

Preaching and Prison in Philippi

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[0 : 00] Our text this morning, as we hear again from the living God, and His word is Acts, the 16th chapter. In Acts, we've been learning about the early church and the spread of the gospel.

The full title of the book, and most Bibles, maybe in your Bible, it says, The Acts of the Apostles. But you'll recall that to summarize all that Paul and Barnabas had done on the first missionary journey, chapter 14, the end of chapter 14 at verse 27, says the church in Antioch declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

So we've seen over and over again in Acts that it is God who empowers and fills and leads and directs and guides and brings about the spread of the gospel now to the ends of the earth.

So really, we should call the book, The Acts of God, through His apostles. It's not quite as snappy, I realize. Today, now, we come to a text in Acts that just pulses with God.

It's about Paul and Silas, and it's about the beginning of the second missionary journey. But I'm convinced at least one thing that our author, Luke, wants us to see is God at work in this account.

[1 : 34] There's just two parts to this sermon on Acts 16. It's a bit lopsided in terms of the number of verses on each side, but there's only two parts. We'll first consider how God directs the spread of His gospel, and that's only verses 6 to 10.

And then we'll consider how God empowers the spread of His gospel, and that's verses 11 all the way to verse 40. Several ways you could preach a text like this, but that simple outline, as I wrestled with this in this past week, seem to be sufficient.

Now, where are we in Acts? Once again, you have maps of relatively okay quality on your service sheet, at least enough that you can follow along. I hope you'll look at them as we go.

The first missionary journey has ended, and we've emerged now from the Jerusalem Council.

Remember, chapter 15? The point of which was to state that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the gospel.

That none are held to any kind of special obligations to be saved. And it's crucial to establish that as the gospel now begins to go out to the world. So that was the Jerusalem Council.

[2 : 46] Then, after a time, Paul and Silas decide to head north again from Antioch. Not Paul and Barnabas now, right? Because they had split over how to treat John Mark.

And it's a terrible, sad incident. But the Lord uses imperfect people. And now there's two teams. And this team that we're with is Paul and Silas now, going back into Galatia to the churches that Paul founded on the first missionary journey.

And they're strengthening them. And they're confirming them of the things that the council had decided. And they pick up Timothy. And verse 5 of chapter 16 says, The churches were strengthened in the faith.

And they increased in numbers daily. So we're in verse 6 now. And if you have the Bible open, you'll find it better as you can follow along with me.

And we're into the first point right away. And that is that God directs the spread of his gospel. Paul and Silas and Timothy know that they're to preach the word.

[3 : 52] They know that they're to establish churches and to build up believers. But it turns out they don't know where that's supposed to happen. They've been back to the churches in South Galatia.

So Paul's thinking about what's next. And he decides it's time to go to Asia. Now that's the Roman province of Asia. It's on the western end of modern day Turkey.

You can see it printed on your map there. And Asia had the cities of Ephesus on the coast. And Smyrna and Philadelphia. And Laodicea and Colossae and Sardis.

And Pergamos and Thyatira. And all these great cities. And there's great opportunities for the gospel in Asia. So they start to move. And then the Lord just drops a concrete wall in their path.

Verse 6. They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit. To speak the word in Asia.

[4 : 54] Forbidden by the Holy Spirit. Luke doesn't tell us how. But they knew they were not to go there. Maybe inner conviction. Maybe circumstances.

Maybe there was a prophetic word. But they know they can't go west. So they'll go north. Verse 7. And when they had come opposite Mycenae. Which means they went north.

Because you may see Mycenae printed on your map there. It's actually in Asia. It's part of Asia. But it's the northern part of Asia. And evidently Paul had in mind to keep on going that way north.

It says they attempted to go into Bithynia. You see Bithynia on the map. You might know some of the cities in Bithynia. Bithynia contained Nicaea. And Byzantium.

Significant places for the gospel. But, verse 7 says. The Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So what are they going to do?

[5 : 55] All major areas are taken off the map from their perspective. So, Luke says it very carefully in verse 8. Passing by Mycenae. Because it's part of Asia.

And they're not allowed to do anything there. They went down to Troas. Down to the coast. You can't see it well on this map. But they just sort of wiggled their way along the borders of Mycenae and Bithynia.

Until they came to the port city of Troas on the Aegean Sea. Now consider this. To get to Troas. Would have been at least a couple hundred miles.

