

Sovereign Friendship- Relationship with God

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Preacher: Rob Buttermore

[0:00] The sermon text for today is Genesis 18, 16 through 33. If you do not have a Bible, there are Bibles on the back table and we would love to give you one of those as a gift.

I don't, are they marked or not? They're not marked, but Genesis is the first book, so I think you can find it. Let's read this together. Then the men set out from there and they looked down towards Sodom and Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

For I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not, I will know.

[1:07] So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said, Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city.

Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked.

Far be that from you. Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just? And the Lord said, If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?

And he said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there. Again he spoke to him and said, Suppose forty are found there. He answered, For the sake of forty I will not do it.

[2:07] Then he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there. He answered, I will not do it if I find thirty there. He said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord.

Suppose twenty are found there. And he answered, For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it. Then he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry and I will speak again but this once.

Suppose ten are found there. He answered, For the sake of ten I will not destroy it. And the Lord went his way when he had finished speaking to Abraham.

And Abraham returned to his place. This is the word of the Lord. Let me open this up in prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, again we ask that your word and your spirit might speak to us today, Lord. Have your way with us. Transform us by the power of your word and your spirit. God, you rule and reign over all things and for that we are thankful.

[3:12] Help us enjoy and find joy in Christ through the preaching of your word today. I pray this in your name. Amen. All right. Good morning, everyone. My name is Rob.

It is Testimony Sunday and Mike's not here, which means we probably will go short. But we'll see. All right.

So it's a joy to walk through Genesis 18, 16 through 33 this morning. To walk through what sovereign friendship or relationship with God looks like through this text.

So before we dig in too far, let's see. Maybe not. Yeah.

So we'll go through Genesis so far. So we started in Genesis very beginning, right? We saw creation all the way to the Tower of Babel. That's what Mike called last week primeval history. [4 : 16] The very, very beginning. And then the section chapters 12 through 50 walk through all the patriarchs. All these names that you know like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

But really, assuming on what we've done so far, we've seen Abraham get chosen. He migrated to Canaan and then to Egypt. Right? He was separated from Lot.

He rescued Lot later on. And then he received God's covenant promise that his small family would become a great nation. And as we're doing that, right, we've also traced the story of Abraham and Sarah and how their household continues to unfold God's promises through this small family.

So to start today, I'm going to have a little introductory picture to help us understand a little bit of how divine sovereignty and relational nearness belong together, especially from this text. So in your minds, imagine a father holding his newborn child.

Right? Compare with the child. His father possesses strength, knowledge, ability. He has authority far beyond what the child can understand.

[5 : 25] But he doesn't use those gifts to create any distance with the child. Right? He uses them to draw near. One hand supports the baby's neck. The other provides nourishment. His power becomes protection.

Right? His authority becomes care. And his strength becomes tenderness. And then, right, that child will grow up. And that relationship develops almost unlike any other relationship.

That father is going to share things with the child that most others may never hear from that father.

The child is going to come to know sides of the father that are deeply personal. And in time, that child is going to speak with the father with a boldness and a comfort it would seem out of place with anybody else.

The questions that this child is going to ask, right, they'll be honest. You've heard those from kids. They'll be searching. And sometimes they're really persistent. But they're marked by this bond of trust, authority, nearness, and love.

That picture gives us just a small window into what we're going to look at today in Genesis 18.

Sovereign friendship, which is relationship with God. Right? The God who possesses all authority draws near to Abraham without surrendering any of that sovereignty.

[6 : 39] He reveals his will. He welcomes in honest conversation. And he directs the relationship from the beginning to the end. This passage shows us that friendship with God, it's not casual familiarity.

It's not fearful distance. It's a gracious relationship initiated by the sovereign God, ordered by his authority, and marked by his genuine nearness.

That means this passage is not just a doctrine to admire. Right? It's teaching us how to live as though God is truly present. Paul Miller, in his book, A Praying Church, says the great struggle in prayer is not simply finding time.

Right? It's resisting the discouragement and quiet unbelief that tells us prayer is going to make a small difference. And Genesis 18, our text today, confronts that instinct.

The God who rules all things invites his people to draw near, to listen to what he's revealed, and to respond. In Paul Miller's terms, a praying church is not a church that adds one more activity to an already busy schedule.

[7 : 49] It's a church that brings its plans, its families, its ministries, its fears, and its hopes into the presence of God and carry them, relying on God and not their own strength.

