

The God Who Ordains

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Over the last several weeks, we've been looking at faith.

! Where does it take us?

How does it help when things are difficult? And we've talked about some of the implications of faith and how it shows up in our life and how it carries us through.

We began several weeks ago looking at the fact that faith and quietness and rest and trust lead to salvation and lead to strength.

It really leads to this sense of confidence in us, this overriding peace and this abounding joy that is true of believers.

[1 : 0 7] It connects with us individually. It connects with us personally. It has real life implications. It helps us to be able to step back and not to strive.

It helps us not to be anxious and to worry about the difficulties and hardships and the twists and turns of life. But this morning, what I want us to understand is that faith in God also leads us not just to waiting, but faith in God leads us to action.

faith in God leads us to ordained movement in a direction that is aligned with the Savior, that is aligned with our God.

A couple days ago, actually I think just yesterday, heard the news of a friend of ours in southern Ohio that just passed away, just went to be home with the Lord.

She would have been 95 in just a couple of days from now. And two years ago, she was going through some difficulties because not only for her personally, the physical health issues and being in a care facility, but also at the same time, her 70-plus-year-old son was dying of cancer.

[2 : 3 1] There were times when I would go and talk with Margaret and the question would be on her heart and her mind, Andrew, what is God doing through this?

Parents aren't supposed to outlive their kids. It's just not supposed to be this way. What is God's purpose for my life? What does He have in mind for me?

What really is the reason for me sticking around? After all, I'm old. I'm homebound. I can't really do anything for God.

There's not a whole lot of activity that I can be involved in. But she rested in the sovereignty of God. She rested in the future plan of God, His purposes for her life.

And she came to terms with the fact that even though she didn't understand it all, there must be a reason for my son dying and for me to continue on.

[3 : 3 6] I think one of those reasons is the life of a young man that she began to invest in. You see, our church was going through the process of encouraging the older saints in the church to partner themselves or to connect themselves with a younger individual.

We called them prayer partners. And for the school year, the goal was for them to pray for these youngsters, these teenagers, that God would help them through the difficulties of school and the hardships that they encountered and that they would be praying them through and encouraging them individually, but praying that God would do a work in their life.

Well, she took it to the next level. And she said, okay, I'm not just going to pray for this young man, but what I'm going to do is I'm going to pray with this young man.

She said, you know, I can pray. God hasn't kept me from that. I might not be able to get out of the house, but you can bet I can pray. And I can talk on the phone.

I can pick up the phone and I can call this young man and I can be an encouragement to him. And not just for the year, but for the last four years, she has been investing and building into this young man.

[4 : 5 9] So that now, as I think about this young man, there is this new passion for the Lord Jesus. There is this bursting forth of confidence in the Lord.

There is this deep affection for prayer. And seeing how it worked out, how it played out in the life of an older person. There was a wrestling with God in prayer.

There was a communion with God in prayer. And that was infectious. It was passed on. The legacy of this godly woman was passed on to this young man.

And only time will tell. Only time will tell what that investment will lead to. The investment of a godly woman who didn't understand the circumstances of life, but was willing to align herself with what she knew at the time.

Faithful with God's will for the present, so that it would lead to faithfulness of God investing in him and leading him to who knows where.

[6 : 1 1] Who knows what that investment will lead to in the future. Because of a faithful, godly woman who was willing to be used. Wrestling with God through uncertainty.

Struggling with the, God, what is your plan for my life? But a willingness to obey in the moment. Well, this morning, I want us to look at Isaiah chapter 45.

You know, I think we're quite happy to talk about the love of God. We're quite happy to talk about the holiness of God. We're quite happy to talk about the grace and the mercy of God.

But one of the areas we don't really want to go often is we don't want to talk about the sovereignty of God. We don't often want to talk about the fact that God not only knows the future, but he has his hand on it.

God not only has a foreknowledge of what things will happen, but he is actively involved in bringing them about. Let me tell you, that should give us confidence today.

[7 : 1 6] That should make us so active and so risky in our courageous, self-sacrificing obedience.

Because we are so convinced that God has a plan for our life, and we'll work it through that nothing is going to get in the way of God's unfailing plan for us, as long as we're aligned with his plans for the future.

