

Prayer Life - Part 2: Collective

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Date: 17 August 2025

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[0 : 00] Well, please turn in your Bibles back to that passage we've read in Acts chapter 4! I'm going to read again from verse 23. So when Peter and John were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them.

And when they heard it, they lifted up their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, Why do the Gentiles rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers are gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

[1 : 42] Amen. This is God's word to us. Let's bow our heads just for a moment in prayer to God. Heavenly Father, as we turn our attention for a while this evening to a notion in your word of the importance of corporate prayer in the life of the church, we cry to you, Father, that you would bless us in this.

Just as we were thinking last week about the prayer life of the individual Christian, and how crucial that is to our whole relationship with you, and all of the priorities that ought to inform our relationship with you, help us tonight to see how our relationships with one another are interwoven into that relationship with you as well.

And so help us tonight to see how we can best bless one another, how we can help one another in our pilgrimage in this world, as we seek to live a life of shared prayer together, and as we seek to pray not only for one another privately, but with one another in our lives day by day.

We need, Lord, the Holy Spirit to guide us in this. We're so conscious, Lord, of the weakness and the fragility of our own hearts. Lord, I know tonight I'm really conscious.

Many brothers in particular who are in anguish over public prayer. And I pray, Father, that they would be encouraged, that they would be built up, that they would not be grieved by what we consider tonight, but rather that they would see ways to grow and to mature in your service, and in how much they can bless the church.

[3 : 51] I pray, Father, for others who are so anxious about praying with other believers that they find it actually almost impossible, just almost struck dumb when they gather.

I pray, Father, that you, by your Holy Spirit, would teach us how we can bless one another and encourage one another through praying together and to be a blessing to one another in this way. And so, heart, we pray tonight, Lord. Shake our hearts. We know the building was shaken after the apostles and their friends prayed that day in Jerusalem. Lord, we need our hearts to be shaken as well.

We need the Holy Spirit to come and work among us, to inform us and enlighten us and change us, and for the power of God to work in and through us in these things.

And so we ask all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. This evening, I want to, when I say continue, conclude, I suppose, thinking about our prayer life as Christians.

[5 : 03] If you cast your mind back to last week, you think that was maybe about good habits that should shape our private prayer life and our priorities in prayer, and how that's really tied up in our individual walk with God, then this evening, it's about how priorities that should shape how we corporately work and pray together in God's service.

And so I think tonight, if anything, I want to just reiterate that line from Derek Kidner that I was quoting last week, that the greatest happiness is to be in close agreement with God. That would be true of us as a church. It would be true of us as little fellowships within this church as well. It's difficult, you know, with a church of more than almost 400 people to speak meaningfully of us all having fellowship with one another.

We gather on a Sunday and have fellowship together. But within the life of the church, there are little circles and fellowships of believers that are gathered together, family units that are clustered together. In all of these contexts as well, I want us to be encouraged about our walk with God and the joy that is to be found in harmony there with God corporately as much as individually.

I have to say as well, last week, a few people have spoken to me since last week's sermon. And they've asked me about something I said that I was, in a sense, I was being deliberately provocative.

[6 : 39] What I said was, public prayer often means in people's minds that I'm talking about the prayer meeting. No, I mean corporate prayer because all Christians everywhere should and do pray with other Christians.

And I think that was probably very controversial, as I said. It is inconceivable, in fact, that you could be a Christian and never pray with another Christian. And what I want to do, first of all, tonight is back that up from Scripture.

I want to back it up from the teaching of the Bible and take us to the Book of Acts, where our text is tonight, and discover the things that Jesus...

Remember, this is a key to understanding what's going on in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is what Jesus continues to do and teach in the life of the church.

This is one of the great wonders of the Reformation, in fact, that the Roman Catholic Church had built up so many centuries to tradition and said all of these centuries of tradition are what we build our hope on and the life of the church upon.

[7 : 47] And the Reformers, Luther, Calvin in particular, were saying, no, we go back to the Bible and we build our expectations of the life of the church on sola scriptura, on Scripture alone.

And so we go back to the Book of Acts and to the New Testament, and there we see what the history of the New Testament church was like and the pattern of the New Testament church.

You see it in Matthew chapter 6, that passage we were looking at last Sunday morning. The Lord's Prayer begins with the word, Our Father. Our Father.

So when Jesus was teaching the disciples how to pray, what he began teaching them was that you pray together. The chief mode, in fact, of prayer in the New Testament is not individual and private prayer.

The chief mode of prayer in the church is actually corporate prayer. And that is the best expression of it, that we would pray together towards our Father.

[8 : 51] And it's interesting that when you go to the end of the book of the New Testament, to the book of Revelation, what you find there is, in fact, a really fascinating pattern emerges in Revelation chapter 8 when the golden censer full of the prayers of the saints rising up as incense before God is revealed at the breaking of the final seal.

The prayers of the saints have come up before God. It is the corporate combined prayer of the saints together.

The intercession of the body of believers. Not as if all of these prayers are somehow individual prayers that are going up to God on our own, but that actually the activity of the church praying together itself is an intercessory moment that rises up before our God, echoing what Jesus has said in Matthew chapter 6, our Father.

