? I can grieve him. He is there to prompt, to encourage me.

One of the passages that I love is in Galatians 5, verse 16. Walk by the Spirit. Can anybody finish it for me? And you will, what? Not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

[33 : 56] So, when you're struggling with covetousness or you're struggling with lust or you're struggling with anger, does anybody have anger issues? Does anybody struggle with lust? Everybody pops their hands up all over the place.

I saw that. You know, it's like, does anybody struggle with covetousness? Everybody's raising their hands. You know, yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm one of those. Listen to me. Walk by the Spirit and you, you have a shot.

Maybe you can pull it off. You will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. One of the reasons many Christians live such ineffective and unhappy lives is because they do not appreciate and appropriate the blessing of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Here's Jesus saying, listen, I want you to understand that the indwelling Holy Spirit is there for you and He stays in the New Testament believer and He's not going to leave us.

He will be with you forever. So, in the face of carrying on the challenge of ministry in the face of Christ's crucifixion and His return to the Father, what Jesus says to His disciples is this, I want you to be of good comfort.

[35 : 22] I want you to know this. It's going to work out well. Why? Because you have the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is in you to help you. Now, there are some essential questions that linger in the back of our minds from time to time.

You know, we ask ourselves the question, where am I going? And the answer for the believer is, what? I'm going to heaven. You betcha. I remember talking with a neighbor and strangely enough, we got on this conversation about how the story ends and I said, I'm going to heaven.

What? How can you be sure? I said, well, it has nothing to do with me. I am not the hero in my story, right? It has to do with Jesus.

He died and forgave all of my sins. I'm going to heaven. So you ask yourself, how's the story end? Where am I going? I'm going to heaven. And who really cares about me?

I mean, you know, we don't want to admit that publicly, but we really do have a concern for who cares about us. I mean, am I right? Come on. Anybody out there want to nod their head just make me feel a little better?

[36 : 31] Yeah. Yeah. There's this better song than the one, Jesus loves me, this I know. Right? Because Romans tells me so.

Well, you can add Ephesians to that one too and you can add John. but you know, how can I do what I should? He answered all those questions for his disciples.

I will never leave you or forsake you. I will be with you always. And you will have the blessing of the Holy Spirit who indwells you, who will enable you to do the things that he calls you to do.

So, let me have you recognize several truths to hold on to. You can know where you will spend eternity. I know where I'm going when I die.

I wonder if you do. It's a concern. I have to tell you that over the years I've seen people who have sat under the faithful teaching of the word of God for decades, who've had something happen and just turned their heart off and hardened themselves to the point of being an absolute embittered, angry, unhappy individual whose life is trashed.

[38 : 05] I've got to tell you that's not the general pattern for a person who knows Christ.

And if you are here this morning and you do not know Christ, let me tell you, the issue of the gospel is this, is you can know for certain where you're going to spend eternity and that's an answer you need to reconcile.

Second thing is this, you can be assured of his presence. You can be assured of his presence. How many of you know that we do better when other people are around us that have leverage and a little bit of teeth?

Do you follow that? Christ in you, the hope of glory. We can count on Christ to be there.

I know he is with me in this journey of life. He will never leave me nor forsake me. And then finally, you can be assured of his help. You can be assured of his help. Can I tell you that one of the difficulties in evangelism is that people have a tendency of getting the cart before the horse.

[39 : 14] What do I mean by that? I mean, it's like, I don't know. I don't know how I'm ever going to stop being an obsessive, self-centered, unhappy, angry, embittered person.

That's all I know. How can I solve that problem? Well, if you're a believer, you have the enabling of the Holy Spirit who is in you.

I love to say, and you who know me have heard me say it so many times, you don't have to stay the way you are. That's pretty good news, isn't it? You don't have to stay the way you are.

Well, no. What did Jesus say? He will give you another helper who will be with you forever.

So let me push it together. If Jesus loved his 11 little disciples who were huddled in that upper room and were very anxious about their certain future, and he gave them this great comfort, and it was good enough for them, right, to live victorious, profitable lives.

[40 : 32] And by the way, how'd they all end up? They had retirement homes in Florida. They got a motor home. They spent the rest of their life driving around. How'd they die? Only one of them died of old age.

The rest of them, they went out in glory. Isn't that right? If you're here this morning, Jesus loves you, and he has called you to be engaged in a great work of eternal significance, obedience.

And you don't have to do it by yourself. Let's close in prayer. Our Father God, this morning, as we think about the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, and our Master, the one who someday we will see and someday enjoy forever in heaven, we recognize that the enemy of our souls so often diverts our attention from the glory and the sufficiency of Christ to get locked up on petty and different things and ends up causing us who know Christ to be unhappy and uncertain and anxious and fretful.

and you call out to us in your tenderness and you say, come unto me and I will give you rest. And Father God, this morning, I would plead with you that you would work in the lives of your people that they would allow these truths to bear fruit in their lives.

that the ministry of the indwelling spirit would be very real in strengthening us to be productive, growing Christians for the glory of the cross.

[42 : 34] Help us this morning to be humble enough to admit where there are some needs that we can't care for that only a contrite and a humble heart can bring about the change that is necessary when we call out and ask you to work.

And I think this morning of those that are here that may not know the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they have sat maybe for years under the teaching of the gospel, that this morning your spirit would convict them of the empty hardness of their heart and they would cry out to Jesus to be their Savior.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.