There we go. So we're going to walk through the passage today a little bit. The first section is verses 16 through 21, when God reveals his will to his friend Abraham.

And then after that, relationship with God involves honest communication. We'll see the two-way nature of that communication. And then friendship with God is directed and sustained by God in the last verse.

So, as we move into the text, the scene shifts. Last week, Mike preached on Abraham and Sarah receiving the promise that even in their 90s, they would have a new baby. And now, the men who've been with Abraham set out and they look towards Sodom.

Right? It's this city marked by grave wickedness. And Abraham, walking as their leader, he walks with them and he sends them on his way. But as he does this, Abraham stays with God and this conversation begins.

[8:56] God kind of takes him aside, begins this one-on-one conversation. As the Lord speaks, let's listen to John 15, verses 15 through 16, that Mike referenced last week to help us understand a little bit of what's happening here.

Jesus says this to his disciples. He says, No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. Right? So with that in mind, the Lord begins his conversation with Abraham here.

He says, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? And then he recalls the covenant that he made with him. Abraham will become a great and mighty nation.

All the nations on earth will be blessed in him and his household is to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. Right? This is the first step of sovereign friendship.

[10:02] God takes the initiative. God reveals what Abraham could never bring about on his own. Abraham could never discover who he was going to be without God revealing it to him.

And this revelation that God gives him calls for obedience in his life. Relationship begins with God, not in our search for him, but with his gracious decision to make himself known and his purposes known.

Right? In other words, God is the promise maker, the promise sustainer, the promise keeper.

Abraham has been chosen. He's been set apart. And it's not just so that the blessing would end with him, but it's so that he would bless all the nations of the world.

And in this moment, the Lord treats Abraham as what? As a friend. He chooses him. He speaks with him. He reveals his will to him. And he draws him into a deeper understanding of his purposes by showing him his will.

The Lord's revelation to Abraham, right, it not only involves covenant blessing, but also the coming judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah.

[11:12] Right? It's not just this rosy picture. The Lord's words now shift from the focus from his relationship with Abraham to the outcry that's coming from these cities, which he describes as great and very grave.

Many people have probably already heard about Sodom and Gomorrah. Right? When we look across scripture at all the examples, it's a consistent picture. Genesis 13 describes it as a city who's wicked and great sinners against the Lord.

Next week, Mike has the blessing of preaching on chapter 19. Right? Their corruption becomes visible in sexual depravity, in boldness, and the pervasiveness of their sin.

Later, Ezekiel expands the picture even further. He says, Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom. She and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but they did not aid the poor and needy.

They were haughty, and they did an abomination before me. Right? And other examples in the New Testament, they're this example of wicked sinfulness. It was not just limited to one category of sin.

[12:19] Right? Their sin stretched. It touched every part of life, horizontally with creation and everyone around them, and vertically with rebellion against the one true God. So then, in this passage today, the Lord says, I will go down and see what they have done altogether, according to the outcry that has come against me.

For me, this raised two questions. The Lord knows everything, so why does he need to go down and see what happened? And also, it reveals to us, secondly, what kind of judgment he has. And the answer to both those questions is connected. Right? The Lord's descent to Sodom doesn't suggest that he lacks knowledge. Hear us clearly. The Lord knows everything. Rather, just like in Genesis 11, 5, when the Lord comes down to the Tower of Babel to see what's happening, he knows it already.

He's condescending, as they're trying to build themselves up, he's condescending down to them to show them the distance they are from God. Right? And Moses, as the author, is doing the same thing.

He's showing us that God is giving his deliberate attention to the matter that's before him. Derek Kidner, one of the commenters on this, said, the Lord reveals that his judgments are well-weighed and perfectly informed.

[13:32] He's kind of pulling the curtain back here so that we can see God is not capricious, right? Meaning he's just this angry God firing off judgment at the mere rumor of sin. God knows thoroughly.

He judges rightly and he acts with perfect justice. Right? Our next section talks through relationship with God involving honest communication. Right?

So after the Lord revealed that his judgment is deliberate, informed, and righteous, the Lord then sends men down to Sodom. But Abraham remains standing before him. Before this judgment falls, Abraham stays near to God.

Verse 23 tells us that Abraham drew near and then he spoke. Right? So far, we've just heard God speaking. Now, Abraham speaks back. That reveals two things.

Abraham's boldness and his ability to preach but also God's approachability. This is not a cold one-way command from a master to a servant. Maybe you have that at work.