And not all easy terrain. And on foot. We're talking weeks. Intense weeks. Of trusting God's guidance.

While they went on and on. Essentially in a blind alley. And what do you suppose they were thinking? They decided to go to Asia. And that's forbidden.

[6 : 55] And they decided to go to Bithynia. And that's not allowed. And I don't know if Paul was frustrated or not. But what I'm pretty sure of. Is that he didn't have anything else in mind at this point.

His ideas had been blocked. So he just went on. In the only direction left to go. And note that there's no indication in this text.

That Paul was somehow wrong. To want to go to Asia. And to Bithynia. It's not as if he'd misheard the Lord. Or he had wrong motives or something like that. The gospel was needed in those places. And the gospel would come to those places. They're significant places. But God had other intentions. For Paul. And Silas. And the point is that sometimes.

The spirit leads. By closing off paths. That we think. Are the right ways to go. Makes all the sense in the world to us. The spirit says no.

[7 : 55] Not there. No. Not that way either. And sometimes. Not always. But sometimes. That's how the Lord leads in our lives. And in the church.

Paul only knew where he couldn't go. And he kept on moving. Where he could. And he ends up in Troas. Probably seemed like a dead end. You don't have to know.

All the details of God's call. Or where he wants you to be. To be moving forward in his will. Note Paul's persistency. These barriers didn't cause him. To pack it up. And go home.

Because the spirit's guiding him. And Paul knew that. And the spirit will move you. Where he wants you. And the spirit will move this church. Where he wants this church.

And we have to attend to his direction. Including his negative direction. And realize that things may not always be. What we planned and intended. At every turn. And yet.

[8 : 54] We keep going. They didn't need to know. Where God wanted them finally. At least not yet. Maybe if they'd known. They would have thought. It's too much.

Because what God had in mind. Was something more. And something different. Than they did.

They're in Troas now. On the coast. This is famous territory. Troas is only about 25 miles.

From the ancient city of Troy. And you've probably heard. At least of Helen of Troy. Or the heroes of the Trojan War. Or Homer. Or Pythagoras. Or many famous Greek names.

From this area. And that's where they are. And this is where it happens. Verse 9. A vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia. Was standing. Beseeching him. And saying. Come over to Macedonia.

And help us. Paul had wanted to be in Asia. Macedonia's in northern Greece. This is a totally new area.

[9 : 52] This is across the Aegean Sea. This is Europe. It wasn't called Europe at the time. But I like how one commentator puts it.

The invasion of Europe with the gospel. Was not in the mind of Paul. But it was evidently. In the mind of the spirit.

Weeks of walking and waiting. And wondering and praying. And all for this. They are to cross one of the great frontiers. In the ancient world. And what a day it is. Because in centuries to come. Europe would be the base.

For the missionary outreach. To the world. So God is going. With his gospel. To the ends of the earth. And he is directing it. And do you think Paul hesitated?

Verse 10. And when he had seen the vision. Immediately. We sought to go into Macedonia.

Concluding that God had called us. To preach the gospel to them. They had been led.

[10 : 55] Often negatively. Over a period of time. And now the dream comes. And Paul and the others consider it. And they talked it over. And they conclude. That indeed God is calling them. To Macedonia.

And the world is changed. Forever. And God directs the spread of his gospel. And just this footnote. But it is such a good one. I can't resist it. And it is another sign. That God had been leading them. Do you hear how the narration. Switched in verse 10. Did you hear that? It says. We. Sought to go into Macedonia. Why we. Because God arranged. For an addition to the team. At Troas. Maybe Paul was sick.

And he had gone to a doctor. And he converted his doctor. I don't know. But this is the point. At which Dr. Luke. Joins the party. Luke. Who would go on to write.

[11 : 53] One quarter of the New Testament. Including this book of Acts. Was there in Troas. And he joins up. With them on their work. Wonderful.

Now we need to look. Quite more rapidly. At the remaining events. In chapter 16. You're getting nervous. Looking at your watch. Five verses. Not very good. The remaining events.

In chapter 16. To establish now. The second point. Not only does God. Direct the spread. Of his gospel. He empowers it. And that means.

He overpowers. Forces that will resist it. Have a look. At the second map. As I read from verse 11. The map on the right. On your handout. Setting sail.

Therefore. From Troas. We made a direct voyage. To Samothrace. And the following day. To Neapolis. And from there. To Philippi. Which is the leading city. Of the district of Macedonia.