There is almost an invincibility about us if we're willing to align ourselves with God's plan, because he is unfailing.

The unfailing God who is unstoppable in every way. That is the God who ordains. That's the God who we're going to look at this morning from Isaiah chapter 45.

Look at that with me. I just want to open and just read through this first verse as an introduction to our study today.

[8 : 1 7] The God who ordains. It says this. It says, First, as we look at the God who ordains, I want us to understand first and foremost that it is God's prerogative to choose his vessel.

It's God's prerogative to choose his vessel. It's his right. It's his ability. There is no reason for us to question God's decision.

His purposes are final. He will do what he will do, and that's his prerogative. That's what makes him God. That's what makes him distinct. He is sovereign. He is able to do this.

And in this selection process, I want us to see here in verse 1 of chapter 45, and then backing up a verse into chapter 44, I want us to understand and to recognize the dignity associated with this decision.

The dignity associated with this selection. Look at chapter 44, verse 28. It speaks of Cyrus again when he says this.

[9 : 46] Who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose. Saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and of the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.

Now in verse 1 of chapter 45, and in verse 28 of chapter 44, we see two significant words that kind of single Cyrus out from the rest of the company, that help us understand that God has set his affection on Cyrus, and commissioned him for a specific work.

Notice that word there in verse 28. He says, He is my, What church? He is my shepherd. Now that's an incredible word as we think about Cyrus, this foreigner, this person who is outside of Jewish nationality, being considered a shepherd of God's people.

A significant claim. And the significance is amplified by the fact that God uses the term, My shepherd.

In the Hebrew, it's actually one word, all connected together. The pronoun is fixed to the end of that Hebrew word, to help understand the relationship there.

[11 : 09] They're connected. They can't be separated. He is my shepherd. Called out by me to do my bidding, to accomplish my purposes.

There is this intimate connection that cannot be separated. We've looked at the concept of shepherding considerably. We saw this a couple of weeks ago in Isaiah chapter 40, where God is referring to himself as the shepherd of his people.

And the idea of gathering and caring and comfort that springs up from Isaiah chapter 40, and throughout the rest of the scripture, drawing attention to the great shepherd who will one day come in the person of Jesus Christ.

This title used consistently of God throughout the Old Testament. Particularly the familiar passage in the Psalms, Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. And a title that Jesus would claim for himself in John chapter 10. He says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

[12 : 20] Now whatever would be said about this individual, Cyrus, we have to understand that it was an identity that connected him with significance.

An identity that connected him with the dignity and the honor of being called out by God. Now, in chapter 45, verse 1, not only shepherd, but also anointed.

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus. Anointed one having sacred oil poured on him ceremonially.

And so becoming a person with special authority and function. God had singled Cyrus out for a special purpose. Again, this personal pronoun is connected in the Hebrew in one word put together to help understand the intimacy and inseparability of the connection between what God is doing for Cyrus and what Cyrus will do for God.

They're mutually exclusive. They cannot be separated. And this term of being anointed is used exclusively up to this point, is used exclusively of Jewish kings.

[13 : 40] Or used exclusively of the future Messiah. And yet, here we find this dramatic shift taking place.

This incredible confession of God through the mouth of Isaiah that Cyrus will be his anointed. Cyrus will be able to enjoy the special dignity and the special honor of being used of God in this way.

Of course, just to be clear, Cyrus is not a Jew. But who is Cyrus after all? We're going to look at some of the things. I don't want us to jump to any conclusions about Cyrus.

But I want you to see how detailed the description is about Cyrus. So we can begin to understand from history who this individual was. But as we understand, Cyrus is distinct in being anointed and commissioned by God.

Set apart. Called to lead and accomplish the purposes of God. That leads us to our next point. Not only do we see the dignity associated with this position, this selection.

[14 : 56] But we also come to understand the difficulty. The difficulty with this selection. So who was Cyrus? Who is this man, Cyrus?

Well, if we look in the passage and move up to chapter 44, I want to point out a couple of things that help to describe this person. Who he is and what he will do.