[14:34] Right? It's this honest communication of a real relationship where the friend of God can draw near with reverence but also speak freely to the Lord. Abraham's first words to the Lord come as a petition.

Right? He says, will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? He asks whether the Lord would spare the whole city if there was 50 righteous there. But notice the foundation of Abraham's request.

Abraham doesn't appeal to emotion. He doesn't make a frantic plea in desperation. He appeals to what he knows of God's true character. He says, far be it from you to put the righteous to death with the wicked.

Abraham knows that God distinguishes those who are his and those who are rebels against the one true God. He rightly calls the Lord the judge of all the earth.

He doesn't sugarcoat it. And he trusts that the Lord is going to judge the earth rightly. He's going to do what's just. But his petition is bold but not careless. It's reverent, it's thoughtful, and it's rooted in the truth of who God is, who God has revealed himself to be to Abraham.

[15:46] And the Lord's response, it's simple but it should astonish us, right? He says, if I find at Sodom 50 righteous in the city, I'm going to spare the whole place for the sake of that 50.

So we learn, Abraham's petition, his request, it's heard, it's considered, and it's received. The Lord of the universe, the one who spoke all creation into existence, hears Abraham.

He listens to it. This is remarkable, right? We might have experiences with people with great authority. We might expect them to dismiss their concern or to silence such bold speech.

But that's not at all what happens here. The Lord draws Abraham near, he allows him to speak, and he answers him with patience. Right? In this exchange, we see that honest communication with God, it's not only permitted, it's welcomed in because of the friendship Abraham has with God.

So what does Abraham do? He continues his petition. In doing so, he reveals the heart shaped by nearness to God. Maybe Abraham's thinking about his cousin or his nephew Lot who's there.

[16:58] Perhaps his concern reaches him even further. Maybe there's anyone who knows God who's there, and he wants to care for them. Either way, Abraham's words show that friendship with God has both transformed transformed his understanding, but also his affections, what he loves.

He's come to know God's character, so he approaches him with reverence and confidence. And then, as he draws near to God, his own character is transformed. He's learning to care for the people of God, to plead on their behalf, and to place his own relationship capital before the Lord in faithful intercession.

This gives us a very practical picture of what prayer can look like among us. Paul Miller, again, his book on a praying church and a praying life, where he repeatedly emphasizes that prayer belongs in the messy reality of ordinary life.

I don't know if you've ever tried to pray at a dinner table. People have been over at our house trying to do that. If you try to wait for a quiet time or a more formal setting, it's not going to happen. We often don't use polished words.

We often, we shouldn't wait for a crisis that's large enough to bring about this spiritual prayer. It can be simple. A husband and a wife can pray over a child for breakfast. A college student can ask a friend, can we just stop and pray about that right now?

[18:20] A child can pray for a classmate. A retiree can carry the names of younger families before the Lord. A small group can spend less time describing every burden and more time bringing those

burdens before the Lord.

As we pray together, the needs of the saints, they become these shared stories and answers to prayer become fuel for fresh faith rather than just forgotten requests.

And then in verse 27, as we continue on, the conversation shows us how communication functions within this sovereign friendship. Abraham repeatedly lowers the number of righteous people.

He starts at 50, then to 45, then to 30, 20, 10, right? His persistence, it's also matched by his reverence the whole time.

He calls himself dust and ashes. He asks the Lord not to be angry and he requests his permission to speak over and over. Abraham never treats God for a second like a peer and Abraham and Abraham also doesn't assume control of this conversation.

[19:30] Yet at the same time, he's free to ask, he's free to reason, and he's free to persist with these questions. This is friendship with God rightly ordered.

The Lord remains the Lord while the redeemed are welcomed to speak boldly and reverently before him. Move on to our last section.

Friendship with God is directed and sustained by God. This is really verses 32 and 33. The conversation between God and Abraham comes to an end, right? Abraham has lowered it from 50 down to 10.

How many righteous people? He doesn't continue down to five. He doesn't ask for three. And the text doesn't tell us why he stops at 10. We can imagine, right?

Maybe he knows enough about Sodom to know it's not less than 10. So he stops there. Maybe he just senses after six petitions it's time for him to stop.

[20:27] We can't be certain. But what's certain is who takes the initiative in ending this exchange. Right? Verse 33 makes it clear. And the Lord went his way and when he finished speaking to Abraham this intimate conversation still occurs with the creator creature relationship.