[12 : 48] And a Roman colony. 150 miles on the Aegean. Sailing. And then a 10 mile walk. From Neapolis to Philippi. And you can see. I think on your map.

The dotted line. That runs through Philippi. It's labeled. The Ignatian Way. The major road. In the Roman Empire. Philippi's on this road. A 490 mile long road.

You can still see. Parts of it today. And if you took that road. All the way west. You'd end up on the Adriatic Sea. And you could take a boat. Over the Adriatic. To Italy. And then all roads.

Lead to Rome. This is a different world. So Philippi is the place to start. It's the leading city.

Luke says. It has a lot of traffic. And trade. And movement. And it's a wealthy city. And it had a lot of resources. And here the gospel lands. In Europe. And Paul just goes blazing in.

[13 : 47] And takes the city by storm. Right? Not quite. His first stop. Is a women's prayer meeting. In fact. It says.

Paul just waited around. For a few days. Until the Sabbath. So he could find the Jews. And what he finds. Is a group of women. Praying by the river. No synagogue. No men.

Apparently. Verse 13. On the Sabbath day. We went outside the gate. To the riverside. Where we supposed. There was a place of prayer. This is where the Jews. Would have gone. By the river.

For ritual purification purposes. And we sat down. And spoke to the women. Who had come together. One who heard us. Was a woman named Lydia. From the city of Thyatira. A seller of purple goods.

And she would have been. A wealthy business woman. Because the best purple goods. Were for royalty. Because the purple dye. Was extracted from this little shellfish.

[14 : 43] Drop by drop. And so it's very expensive. So the point is. Lydia sold to the top of the market. And Luke says. Not only was she a successful. Wealthy business woman.

She was a worshiper of God. That means she was a Gentile. But she worshipped the Jewish God. And then look at the rest of verse 14. The Lord.

Opened her heart. To give heed to what was said by Paul. And when she was baptized. With her household. She besought us. Saying. If you have judged me.

To be faithful to the Lord. Come to my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us. So the first member. Of the first church in Philippi. Is a wealthy business woman. And her household. And without developing it here.

There's two things. That should stand out. To us about that. Number one. Lydia is a woman. And against the conventional. Greco-Roman. And Jewish ideas.

[15:38] Frankly. About women. Paul and Silas. Reach out. To Lydia. Who becomes the first convert. We know of. To Christianity. In Europe. And she'll be a pillar.

Of this church. In Philippi. Second. Lydia was a wealthy woman. And Luke. More than any other. Gospel writer. The gospel writer says. Money can be the greatest obstacle.

To faith. Jesus said. It's easier for a camel. To go through the eye of a needle. Than for a rich person. To enter the kingdom of God. But God. Does it. You can't miss that.

God's power is at work. Luke comes right out. And says so. Verse 14. The Lord. Opened her heart. To give heed. To what was said by Paul. She was seeking the true God.

And God. Met her. In fact. I'll go where the text. Does not explicitly go. And say. I think the sovereign Lord. Had Lydia in mind.

[16:38] When he brought. Paul and Silas. Through Asia Minor. And all the way to Philippi. This is the power of God. In the spread of his gospel. The next episode.

Paul makes his way. Through the city. And he would regularly. Go to this place of prayer. But he had a problem. There was a girl. Demon possessed. Used by her owners. To make money.

Because Luke says. She had a spirit of divination. Meaning. She could tell fortunes. And this was all wrapped up. With. The cult of the Greek. God Apollo. And telling fortunes. And the oracle at Delphi.

And it's. It's a big tangled mess. But Luke says. This was a demonic ability. And that her owners. Exploited this. For gain. And she was driven. By the devil.

To follow Paul around. And she keeps crying out. These men serve the most. High God. And proclaim the way of salvation. Well that's a true statement.

[17:30] In a way. But not at all. Helpful to Paul. Because the devil. In her. Is making her. Shout out. These announcements. To cloud the picture.

And confuse everything. Anything. Because most. High God. That. Could mean Zeus. Or it could mean. The top. Deity. In the local pantheon. Philippi was home.

To the worship. Of many different gods. And salvation. Was just a term. That could be used. To mean. Many different things. So Satan. Is trying. To distract. From what Paul.

Is doing here. Or maybe. He's trying. To discredit Paul. By associating. What he's doing. With the occult. Worship. But whatever it is. This is annoying. Paul. It's deeply.

