

The Way of the Cross

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Date: 18 June 2017

Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0 : 00] I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to Matthew chapter 5.

! Wednesday evening, as we were enjoying the ministry of missionaries that are going to be serving the Lord in England, I was listening to the preaching of the Word and I fell under conviction for something that had been said on last Sunday, something that I said on last Sunday.

And pastors don't get to bury retractions on the ninth page of the newspaper. When it happens at the pulpit, it should be declared at the pulpit.

It's inappropriate for a pastor to be sympathetic with people who are struggling with depression in his office and then be sarcastic in public preaching of the Word.

And I ask your forgiveness for that. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 17, verse 6 through 19.

[2 : 09] Let me read the passage and have you follow along with me as we hear exactly what God has spoken to us here in this passage.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you've given them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

And I no longer, I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you, Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

[3 : 15] While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Join me in prayer. Father, we unite together as your people with one common desire, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our God and Savior, would be lifted up this morning, and that we seeing Him would grow to be more like Him, and that we would grow in our affection for Him.

[4 : 37] I'm thankful that both the preaching of the Word of God and the comprehension of the Word of God are things that we may ask the Holy Spirit's help for this morning.

And I pray that your people would join me in praying for the work of the Holy Spirit in both the declaration of the Word and then in our comprehension and appreciation.

I pray also, Father, for those that are here today that perhaps have never come to saving faith. They know perhaps the words of truth.

They've heard the Scriptures, and yet they've never been drawn to the cross to repent and confess their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And just as we pray that believers would be strengthened, so we pray that sinners would be converted, that Jesus, the Lord of life, would be made much of today in this place.

And we ask in Jesus' name, amen. This lesson here in John chapter 17, beginning in verse 6 and carrying through to 19, is the second of three parts of Jesus praying after He had had the Lord's table and just before He went to the Garden of Gethsemane.

[6 : 08] And you remember last week, one of the things that I commented on is that it's appropriate for us to kind of remind ourselves of the sharp differentiation between this prayer here, where Jesus is praying for Himself, for His disciples, and for us.

And then moments later, when He goes into the garden, and He pours out His heart, and He says, listen, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Here we see the Lord praying with this kind of divine overview and interest that kind of transcends the moment that was going to take place in the very hours to come.

And He is praying about things that were very, very close to His heart and His interest, namely, His reunion with the Father, namely, the disciples that He had loved and cared for, and namely for us who have come to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ because of His ministry and because of the ministry of the disciples that He prayed for.

It would be difficult for me, and many of you have heard me on occasion say this is my favorite passage. It's almost become kind of a joke because seldom is there a Sunday that goes by that I don't come to the text thinking, man, this is really good.

And I have to tell you, Thursday when I hit the print button and I heard it click out there in the copy, Connie, are you in here working in the nursery? Yeah. Connie, what happened?

[7 : 37] I just, wow! Man, I've got to wait until Sunday. But it's a good passage. Just bear with me. It is really good. And the thing that makes this passage so precious is that it informs us of the heart of Jesus.

Now look at me. You know, at the heart of our religion and at the heart of our faith is not just a set of rules. Now rules aren't all bad. But listen to me.

At the heart of what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ is a very real, personal, genuine relationship. And one of the sure tests of the authenticity of your relationship is your affection and interest in the person you have it with.

Would you agree with that? Judith, my bride. There she is. She was sitting behind Chris. And Chris is too tall. Sorry, Chris.

I'm glad. Did you notice, Chris, that she moved over here? I saw her and I went back to let her know. She works in the nursery once a month, you know. And so I was like, that's always a bad Sunday for me because I like to see her.

[8 : 56] And then she decided she's not one of those people who likes to sit at the very front, you know. She likes to kind of be in the back. And she was sitting behind Chris. And Chris is just too tall. And I told her, honey, you have to move so I can see you.

Here's the point. If you have a relationship, now, if you have a relationship, there has to be some affection with that. Would you think so?

Well, and so when we step into this passage, we have an opportunity to understand a little bit more about how Jesus loves us.