And the Lord remains the one in authority. The conversation ends when the Lord brings it to a close. Abraham doesn't respond and he doesn't demand more time.

He doesn't respond with resentment. He simply turns to his place. Abraham is the Lord's chosen servant and he's welcomed remarkably into intimate conversation with him.

Yet still again the conversation remains rightly ordered. The Lord goes his way and Abraham does the same. All of this again points us back to God's character and the grace that has changed Abraham.

The Lord knows that Abraham is broken by sin. Right? In Genesis 15.6 it says Abraham believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness.

[21:35] Abraham is not right with God because of anything internal to himself. He needs this alien righteousness outside of him. Right? The righteousness is credited to Abraham simply by faith.

No works of his own. His freedom before God is the freedom of grace. He speaks boldly because God has brought him near and he remains humble because the relationship depends entirely on God's mercy.

Sovereign friendship is never earned by human worthiness. It's given by God and received through trusting in his promise. Right? Because Abraham's freedom before God it rests entirely on grace.

The same grace also changes how we as God's people carry responsibility. Parents we know this. We cannot change our children's hearts.

As spouses we cannot fix every weakness in one another. elders of the congregation cannot manufacture spiritual life in a congregation. Older saints cannot control the future.

[22:48] Younger believers cannot do it just by energy alone. Right? As believers we're called to speak truth we're called to act faithfully love sacrificially but we must refuse the illusion that we are the ones who make resurrection happen.

We simply cannot do it. Again Paul Miller describes prayer as our access to the spirit of Jesus. He is the one who must do with words what our words what our plans and our strength cannot do.

Prayer then it's not another brick added to our burden. It is the place where we hand that burden to the Lord and ask him to lead his people. So closing up the passage there we're going to look now from Abraham to the cross what does friendship look like for us today fulfilled in Christ?

Abraham's freedom to draw near by grace points beyond him and raises this larger question. If we know ourselves truly we are sinful so how can a sinful people enjoy genuine friendship with the holy and sovereign God?

Right? Abraham's friendship with God was real but it was never meant to just end with Abraham. Abraham wants to continue his relationship with his people. God promised that through his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed and the New Testament shows that promise offspring as Jesus Christ.

[24:21] The God who drew near in Abraham in Genesis 18 now draws near to us all through his son. Jesus please please don't understand Jesus as just another example of what friendship with God is like.

He is the one through whom enemies of God are reconciled to God himself and they're welcomed through friends as friends. Right? This friendship rests entirely on the work of the cross.

Abraham believed the Lord and righteousness was counted to him. Believers now see the full ground of that verdict in Christ. Jesus he lived the obedient perfect full life that we should have lived he bore the judgment our sin deserved and he rose bodily in victory.

Praise be to God. And at the cross God did not overlook sin he didn't lower his standard of justice the judge of all the earth did what was right he condemned sin in the flesh so he needed that in the flesh of his son so that all who are united to Christ by faith would be justified reconciled and brought near.

we do not approach God today because we possess Abraham's courage because we possess his maturity because we possess his spiritual achievement we approach Jesus because he paid our debt completely and he opened the way into the father's presence.

[25:51] This is why we talked about it Jesus can say in John 15 I have called you friends he makes known to us what he has heard from the father and just as the Lord disclosed all of his purposes for Abraham but Jesus also does something greater he lays down his life for his friends that orders things for us we're not naturally God's companions looking for deeper intimacy right we were sinners in need of rescue Christ loved us first he chose us and he gave himself for us he joined us to himself friendship with God then it's not this sentimental closeness with this manageable deity no it's a covenant nearness so rich purchased by blood received by faith and sustained by the risen Christ the gospel reminds us salvation is the rescue from the wrath of

God and into peace and fellowship with him and that gospel doctrine we just went over produces a gospel culture right because the holy one has befriended his enemies the church now becomes a people who welcome in the undeserving that's my story coming to church later in my life because Christ has spoken truth to us in grace somebody else learned to speak truth to me without harshness because Christ gave himself for his people others learn self-giving love and because he brought us near to the father prayer becomes not an attempt to persuade this reluctant God but the honest speech of children and friends who come through the son!

God is good but it doesn't just leave us as individuals there it never becomes a private comfort you just feel good on the inside it doesn't affect your outside the sovereign friend who brings us near also sends us out into the world as witnesses!