Disturbing. Paul. Would be a better way. To put it. Pick it up there. In verse 17. She followed Paul. Crying. These men. Are servants.

[18:26] Of the most. High God. Who proclaim. To you. The way of salvation. And this. She did. For many days. So they didn't. Act right away. But Luke says.

Paul was annoyed. And he turned. And said. To the spirit. I charge you. In the name. Of Jesus Christ. To come out of her. And it did come out. That very hour. The implication then.

In the next verse. Is that she couldn't. Tell fortunes anymore. Or she wouldn't. Tell fortunes anymore. God's power. Had delivered her. From oppression. And Luke says.

When her owners. Saw that their hope. Of gain was gone. That's all she was. To them. Money. They seized. Paul and Silas. And dragged them. Into the marketplace. Before the rulers.

The slave girl. Now I think. We have to assume. Something here. Though Luke doesn't. Say as much. But I've poured over. This chapter this week. And I think. This slave girl. Was saved.

[19:21] And I think that. Because Luke. Puts her story. In between. These two other. Great conversion stories. And all of them. Are showing the power. Of God. At work. In the conversion.

Of people. In Philippi. And this slave girl. Is now free. Her owners. Didn't own her anymore. And she doesn't. Have a devil anymore. And so.

I just think. She'd want to know. Jesus. And Luke. Doesn't say that. But I think. That's probably. What happened. So I'm assuming. That member number. Two. Of the church.

In Philippi. Is a formerly. Demon possessed. Slave girl. And God. Has empowered. Again. The spread. Of his gospel. Now.

The third episode. The uproar. That followed. This girl's deliverance. Gets Paul and Silas. Into trouble. As you see. The power. Of the name of Jesus. Came up against. The power. Of the forces. [20 : 16] In the world. And there's. Prophet motives. In play here. And these. Wicked men. Get their religious. And political. Mucky mucks. All riled up. And they just. Stoke the flames.

Of racial pride. And this whole thing. Turns serious. In a hurry. Paul and Silas. Are beaten with rods. Many blows. Verse 23 says. Severe flogging.

And they're thrown into prison. And their feet are in stalks. And that's torturous. Because these stalks were made. So they would spread. The victim's legs.

As far apart as possible. To induce muscle cramping. And so these guys are beaten. And they're bloody. And they're in pain. And it looks like the gospel's lost. God knew what was happening.

Something bigger is at work here. God's after member number three. For the church in Philippi. And member number three. Is the jailer.

[21 : 14] So how do you reach the jailer? Well you get your apostle in jail. Right? Okay. So verse 25. About midnight.

Paul and Silas were praying. And singing hymns to God. Incredible. And the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake.

So that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened. And everyone's fetters were unfastened. Well when the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open.

He drew his sword. And was about to kill himself. Supposing that the prisoners had escaped. He's as good as dead. But Paul cried. And with a loud voice.

Don't harm yourself man. We're all here. And the jailer called for lights. And rushed in. And Luke says. Trembling. Trembling with fear.

[22 : 14] He fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out. And said. Men. What must I do. To be saved. They said.

Believe in the Lord Jesus. And you'll be saved. You and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him. And to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night.

And washed their wounds. And he was baptized with all his family. Member number three. Of the church in Philippi. Is a middle class employee. Of the Roman Empire. The jailer.

And God brought this man to the end of his rope. He'd nearly ended his life. He knew he had no answers at this point. He'd seen what happened.

And if he knows anything. It's that at this moment. He needs the help of the same God. That Paul has on his side. So trembling. He says.

[23 : 14] What must I do. To be saved. Now a Roman jailer. Is not asking for a clear explication. Of justification by faith. But he had to know something.

About why Paul was there. And the claims that Paul had made. And that Paul had acted. In the name of Jesus. And clearly Jesus. Is on the winning side.

At this point. And so this man feels it. At the core of his being. And he's trembling. And he wants whatever Paul can give him. So Paul gives him the answer.

That addresses every concern this man has. And every concern we. Ever face in life. Believe in the Lord. Jesus. And you will be saved.

The Lord. The Lord. The one who reigns. As sovereign. Over the mess of the world. And its troubles. And the global facts.

[24 : 14] Of human rebellion. And its consequences. And even your own desperate state. As a sinner. Against the God. Who will bring it all to right. In the end. Believe.

Paul says. In the Lord. Jesus. That's the way. To deliverance. Christ. And so the power of God. Claims this.