And understanding that, listen to me, understanding that will whet our appetite for him and cause us to love him more. So, if you're sitting here this morning and your heart, very frankly, is just about stone cold to Jesus, I'm really not all that interested in how many Bible verses you have memorized in the past or whether you were baptized or whether or not you go to church on a race.

I'm really interested if you love him and you know him. Because at the heart of what we are engaged in is relationship with the Lord of glory.

[10 : 18] And as we look at this passage, we are getting an opportunity of looking into the heart of Jesus and understanding how he loves us.

Truthfully, today, we are looking more at how he loved the 11. But here's the interesting note. If he did fairly well at loving the 11, and what do we know about the 11?

Just follow me here, okay? The 11 were the most famous and most significant men in the ancient world. Phenomenal, spectacular, men of renown and repute and incredibly brilliant, right?

I mean, how are we doing so far? They were low-life fishermen, flunky tax collectors. I mean, just a bunch of rude guys. I mean, it's like, Jesus, are you kidding me?

These are the guys you picked? Well, here's the deal. If Jesus can love those kind of guys, he probably will do a fairly decent job loving me.

[11:23] You. You got it? So when we look at how Jesus loved the disciples and prayed for them, our hearts should be encouraged to know that he cares for us the same way.

So let's look this morning at, first of all, who Jesus was praying for in this passage. This is called the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. I want you to know, just because I have to say this, we're going to cover John 17 in three sermons.

Next Sunday, Pastor Shearer is going to be preaching. Pretty good. I like that. To cover John 17 in three sermons is just about over the top for me.

Marcus Rainford has written a book called Our Lord Prays for His Own. It's 476 pages long, and it's just phenomenal. But I have to get this done in this sermon.

Okay, who was Jesus praying for? I have manifested, verse 6, your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Here in John 17, verse 6, and carrying down through verse 9, we're going to see Jesus lay out some of the markers, the characteristics of the men that he was praying for.

[12:47] First thing we see here is that these are men that the Father had given him. Now remember that Jesus had manifested the Father's name publicly.

He had preached the kingdom and repentance to all kinds of people. He had healed individuals. He had performed miracles. He had fed the multitude.

He had done all kinds of things, and people had seen and seen and heard and heard, and nevertheless had really not come to faith. And here we have 11. And Jesus identifies that these individuals are ones who were a select group.

Now look what it says there in verse 6. It says, whom you gave me out of the world. I want you to understand that these 11 were individuals that the Father had given to Jesus as disciples, but they are also individuals that the Father had given to Jesus as converts, as believers.

Now we know that Jesus chose 12. And I don't want you to think that Jesus, in choosing Judas, had made a bad pick.

[14:07] because it tells us and we can take the time at another moment and kind of look through the life and work of Judas and his role in the plan of redemption.

I just want you to understand that the 11 that are being referred to here are the ones that God had given to Jesus sovereignly as His own. It's interesting to mark how often we see this issue of God being the one who gives individuals to Christ.

You find it three times in John 17. Put your finger there on verse 6. Put your finger then on verse 37. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Hold it, hold it. What am I doing here? John chapter 6, verse 37 and 39. That's my mistake. Go there for a second. John chapter 6, verse 37.

All that the Father gives me will come to me and whosoever comes to me I will never cast out. How is it that people come to Christ? Oh, just arbitrarily decide one day. No, it says here they come because the Father gives them.

[15:11] There, verse 39. It says this, And this is the will of Him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me but raise it up on the last day. Look at John chapter 10, verse 29.

Those who Jesus was praying for were those that the Father had given Him. John chapter 10, verse 29. My Father who has given them to me is greater than them all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Now stop just for a moment. There's a little sidebar. A little note. To believe in eternal security means that you're ultimately resting on the same theological foundation that the doctrine of God's sovereign grace in choosing rests on.

Does that make sense? Jesus makes it clear over and over again that the Father is the one who gives and He doesn't lose them. And so if you're sitting here this morning and you're a believer, I want to encourage you to know this.

The reason you've come to faith is because of His call and His enabling and you are incredibly blessed. Furthermore, you are not going to fall away. I like that.

[16:33] Second thing that I want you to mark about these individuals that Jesus was praying for is that these are those who have kept the Father's word. Look at the last part of verse 6.