Paul says that God spreads through his people the fragrance of the knowledge of him and that aroma is received in radically different ways sometimes you may have experienced this to some Christ is the fragrance of life and then to others the gospel carries the smell of death they want nothing to do with it that same message that draws one heart deeper in may expose!

another heart resistance no one can finally remain neutral before the risen Christ the gospel reveals what we love it reveals whom we trust and whether we will come into the light or further into self rule that reality can do two things to us it can make us both courageous and careful we as Christians we should remove every needless obstacle when we are speaking with other people we should speak with humility we should answer questions honestly and patiently and we should repent quickly when our conduct contradicts the message that we believe in but we as Christians cannot make rejection impossible without changing and adopting the message the cross announces both a devastating verdict but also a magnificent welcome to all our sin is so serious that the son of

[29:27] God had to die to bring us in and God's love is so great that he willingly gave his son to the same undeserving people some are going to find that beautiful like we said and some will find it offensive faithfulness refuses both the defensiveness or triumphalism we never gloat when people turn away and we don't dilute Christ in order to avoid their displeasure our role right we should grieve we should pray and we should continue to speak the truth in love this also deepens the meaning of having God as our friend friendship with Christ it does not guarantee universal approval Jesus told the disciples that those who belong to him they're going to be reviled misunderstood

falsely accused Abraham stood near God while the moral corruption of Sodom cried out for judgment and believers now stand with Christ in a world they may assume that but we must not assume that every accusation towards ourselves proves our unfaithfulness right our confidence is not our ability to vindicate ourselves though we may try we have a friend an advocate on high the righteous!

Jesus Christ so in that he knows the truth he intercedes for his people and he will judge with perfect justice right so because sovereign friendship is purchased and sustained by Christ the first mark is not human impressiveness The first mark of a faithful person is dependent power the gospel we know is the power of God and the spirit applies what Christ accomplished at the cross to our lives Abraham could plead for Sodom but he could not create righteousness there in the same way right we can preach today parent counsel organize serve in many different ways but we cannot spiritually raise a dead heart Paul says who is sufficient for these things it's not us our sovereign friend is though so in our place of weakness our inability to do those things Christ teaches us to rely on his grace and prayer becomes that active expression of a relationship that depends on God to give only what

God can give like we talked about the cross also gives us courage courage if Jesus has borne our judgment if he secured our welcome and he joined us to himself that we no longer have to spend our lives protecting our image trying to control every single outcome we're free to obey the next clear command speak the necessary truth pursue reconciliation and accept costly faithfulness courage is never a harsh personality courage is never the love of controversy it is calm resolve produced by the greatness of Christ it says this church belongs to Jesus my life belongs to Jesus therefore his word his glory and his path and his purposes matter more than my comfort and the cross it creates love Jesus does not merely command his friends to love we've tried that it doesn't work Jesus defines love by laying down his life for his friends and his friendship with them therefore reshapes our relationship with tenderness with honesty with patience forgiveness and self-giving care we could be a church who defends true doctrine but if we're not careful we could obscure Christ through suspicion through cruelty rivalry with other churches or a coldness and indifference but when believers walk in the light when they're confessing sin when they're forgiving the repentant when they're bearing burdens and they're rejoicing in another's good the church puts on this living display of the Son who the Father sent again gospel doctrine should create gospel culture because the friend who gave himself for us now teaches us to give ourselves to another should have been out there the whole time this gives Abraham this gives Abraham's intercession even greater significance for us right he drew near to plead for others on the basis of God's justice and his mercy and we draw near through the blood of Christ carrying the names and the needs of others before the Father so every sermon every Bible study every family prayer small group conversation every act of witness matters because God uses those ordinary things to spread the knowledge of Christ so all those moments matter our eloquence does not but he's producing works through those things what is our calling then remain near to God remain faithful to his truth and dependent on his spirit remain courageous under pressure all while being unmistakably loving towards his people all right because friendship with God is purchased by Christ and expressed through that dependent power we talked about courage love and intercession again it can't remain just this internal private comfort Abraham's intercession gives us a missionary shaped vision of sovereign friendship so we talked about how this affects our church life and our daily life but this is world missions now Lot and his household were living as God's people were living as God's people in Sodom a foreign and hostile place whose values stood against the Lord Abraham did not dismiss them because they're far away because they were culturally surrounded because they were facing dangers that he couldn't personally control he drew near to God and he pleaded with the Judge of all the Earth friendship with God widened Abraham's concern outside of his tent outside of his household and it moved him to carry before the Lord the lives of those who are