Former subject. Of the Lord. Caesar. To be a subject. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. And Paul's message.

Never changed. In fact. It's the same thing. He declared. In his letter. Back to this city. In Philippians 2. 10. When he speaks of the day. When every tongue. Will confess.

That Jesus Christ. Is. Lord. Lord. And this unsuspecting jailer. Has just been invited. To join. That great witness. Now. And Paul and Silas.

[25 : 10] Explained all this. Right. So. There. Verse 32. They spoke the word. Of the Lord. To him. They unpacked. What all this meant. What they're talking about. We have to do that. As we go out.

With the gospel.

And this man. And his family. Confess. And believe. And what a beautiful moment. Isn't it? Verse 33. I tear up at it. The jailer took them. The same hour. That means it's still.

The middle of the night. 1 a.m. I don't know. And he washed. Their wounds. And he was baptized. With all his family. He washed.

The wounds. That brought. These men. Into his jail. And saved his life. And then he himself. Was washed. In baptism.

Luke says. Then they did. The only thing they could. They had a big meal. Middle of the night. Doesn't matter. Have a big feast. He rejoiced. With all his household. And all that he had. That he had believed.

[26 : 05] In God. This whole chapter. Of Acts. Just pulses. With the direction. And power. Of God. Who are these members.

Of the church. In Philippi. First church. In Philippi. A woman business owner. From Asia Minor. Because the Lord. Opened her heart. A demon possessed. Slave girl. Because in the name. Of Jesus Christ. She was freed.

And a middle class. Roman jailer. Who had his life. Turned upside down. By the God. Who shook the very earth. To bring him to faith. A woman.

A slave. A Gentile. Different gender backgrounds. Different ethnic backgrounds. Different social backgrounds. Now united. As the Philippian church. Admitted with no distinction.

And God did it. God. And that's what I want us to see. That God. Was after. These. People. That God saved Lydia.

[27 : 03] And God saved the slave girl. And God saved the jailer. And maybe these are not. The first three people. You would have handpicked. For your church plant. But God did. Acts 16.

Should just encourage us. And spur us on. Because. St. John's. Ours is the same. God. Who directs. And empowers. The spread of the gospel today.

And he has plans. So everywhere you go. Everywhere we go. As God directs us. He is after people. And don't assume you know who they'll be.

Now you have to be willing to go. And you're not guaranteed protection. I hope that's clear. From the sufferings that come with this. I mean.

We see now. Paul seized. And charged. And beaten. Again. And again. And again. In Acts. In Thessalonica. In Corinth. In Ephesus. There's no promise of security. I'm not going to tell you.

[28 : 03] You're going to be safe. But if you're willing to approach. The wealthy. Successful business person. You may find the Lord's head of heart. Prepared for you. Or if you're willing to speak.

Against the forces of evil. In the name of Jesus. Knowing it might put you. In a whole lot of trouble. God may use that. To deliver people. And if you're willing. To be beaten.

And thrown in jail. For the name of Jesus Christ. God may just use you. To save a jailer. Because the same.

Directing. And powerful God. Is here with us. Now. And if you're willing. He'll use you. He'll use you individually. He'll use us. As a church. To rescue the business women.

And the demon possessed. Slave girls. And the jailers. Of the city of Vancouver. God help us. To witness to him.

[28 : 59] Faithfully. In the name of the Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. Amen. We offer praise. Dear Lord. We bow before you.

To affirm. That you. Are Lord. Our King. Our Master. And that. Only in you. Are true rescue. True safety. True peace.

And true love. Found. We pray with the psalmist. Oh Lord. I have come to you. For protection. Don't let me be disgraced. Save me.

For you do what is right. Turn your ear. To listen to me. Rescue me quickly. Be my rock of protection. A fortress. Where I will be safe. You are my rock.

And my fortress. For the honor of your name. Lead me out of this danger. Pull me from the trap. My enemies set for me. For I find protection. In you alone.

[29 : 54] I entrust my spirit. Into your hand. Rescue me Lord. For you. Are a faithful God. Lord. In your mercy. We confess dear Lord.