Notice in verse 26, it says there in the middle, Now whatever is taking place here, Isaiah is describing a city of Jerusalem that is in a far different condition than it is in the current time.

At that time, Jerusalem was inhabited. At that time, the temple had been built. But sometime in the future, there was going to be a need for being re-inhabited.

Sometime in the future, there was going to be a need for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. Sometime in the future, there was going to be a need for the temple to be re-established. Cyrus will be the means by which God will accomplish this objective.

[16 : 35] He will be the shepherd to help usher in this new season of being re-established and revived as a people. There's a list of details that describe him later on as well.

We find in chapter 45, verse 1. It says that he will subdue nations before him. It says that his... Excuse me.

I will break in pieces the doors of bronze, in verse 2, and cut through the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

And then dropping down to verse 13. It says, I have stirred him up in righteousness. I will make all his ways level. He shall build my city and set my exiles free.

Not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts. And there are a number of difficulties with this prophetic section. Difficulties that may have confused the people of the time.

[17 : 56] What are you saying? Cyrus is going to restore a city that hasn't yet been demolished? What is taking place here? And who is this Cyrus after all?

The first difficulty that the people would have come to terms with is the whole timing of this prophecy is so distant into the future. It would be some 150 to 200 years before Cyrus would even emerge onto the scene.

But God names him before the fact. God speaks the name of Cyrus 200 years before Cyrus even existed as an individual. And at the time, no one could envision any empire but the Assyrian Empire continuing to maintain control.

And yet, Cyrus, who was in the Persian Empire, has to move through the Babylonian Empire before you even get to his empire taking prominence.

The Babylonian Empire would emerge after Assyria. And one would expect that it would be another couple of hundred years before any new empire would emerge as being the world power.

[19 : 13] And yet, it was going to come in a series of years. God predicted this before the fact. Cyrus would be installed as a king in 559.

And in 20 years, he would not only conquer the portion of land that he was living in, but he would conquer Babylon to the extent that the Assyrian or the Persian Empire would be the largest empire the world had ever known.

Emerging from obscurity to become the greatest empire in history. Any surprise? No.

Because it is God who ordains. It's God who knows the future. It is God who is in control of those things that are happening down the road. But the difficulty is not only in terms of timing, but also in terms of heritage.

Cyrus was a Persian. And as we look back to 2 Chronicles 26, we see a description of him. It says, All those who escape from the sword he will carry away to Babylon, where they will become servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia.

[20 : 30] Speaking of Cyrus. Cyrus would be a Persian, but earlier in the book of Isaiah, in Isaiah chapter 13, Isaiah actually says that it's not going to be the Persians who are taking Babylon.

It's going to be the Medes who will be taking Babylon. So how do you deal with this conundrum? How do you resolve this conflict? Only in the mind of God.

Only God can resolve the tension that would otherwise confound the wisest individuals. You see, Cyrus was a Persian because of his father, but his mom happened to be a Mede.

His grandfather actually happened to be the king of the Medes. And so again, God begins to unravel the tension. To demonstrate his sovereign control.

His ability to ordain the future, to know exactly what's coming, to describe the details, and to help us understand that he is God. He alone is able to tell us what the future holds.

[21 : 39] He alone is able to help us understand the things that would otherwise seem contradictory. And the empire of Mede-Persia, although it began with the Medes being in charge, Cyrus, in rising to power, overcame the Medes.

And so he comes in and answers all of the things that God had promised to do through him. The third difficulty is a difficulty of the fact that he was a foreigner.

It was a difficulty in the minds of those of the audience, those who were listening. How can you bring an anointed shepherd to rescue the people of Israel who is also not part of Israel?

How can you do this? This is unjust. This is not right. And God's response to that is found in chapter 45, verses 9 and 10.

In answering this complaint, God, how can you do this to us? God says, I'm in control.

[23 : 12] I'm in charge. Who are you to question me? God is the one who ordains the future.

It is my prerogative to decide who I choose to use and how I accomplish my objectives. The point of all of this is that God's purposes will be accomplished.

But the question is, will he accomplish it through you? You see, the reason why God wasn't going to fulfill, at least immediately, his objectives through his people is because they were disobedient.