seeking to belong to God in a place marked by rebellion that outward movement belongs to the whole story of Scripture right God called Abraham and promised that through his offspring all the families of the Earth would be blessed this promised offspring is Christ the crucified and risen Lord who possesses all authority and sends his disciples to go out and make disciples of all nations so what does that mean for missions it's not an optional program just added on top of the church's work just like prayer it's the extension of sovereign friendship now across boundaries especially about these boundaries of language and culture so that people who are far from God might hear the

truth of the gospel they might turn from darkness to light receive forgiveness through christ and be gathered into faithful local praying churches abraham's concern for those in sodom challenges the church to remember believers and gospel workers serving in places that are spiritually resistant that are politically unstable culturally unfamiliar or just lonely we look outward by learning about god god's world through god's word praying for the gospel to spread giving generously sending qualified people and caring for them after they go we can never just send them away and forget them we need to remain joined to them through prayer encouragement accountability practical help and patient partnership sovereign friendship makes us friends to god's mission but also faithful companions to god's people wherever he places them so with that let's dig into some application here five points pray from who god is not from how the moment feels in sovereign friendship right god's character not our emotional condition provides the ground of prayer what did abraham's confidence rest in the judge of all the earth paul miller again observes discouragement cynicism unbelief all lie often behind our prayerlessness when they say that prayer is pointless what we need to do is answer by naming what scripture says about god he's holy he's just he's merciful he's attentive he's faithful to his promises children can begin with one sentence god you are so good so please help adults can do the same so shoreline this week let one reveal truth about god about your sovereign friend become the starting point of each day's prayer two we talked about this a little bit make prayer normal brief and frequent in the ordinary places of life we talked about waiting until everyone's composed or until we have the perfect words we could push that aside couples pray for five minutes before someone leaves for work parents pray with children about a part of the day that's full of fear or temptation conflict children ask an adult to pray with you for a friend college students turn a conversation this week into prayer by asking can we bring that to god right now older saints i've seen this use the flexibility of retirement to pray steadily for the church's children for the children for the students for the marriages for the missionaries for the leaders three release control and depend on the spirit of god easy to say hard to do we as believers we should plan carefully we should teach faithfully we should parent diligently and serve sacrificially but again none of us is the spiritual head of the church none of us is the savior for our family so before a meeting maybe a difficult conversation a lesson a medical appointment or even a major decision slow down that horizontal plane of talking and speed up that vertical plane of talking with god ask the lord to do what human wisdom and human effort energy cannot do and be willing for him to lead differently than what you expect four adopt a missionary posture towards believers and gospel needy places beyond where we are like abraham let the relationship with god enlarge our concern for people living in distant or hostile settings last week i'm sure we have it back there grab randy's prayer sheet for his upcoming trip he's going to malaysia cambodia indonesia thailand in that sheet right it says this area is called the resistant belt a play on words off of the rust belt they're so indifferent and spiritually blind to biblical truths there and what we can do this week right dig in and learn maybe out one of the countries the people groups that are there a church or a church planning effort or the groups that randy's going to go teach and train there give discernment give with oh give with discernment and joy encourage randy with prayer and all those who are sent and ask whether god might use the job that you have now the home that you have now your resources or even possibly we've been praying about this even your presence in another place for the sake of christ's name last point become an intergenerational house of prayer i remember what andrew was talking about this morning about praying for older saints and the lord has blessed us with that we were a bunch of young 20s trying to figure it out early asking for for help older saints continue to tell us younger believers i think i'm still younger how your sovereign friend has sustained and invited you in and invite those younger saints to continue to pray with you young couples and families welcome those single students and children into the real joys and the burdens of the home college students single adults bring energy questions and friendships into the praying life of the church children that are in the service know that your prayers matter you belong among god's praying people again our confidence is not in our age it's not an experience what stage our family's at any giftedness but our confidence is in the righteousness that god gives through faith in christ so together let us live in sovereign friendship with god listening to his word depending on his spirit and speaking to him with reverent boldness carrying his love to one another and also to the world closes in prayer god dear heavenly father lord you are so so good god we think about what you have revealed in your word through moses as the human author and you as a divine author you call a people to yourself not just to be just servants who serve without thinking but you call us to relationship with you to a friendship with you you draw us near to yourself and we can draw near to you because of what

[illegible]