And they have kept your word. In addition, to the fact of the sovereign will of God in choosing those that He would give to Jesus, we see that there is another marker given to us in the text about the characteristic of these individuals who are genuine believers.

What is it? They obey the word. They follow the word. They do the things that the Father has called them to do. And so I want you to recognize that there is no accident that there is this close correlation or connection between divine appointment and willing obedience.

There is no denying the fact that one of the characteristics of those who are genuinely called is that they are wired and God is at work in helping them grow in obedience.

Do you follow that? Now listen to me. Just an illustration. I got to tell you for me to sit I was sitting right over there wrestling with the bad words that I'd said on Wednesday and kind of thinking do I really want to stand in front of God's people and say that was wrong?

[17 : 57] Now how many of you think that was yeah, yeah I can't think of anything more exciting. But here's what. I who have been saved by the grace of God have no other call but to be obedient to the word of my Savior and I had to choose between whether I was going to play to my pride or I was going to humble myself and exalt him whose word is my command.

And as we look at the passage Jesus makes it very, very clear that those who he was praying for are those who kept the word. And so if you're sitting here this morning and you're one of those individuals who you grew up in a Christian home you learned the vocabulary you got it all down but the fact of the matter is this you do not see a continuing path of obedience you do not see growth in obedience I would ask you to double check your birth certificate.

Where's the proof? If you're his child there will be a growing interest in obeying him regardless of the cost. Third I want you to mark that those who Jesus was praying for were those who'd received the word as gods.

Now they know verse 7 that everything that you have given me is from you for I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me.

When Jesus prayed for these eleven disciples he wasn't praying for those who had merely believed in the physical evidence that they had enjoyed when Jesus fed the five thousand.

[19 : 43] I mean do you follow that? Here you are stuffing your face with bread and fish and you have to say well this is pretty spectacular I mean hey we started out with one little boy with his lunch and we're all eating.

I have to admit I believe. But did they believe in Jesus as the Savior? Did they believe in Jesus as the one that they were trusting for their salvation?

No. In the vast majority of cases they didn't and here's Jesus saying these who I am praying for are those who have received the word that I have given as God's.

They heard what Jesus said and they accepted that it was actually God's word. They didn't just nod and grin they obeyed it.

Next thing that I want you to mark is that those who Jesus was praying for are those who believed that Jesus had been sent by the Father.

[20 : 44] Here's Jesus praying specifically for his eleven. Now I'm not going to get over into the issue here but remember Judas by this time had left to betray Jesus and it tells us later in the passage that Judas was the son of destruction.

he was the one who had been ordained providentially by God to do the thing he did. Now if you're sitting here trying to put all the pieces together let me know when you get there because but it's true.

Mark the fact scriptures tell us of the reality of human responsibility but also of God's sovereignty and the way he does things and so we kind of humble ourselves and say okay in this case what we're looking at however is not the issue of Judas but the ones that Jesus is praying for and his prayer was this that they who he was praying for would believe they'd been sent by the Father. What's the emphasis here? That they would be locked into the reality that Jesus had been sent on a divine mission by God to accomplish a particular purpose.

You got that? Now stop just for a moment. I want you to move forward in the passage just a little bit okay to verse 18.

[22 : 14] As you sent me into the world so I have sent them into the world. what's Jesus saying?

Back up just for a moment because we want to understand this. Here is Jesus saying I want these people to really understand and the ones I'm praying for get it that you sent me into the world.

Aren't you glad that Jesus came? Are you glad? For real? He sent you for exactly the same reason. I had an epiphany.

Do you know what an epiphany is? How many of you like cartoons where the little bubbles kind of represent people that are thinking and not saying it? Okay. An epiphany is a bubble moment. I was driving down the road and you're kind of thinking to myself about 14 months away from retirement and what am I going to do when I'm retired? I thought I'm going to do the same thing I'm doing now. I'm going to serve God. Is there no change? Do you understand that?

[23 : 19] That was a bubble moment. It's like what? You mean I don't get to do just one and one go fishing and hunt all the rest of my life and maybe garden a little bit? No.