They had stepped outside of the will of God and had not aligned themselves to his perfect plan for their lives. And so God says, fine. I will accomplish my objectives, but I'm going to accomplish them through other means because of disobedience.

It will stand. My plans are unfailing. Will you choose to be part of the plans that I have made? We have the privilege of aligning ourselves to God's plans if we're walking and submitting and yielding to his purposes.

[24 : 25] His plans are unfailing. They will be accomplished. Will we have the privilege of being God's chosen vessels as we step in to the plans that he has made?

Israel could not experience the dignity, the honor of what God had in mind because of their disobedience.

So he chose to bring in other means. And he does that through the person Cyrus. Well, we see God's prerogative with his plans.

Next, we see God's power to accomplish his plans in verses 1 to 5. You see, God not only understands the future.

He not only has perfect foresight and foreknowledge of all that is coming. But we're going to see in these verses that God is the one to work it through. What God purposes, he will perform.

[25 : 22] What God has as a plan, he will bring about. That is our God, as we'll see here in the next several verses. We're going to see through this section his primary means and his secondary means of accomplishing his objectives.

Look with me at the end of verse 1 and reading down through verse 5. It says this. I want you to pay attention to the use of the personal pronoun I.

Who is the one who is accomplishing these plans? What is the primary means? Notice it says, Whose right hand I have grasped.

That's in the middle of verse 1. To subdue nations before him. To loose the belts of kings. To open doors before him.

That gates may not be closed. Verse 2. I will go before you. And level the exalted places.

[26 : 29] I will break in pieces the doors of bronze. Verse 3. I will give you the treasures of darkness. Verse 4.

I call you by name. I name you, though you do not know me. Verse 5. I am the Lord. There is no other.

Besides me, there is no God. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I equip you, though you do not know me.

Verse 7. I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things. Now dropping down to verse 12.

I made the earth and created man on it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens. And I commanded all their hosts. Verse 13.

[27 : 35] I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level. Is there any lack of clarity in those verses?

Who is the one who has accomplished these purposes? Who is the primary means? Who is the one that is making it happen? Not only in knowing the future, but in bringing those purposes about?

Make no mistake. God is the primary means. God is the one who commits himself to work his plans through. What he has planned, the purposes that he has, are the purposes and plans that he will perform.

We can take confidence in that. We can rest in God. We can rest in the future because we know it is God who will work things through.

The future rests in the power of God to perform, in the power of God alone. What God ordains to happen, he will see it through to the end.

[28 : 49] It is no different from the involvement of God with his own people. And if we were to take some time and you look through the second half of chapter 44, you would see God's involvement with his people in bringing them and birthing them as a nation.

Israel didn't have any problem with God's favor on them as a people. But if they were to understand and recognize that the only reason why they existed is because of God's direct involvement in their lives as well.

And so God has the prerogative not only to choose his vessel, Cyrus, but to exalt him and to make him useful, to accomplish his purposes.

And in doing this, he says, you are nothing without me. You are nothing without me. I set you apart. I put my affection on you.

I have commissioned you as my own special vessel. Any blessing or any purpose or any product that you might be able to bring about is because of my working in your life.

[30 : 03] That's his primary means. We see now his secondary means in verse 13. His primary means is resting in the character of God alone.

His secondary means is that he chooses to let us be part of the process, to be his vessels, to be his conduits. Look at verse 13.

Chapter 45, it says this. I have stirred him up in righteousness. I will make all his ways level. He shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts.

God's favor will be on Cyrus, to raise him up, to stir his heart. This word stirring is this word to arouse or to awaken from sleep, to make him alert.

It's used 80 times throughout the Old Testament. And in every case where it's translated to stir up, it's always used in the understanding of God's activity in leading his instruments to accomplish his objectives.

[31 : 18] God is the divine mover who is stirring hearts, arousing us to then accomplish the purposes that he has called us to do. And amazingly, it is used of God's power over kingdoms 17 times, and particularly used of Cyrus 10 times throughout the Old Testament.

It is a word used almost entirely of God's authority over the nations, and particularly God's authority over Cyrus. Cyrus, you may not know who I am, but I know who you are.