That too often. We are hard of hearing. And slow to see. And hard of heart. But we come to you. The great shepherd. We come as sheep. Kneading your tender care. And as we rest in you. May your voice. Be the one we hear. And your vision. Be our vision. Such that our hearts. Would be soft. And the peace. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would fill us each. In whatever shackles. We find ourselves. Or tombs. We fear we are in. Or doors we face. That are pure closed. Lord. We praise you. That you have granted. The power. Of your Holy Spirit. That our lives. Might be made new. That we might be your witnesses. Unto the uttermost parts. [30 : 51] Of the earth. Lord. In your mercy. We ask. Dear Lord. Your hand. Upon the world. May your witness.

Be clear and strong. Especially in the diocese. Of the upper shear. In Malawi. We pray for the church there. That the proclamation. Of your word. Would be such. That hearts. Will be open. To the new life. You offer. We ask. For good health. For Bishop Malasa. And Father Tibilo. Who will travel here. From Malawi. Later in the spring. Here in Vancouver. We ask. Your continuing care. Upon those. Working at the crisis. Pregnancy center. May you. Especially. Be close. To those. Who learn. Of an unplanned. Pregnancy. And may you. Extend your touch. Your wisdom. Your peace. And your life. To all. Who come into that. Experience. [31 : 47] We pray. Lord. For the world. Where there is war. May you give solace. And protection. To the innocent. Where there is calamity. May you. Give. And shelter.

The injured. Give aid. And shelter. The injured. Where Canadian. And other soldiers. Serve. May you be their. Constant companion. And where. Aid workers. Have gone. May you protect. And guide them. Almighty God. From whom. All thoughts. Of truth. And peace. Proceed.

Kindle. We pray thee. In the hearts. Of all people. The true love. Of peace. And guide. With thy pure. And peaceable wisdom. Those who take counsel. For the nations. Of the earth. That in tranquility. Thy kingdom. May go forward. Till the earth. Is filled. With the knowledge. Of thy love. Lord. In your mercy. May we here. [32 : 45] At St. John's. Be united. Lord. As a large family. Known. To share the word. Of the Lord. In love. Through challenging times. Such as the current legal issues.

We face. And through tremendous. Times of opportunity. Such as the thousands. Of visitors. Soon to arrive. From around the world. Give us.

Grace. To lay to heart. A deep care. And love. One for another. At this time. When the evil one. Could insert wedges. Between us.

Take away. Whatsoever. May hinder us. From godly union. And deep compassion. For each other. That as there is. But one body. And one spirit.

And one hope. Of our calling. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One God. And father. Of us all. May you guide us. And soften us. So that we may.

[33 : 41] Henceforth. Be all of one heart. And of one soul. United. In one holy bond. Of truth. And peace. Of faith. And charity. And may with one mind.

And one mouth. Glorify thee Lord. Lord in your mercy. We ask your care upon those. Who minister your word to us.

For Dan. And Jim. And Jim. And Keith. And the Artizo interns. We ask for grace and peace. For David. And Bronwyn. We pray with thanks.

For Bishop. Stephen. Thanking you for his work with us. This week. Last week. And we pray for Bishop Charlie. With thanks that he is able to be with us.

This coming week. And we thank you also for Bishop Trevor. We pray for strength and wisdom. For those here at St. John's. Involved with youth. With children. Evangelism.

[34 : 35] Pastoral care. Music. And Artizo. We bring to you Aaron. And Edie. Ben. Robert. Chloe. Lisa. Bettina. Terry.

David. Michelle. And Eric. Guide those who are currently working to discern your call to someone to fill the vacant youth ministry position. Our Heavenly Father.

Help us to trust our loved ones to your care. When sorrow darkens our lives. Help us to look up to you. Remembering the cloud of witnesses by which you are.

By which we are surrounded. And we ask your healing hand on those who are ill. And on those who face ongoing difficult emotional, physical or financial situations.

We remember these by name. Ken. Lynette. Betty. Rowena. Harold. And Kathy.

[35 : 35] And we raise before you in a moment of silence. These additional persons for whom we care. We ask Almighty God that you would supply their needs.

And help both them and us to put our whole trust and confidence in you. Lord, in your mercy.

Almighty God, we declare your majesty.

In praise, as does the psalmist. The whole earth will acknowledge you, Lord, and return to you. All the families of the nations will bow down before you.

For royal power belongs to you, Lord. You rule all the nations. Let the rich of the earth feast and worship. Bow before thee, all who are mortal.

All whose lives will end as dust. Our children will also serve thee. Future generations will hear about your wonders, Lord. Your righteous acts will be told to those not yet born.

[36 : 45] They will hear about everything you have done. We offer this praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.