I'm going to do the same thing I was doing before. I'm going to serve Jesus. Just the same thing. Why? Because he sent me. His sending doesn't stop when I turn 70 if I get that far.

Do you follow that? You got that? Here is Jesus saying listen I'm praying for these guys and I'm really glad that they believe you sent me.

By the way I am sending them. So before we go on from this little who is Jesus praying for let's kind of put our heads around this for a second and let's ask a couple practical questions.

Just kind of put it out there and have you chew on it a little bit. hey am I someone who actually is following what Jesus says?

[24 : 29] We live in a messy messy world. Do you realize that? We really do. the greater concern I have today is not about the unregenerate world around us.

But the fact that so many people who have been called by Christ to be salt and light are not the least bit interested in anything but their own private agenda.

And I got to tell you when the salt stops being salt the meat goes bad quickly. And that's what we're seeing. So are you one who is obedient to Christ?

That's a practical question. Another question is this is that hey you and I are tickled pink that Jesus was sent to be the savior of the world. Now look at what it says there again.

Just put your finger on it. Verse 18 as you sent them into the world. The Greek word there is *kathos* which means in the same manner in the same manner that you sent me into the world I have sent them into the world.

[25 : 45] So practical question is this is your life as wrapped up in the glory of the father and in the work of redemption that he came to accomplish and sent us out to be messengers of or is it all about your personal comfort and preferences and all the little nuanced details that reflect you?

Coming back just for a moment. Hebrews chapter 1 verse 1 and 2 it says this it says that God at various sundry times he spoke through the prophets etc etc and then he says in verse 2 but in this last day he has spoken to us through his son.

What it's saying is this is what Jesus says has got some weight right? It's got some weight and so Jesus is saying to you I'm sending you out for the same purpose the father sent me.

Well let's come to another profoundly encouraging part because the first part is a little heavy. let's look at what Jesus prayed for.

Verse 11 Jesus says I'm no longer in the world but they are in the world and I'm coming to you holy father keep them in your name which you have given me that they may be one even as we are one.

[27 : 06] I have to tell you having asked earlier for forgiveness for sarcasm I want to be very careful how I tread with this but listen to me. I am flummoxed.

I'm stymied. I'm confused. And I don't know what else to attribute the deficiency to other than a general lack of Bible knowledge.

Here's what I'm talking about. That was a long wind up but here's the point. I just cannot believe I was watching TV the other night a rare occasion that I was doing it and I happened to watch an advertisement send in for free miracle water.

Some of you are smiling but I hope you didn't send in. Our fountains are cheaper than that. Send in for free miracle water and one person after another immediately after the send in for free miracle water I sent in with my free miracle water and I got a Lexus and God blessed me with he healed me.

I'm thinking to myself if Jesus was really interested in healing us with free miracle water in the 21st century could he could he have done it?

[28 : 24] What's the answer? Nod your heads. Here's Jesus praying for us praying for his disciples. What is he really interested in?

that we move up a tax bracket or two? That we have you know what is he interested in? Okay well let's get to it. Number one that they be kept in the father's name.

That they be kept in the father's name. That they be kept in the father's name. Now the name of God is more than vowels and consonants.

It's more than letters. His name refers to his character and his truth. In Romans and in 2 Peter we find that the way in which we behave as believers ends up reflecting on his name and when we misbehave we cause his name to be blasphemed.

It's no accident that the first thing that Jesus prayed for as he was praying for his disciples was this that they would remain in the center of the character and nature and glory of God.

[29 : 45] In essence when Jesus said what he did there keep them in your name he was praying that his disciples would stay zeroed in would stay focused would remain interested in the glory and the person of God.

What you think about God and how often you think about God makes all the difference in the world in how you act and what you say.

Isn't that right? I am a Baptist pastor actually seven days a week. Now some days I wear jeans and some days I wear shorts and some days and sometimes one of the things that I always find curious is that you know I'm working around the yard or I'm somewhere at Home Depot a lot of times and you know and someone will get to talking to me and the next thing that happens is they say something that is a little off color or a little inappropriate.

I don't say hey don't do that I'm a Baptist pastor. I just kind of go on go on go on and a couple minutes later I say so what do you do?

well I'm a pastor. Oh I didn't mean to say that. I'm sorry. What I think about what you said is really irrelevant.