You don't exist yet, but that doesn't matter. I am setting my sights on you. I will accomplish my purposes through you, and I will make it happen.

I will stir up your heart and awaken within you an idea, an understanding of my objectives, and coupled with my divine power, you will be unstoppable.

Cyrus was one of those secondary means, but not in this text is another secondary means. Somebody who had been taken out of Jerusalem, somebody who had been a prince in Jerusalem, who had been moved into Babylon, who had been brought up in the courts of Babylon, and then had been transferred to the courts of Persia, and had a direct line of access into the ear of Cyrus himself.

[32 : 51] Who is that? Daniel. Daniel is a man of God. Now, this blows me away, okay? This is an amazing example of bending and resting through the twists and turns of life.

Daniel, who is in Jerusalem, and if he would have been like any of us, would have said, hey, I'm in a place of prominence here. God, if you're going to really use me, you keep me here in Jerusalem.

I've got a place of position here. I've got a place of authority here. God knocks off that plan and moves him off to Babylon into exile to be a slave, essentially, in another empire.

And as chance would have it, he was identified along with his friends and allowed to be trained in the courts of Babylon.

But Daniel wasn't going to be a man of compromise. He was going to be a man who was committed and consistent, a man of integrity, to follow the ways of God, to submit himself to the purposes of God.

[34 : 02] And what happened? God used that submission to then raise him up to higher levels within the courts of Babylon, to be the number two man in that massive empire, then to be relegated to the outskirts once Nebuchadnezzar died, but then to reemerge as the number two guy again in another entire empire of Persia.

Who could have imagined that God would do that through the twists and turns of life? But it happened because of Daniel's willingness to submit his heart to the teaching of the Scripture, to be a man who is committed to prayer, and a man who is willing to trust in God's perfect, ordained plan for the future.

And so here is Daniel. As we find in Daniel chapter 9, he's reading through the Scripture, and at the time he's reading the book of Jeremiah, and he notices in Jeremiah that in 70 years that the people are going to be brought back to Jerusalem.

And he says, it's been 70 years! This is the time! God's going to do this! And so he prays it through, and we see this heart of a humble man coming before the Lord in sackcloth and ashes and in repentance before him and pleading with God to carry out his purposes.

And certainly having a copy of the book of Isaiah in his hand and seeing, Cyrus, his name is here! Wow!

[35 : 48] He's right here! He is the king now over Babylon! Come on! God has put me exactly where he wants me to be so I can speak the word into Cyrus' heart.

And as we look back to Ezra chapter 1, we can see the words of Cyrus confirming the words of God and saying, hey, I am the anointed of God to carry out his plans.

I'm going to send the people back to Jerusalem because God has commissioned it long before I even existed. the secondary means of God to accomplish his primary purposes.

You see, God wants to accomplish his purposes through you too. The question this morning is will you align yourself to the purposes of God? And will you allow the plans of God to be worked through your heart and life regardless of the twists and turns and the difficulties that you might experience?

so that God can be exalted. It takes us to our last point this morning. The point that we see in verses 6 to 12 and that is that God's, we see God's purpose in the path that he takes.

[37 : 10] We find God's purposes in the path that he takes. What is God's purpose? Why does he do it this way?

What is the point of raising up Cyrus? What is the point of looking down the road and doing something that would have totally confounded the wisdom of the day?

Well, the first purpose is that it underscores the preeminence of God. It underscores the preeminence of God. Look with me at verse 3.

It says, I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes in secret places.

Why? Here's the purpose. That you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

[38 : 12] And then moving down to verse 6. That people may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none besides me.

I am the Lord and there is no other. What other explanation is there? Notice the heart of God. The heart of God not just to establish the preeminence of his wisdom, but notice even in the contrast of these verses how they're how they're phrased.

It says in verse 3, I will give you the treasures that you may know that I am the Lord. That you, Cyrus, might understand who I am.

And then in verse 6, the difference that people may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none besides me. we see throughout this passage and now particularly at the end it says towards the end here in verse 23, 23, I myself have sworn from the mouth that has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return.

To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance. And then in verse 25, in the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.