[31 : 19] I'm checking out of here soon. It's what God thinks that counts. okay. So it's the desire of the Savior that his disciples stay within focus and interest in the glory and the supremacy of God.

Second thing that we find here. Jesus prays that they will be one. Look at verse 11 that they may be one even as we are one.

Hey. I have the privilege of being father to four children. They are no longer at that point in life where we all get in the car together and we say or I would say from the driver.

Well actually I would say from the passenger seat because Judith usually drove for good reason. I no longer say hey where do you want to go? But I can tell you when we used to say that in the car I ended up with five different opinions.

I want to go to McDonald's. I want to go to Arby's. Everybody had an opinion. It's like stop. Unity is not something that we are hardwired to do because of our depraved little souls.

[32 : 51] Would you agree with that? Huh? Getting along? Huh? No? Here's Jesus. He says let me read it again. He says that they may be one even as we are one.

Here is Jesus praying. What's he praying for? That his disciples be one as he is one with the father. Jesus cared very much for the well-being of his disciples.

Listen to me. And in relationship to that interest he prayed that his children, his disciples would be in unity with one another.

Being in unity is not in our human nature, in our depravity. It is the work of grace and it is the work of the cross. In essence, to put it together this way, and it's not the only thing that could be said about biblical unity, but unity is something that comes about when we are persuaded that the glory and the name of the father is more important than our personal preferences.

Let me come to one more point here just for a second. Not one more, so you'll think I'm done. I want you to mark also that Jesus said, I'm praying that they will have their joy fulfilled.

[34 : 22] I want you to recognize that when Jesus is praying that they have their joy fulfilled, he is interested that his disciples have a joy, an abiding joy that transcends the moment.

What's going to happen very soon is that they're going to watch their savior betrayed, and they're going to abandon him, they're going to know of the crucifixion, and they'll be pretty disappointed and grieved.

And yet here is Jesus praying, and his prayer is this, that they would have their joy fulfilled. They would be full of joy. Let's think about that just for a moment.

Where does joy come from? For one, it comes from who you know. And I have to say this, that a characteristic of a believer whose heart is marked by a sense of the presence and the glory of God is not an unhappy person.

There are moments of sorrow and their heartache and their days of shadow, but the characteristic of a believer who is walking with the Lord is marked by joyfulness.

[35 : 33] joyfulness. There's another thing that I want you to understand in relationship to this issue of joy, and I want you to go back just for a moment to John chapter 15, verse 9 through 11.

John chapter 15, look at the passage, if you will. John chapter 15, verse 9. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. Now listen to me. Everybody wants to be happy.

Would you agree with that? I mean, just try it. You're in the checkout line at Walmart. You come up to the lady who's standing there waiting for you to scan your stuff or whatever else, and you say, hey, would you like to be happy today?

Or when you drive up to McDonald's and you order your food at the window and just say to the lady, hey, would you like to be happy today? No, I'm really hoping I can be pretty unhappy today. Today's a day for unhappiness, and I'm really into it.

[36 : 50] I want to do my best at it. People want to be happy, but here's the deal. There is a correlation. There's a connection. There's a link between obedience and happiness.

Do you follow that? There really is. There really is. The other day, I found myself in the process of putting something together, and I have changed.

One of the advantages of growing older is that you learn things the hard way. And I was actually sat down, and the first thing I did was I took out the instruction manual. The first thing. I used to think that I could figure it out.

It didn't make any difference what it was. I figured it out. And I've had so many times where I would be about three-quarters of the way through the project and suddenly realize that this wasn't working.

And so back to the manual. So now I'm at the point where I've made this connection between following instructions and getting it right seems to be really close. It makes me happy.

[37 : 52] Now listen to me. There are some of you out here who just, I mean, you can't figure out why happiness just seems to be elusive, but you are living in perpetual, ongoing disobedience to the Word of God, and it isn't going to work until you follow Him.

The fullness of joy and the circle of obedience go together. Mark what it says next. We find Jesus there in His prayer saying, I'm coming to you, okay, and I've kept these ones, but I am asking that you would guard them, that you would protect them.

And so I want you to understand as we think about this fact that Jesus is not praying that we'd be taken out of the world, but that we'd be protected. I can't help when I read from day to day of the things that believers are suffering all around the world to not think that the day is coming when people here in America are going to suffer very realistically for their faith.

Do you realize that? It's coming. It's coming. And interestingly enough, we find that Jesus didn't pray that we would be kept from difficulty.

difficulty. His prayer was that we would be kept through it. Last thing that I want you to mark here, going down, if you will, to verse 17, it says, sanctify them in the truth.

[39 : 28] Your word is truth. My Bible reading last Thursday was through a portion of Leviticus covering the the ordination process and the sanctifying process of Aaron and his sons.

I mean, it was impressive. Went on for seven days. And what that did actually was set Aaron and his sons apart for the responsibility of serving God.

The word sanctify means to set apart, put apart for some specific purpose or be appointed for something. And in the ceremony in the Old Testament, the priest put on special garments.

He offered specific sacrifices. He had blood put on the right lobe of his ear and on the right thumb and on the right toe, okay? And it was all put together in such a fashion that that individual was set apart for a particular responsibility.

That was their job, their call. And here is Jesus praying for his disciples and he said, listen, I want them to be sanctified in the truth.

[40 : 43] I want them to be set apart. Now listen to me. The thing that makes us different is the word of God.

The thing that makes us different is the word of God. It's no accident that the central part of our worship today is the word.

And next week when Pastor Shearer preaches, you'll have someone who doesn't have gray hair, who's a little younger and a little slimmer standing up here.

But you know what's going to be exactly the same? It's going to be the word of God. And the thing that characterizes, now listen, because this is something that seems to be missing sometimes.

The thing that characterizes authentic worship is that it's never separated from the centrality of the preaching of the word of God.

[41 : 54] Do you follow that? Our singing is what it is because of the word of God, not despite, not apart, but because.

And so here is Jesus praying that his disciples would be sanctified by the word. The word. The word. So practically speaking, let me ask you this.

You're sitting out there. We're coming towards the end. How important is the word in your life? How important? Well, I read three verses in the morning.

You know, pretty much that's all I can get in. Really? Okay. So when you have a question, where do you go for information?

Well, I Google it. So I got you there, didn't I? Okay. So where's the word in all of this? Do you follow that? Malachi, to the law, Isaiah chapter 8, to the law and the testimonies that they speak not according to this, it's because there is no truth in them.

[43 : 06] Jesus says, listen, I want you to do something for these 11 that I love. I want you to sanctify them in the truth and your word is truth.

Listen. Jesus prayed for his 11 and he's praying for you today in the same way.

If you want something that is an incredible comfort, yes, it is a comfort to know that Jesus died on the cross for my sins.

But it says in Hebrews that he ever lives. Do you know what it says? To make intercession.

Intercession. Thank you, Mary Ellen. To make intercession for us before the throne. I got to tell you, it gives me cold chills to realize that Jesus is praying for me today.

[44 : 18] It doesn't get much better than that. So practically speaking, listen to me. If you are here and you know Jesus as your Savior and you're kind of playing loose and careless with obedience, are you listening?

You're messing with the wrong Savior. Because the one who is interceding on your behalf is bent on bringing it about, right?

Having begun a good work in you, he will keep on putting the heat on until you get the memo. So don't mess with him. If you are here this morning and you do not know Jesus, let me tell you, now is the appointed hour to cry out to him and say, listen, my life's a mess and I cannot make it and I need Jesus as my Savior.

Now's the hour. Let's close in prayer. Our Father God, this morning as we take the word in hand, we are thankful for the blessing of the scriptures that you have given to us that declares truth and tells us of the Lord Jesus and his ministry on our behalf, even today as he intercedes for us before the Father.

I pray that as we sing this song in closing, that those who are here that do not know Christ would be drawn to the cross, that today they would recognize the burden and the darkness of their heart has no remedy apart from crying out to Christ.

[45 : 55] And believers that are discouraged, believers that are uncertain about the moment and the future would find comfort in this, that the one who saved them, even at this moment, intercedes for them before the throne.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.