[39 : 53] The heart of God in demonstrating his preeminence is not just to put himself up as the superior one but to put himself there so that we can enter in.

So that we can enjoy, so that we can recognize who he is as distinct from the world and we can worship him. We can recognize him. We can delight in him and understanding who he is.

Whenever we see this in this chapter throughout the rest of scripture and particularly in the book of Ezekiel we see throughout the book of Ezekiel 75 times where he says this, then you will know that I am the Lord.

God's desire is to set himself up in providing these prophetic words to help us understand his distinctiveness, his preeminence.

And so in trusting him, it's not a blind faith. We recognize the unfailing testimony of God's preeminence and it sets him apart.

[41 : 11] It is his desire that the world would recognize his distinctiveness too and come and worship him. But finally what I want us to recognize is not only the preeminence of God, that is his purpose, but I also want us to understand that it underscores the invincibility of his people.

The invincibility of his people. Those who surrender to God's purposes for their lives will not fail. They cannot fail because they have the unfailing strength of God working through their lives.

As long as they are walking in the path of God, the path that he has set for them, they are invincible. The certainty of their productivity and usefulness rests in the wisdom and the power of God to perform, thus rendering them unstoppable.

Now don't misunderstand. In rendering us unstoppable, in rendering us unfailing, it is not saying that you're not going to experience difficulty.

It doesn't mean that you're not going to be persecuted. It does not mean that you're going to be treated unjustly. It does not mean there's not going to be twists and turns in your life, but it means that God will use those things in your life to accomplish his purposes.

[42 : 35] They will be unfailing because you have an unfailing God. The preeminent example is Jesus Christ. The preeminent example is the one who came in perfect submission to the Father's will.

Of course, we understand what happened in his life. We understand that he was mistreated. We understand that he was put on a cross. But in his obedience, he accomplished the greatest objective that God ever had for humanity.

To reconcile us to himself. To make a way for fellowship. That's what happens when we align ourselves to the wisdom and to the power of God.

We will be unstoppable. not because the power is within us, but because we have yielded ourselves to the perfect plan of God who will bring about his purposes in our life.

There's a lot of excuses. Maybe you're saying this morning, well, I'm just too old. God can't use me anymore. I would say, look at the life of Daniel.

[43 : 49] he was in his 90s before Cyrus ever came into power. Look at the life of Margaret Brown. He was willing to invest in the life of a younger man.

Who knows what God will accomplish in his life because of her faithfulness. Maybe you say, I'm too young. Into that, Paul's words to Timothy says, don't let anyone despise your youth, but be an example in word and conduct and faith and love.

Rise to the occasion. Let God's power speak through your life. Maybe you say, well, I'm just a mom. How can God use me?

And I think of the life of Susanna Wesley. I think of the men, John Wesley and Charles Wesley, who we still enjoy not only the richness of theology and the hymns that we sing, but also in the legacy of men who loved God and spoke for him.

There is not only an effect in the day that they were living in, but an effect that continues to last to this present day. Maybe you say, well, I don't have a seminary education.

[45 : 08] And I think of the life of David Brainerd. David Brainerd died at the age of 29. He suffered with crazy physical issues.

But through it all, there was a resting and a waiting in God. And he wrote this journal that ended up being the catalyst for the modern missions movement. It went into the hands of great men like Hudson Taylor and William Carey, and it inspired them to love God and to trust him through any adversity.

There could be any number of excuses this morning. But God wants to work his will out in our life if we just surrender to his plans. And if we do, the power of God will show up, will accomplish his purposes, and we will be unstoppable for him, for his glory.

Let's pray. Lord, we say not to us, but to your name give praise.

Our desire is not to put ourselves in the spotlight. Our desire is to submit ourselves to the sovereign hand of God, to your purposes, so that we can be useful, so there can be some productivity in life, so that we can look back on a legacy of your faithfulness and using us as weak vessels to accomplish your eternal purposes in this world.

[46 : 41] Purposes that will lead to people in this world bowing the knee before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is our desire. And so, this morning, we bow ourselves, and we pray that you would have your way in our lives, so that we can be useful in this world for you.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.