So we ought, therefore, from the example of Jesus and from the revelation, to recognize prayer together is important. It follows through in the book of Acts. In Acts chapter 1, verse 14, it's really interesting that the apostles and the women with them were all gathered together, devoted to prayer, in the days between the ascension of Jesus and Pentecost.

You see it again in Acts chapter 2. On the day of Pentecost, there are about 3,000 people added to their number, and they devoted themselves. So this is what faith looks like.

[10:29] They devoted themselves to corporate things. The apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to breaking bread together. That could be seen either as sitting together at the Lord's table, breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord's death, as he taught us, or it could simply be just in having actual physical fellowship together, meeting together and breaking bread together, and being in a corporate setting like that.

But it's something that they do together. And then the fourth thing that Luke tells us is that they devoted themselves to prayer. And again, the notion that that is something that they then broke off and did individually is not following through.

The pattern continues. They come together under the apostles' teaching. They come together in fellowship to encourage one another. They come together breaking bread together.

And they prayed together. Acts chapter 14, during Peter's imprisonment, the church prays.

And there's a servant girl called Rhoda who's present at that time of prayer together. Rhoda goes to the door when she hears someone knocking and looks out to see, and it's Peter.

[11:50] And she kind of doesn't believe it's him. She thinks it's a vision, an apparition. And so she goes back in to speak to everybody else, leaving Peter standing out at the door.

It's quite a comical scene almost. But again, you've got that impression that she's there as part of the church gathered together in prayer. You've got, as you go on in the New Testament, you go into the Corinthian church.

And there is a passage that is, in some ways, very confusing. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it's the famous passage that talks about women having head coverings. And I know having grown up in the island, I know that that's a passage that for some of a certain generation really obsesses their thought and their thinking.

But it's really interesting what Paul actually says there. Women cover their heads when they pray.

And prayer in the New Testament is not something you do quietly, privately.

And the point about head coverings in these contexts is it's not something that's done in a corner in your own home. It's in the gathered church. Women were participating in that, engaging in it.

[13:08] You see it in 1 Timothy. Paul talks to the men of Crete that he wants Timothy to encourage and teach. And he says he wants them, men everywhere, to lift up their hands in prayer.

And then he says, likewise, women also should adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair, gold, or pearls, or costly attire.

Now, the question is, what does the likewise apply to? The likewise can only possibly apply to that action of prayer. That women, as they gather with the church in prayer, do so in an appropriate way.

And so the pattern of the whole of the New Testament, the thrust of it is that all Christians are men and women who pray together.

And before we get tied and not, then, about the context of that, and we rush to the conclusion of saying, well, that just refers to the prayer meeting. What are we going to do in the prayer meeting, Gordon? I want us to think, actually, about the fact that the church, as a body, not just what we do on the few occasions when we're actually gathered together in the large group, but that we continually be people who gather together in the small group and who pray together.

[14:39] That's the emphasis. The thrust of the New Testament is that if you're a Christian, you are someone who prays.

Whether you are an old Christian or a young Christian, whether you are a man or a woman, whatever your situation is, you are part of a body of people who pray.

So all disciples are praying together. Perhaps the most intimate of that setting is within your own family.

In fact, not even just within your own family, but with your spouse. If you are a Christian married to another Christian tonight, the pattern of the New Testament is that you pray together.

Paul's even very specific about it. You can read the passage in 1 Corinthians 7. where Paul talks about just how marriage works and the flow and the rhythm of marriage when you set aside time to pray together.

[15:43] So there's a real emphasis on that role of prayer in the corporate life of our families.

There is a pattern for it within our family worship.

Again, I would encourage you to reflect on this and think about this as Christians. How do you conduct prayer in the context of your family home? Is prayer a part of what you do with your kids? Do you set them an example of it in how you pray with them? You've got people who do this in evangelism as well. The great example that I find is probably in Acts 17 where there's a group of people who are called God-seekers and among them is Lydia in Philippi. And there isn't a synagogue in Philippi so these people among whom are the women like Lydia they've gone to the riverbank to a quiet place a place where they can see God. And it's a place of prayer. And you've got Lydia there and Paul and his team of evangelists go along to this place of prayer.

[17 : 01] And in that place of prayer they share the gospel. And I think it's a wonderful example just in scripture of the importance of setting aside time to pray with those who are seeking.

And those of you tonight who are seeking you know those of you who haven't yet come to a place of settled faith in the Lord Jesus I want to encourage you tonight to look for people Christians who will pray with you.

Perhaps tonight you don't know how to pray and you don't need a lecture to tell you how to pray but what you could best do is actually find Christians who will show you how to pray who will set an example for you of teaching you how to pray to the living God how they come to him how you pray for one another how you encourage people through that how you bring forth the blessing of God in people's lives by praying for them.

I heard a wonderful example of this actually just recently I was talking to some friends who were in the South Uist and Mbecula congregation at one point and they were telling me about the history of that congregation and one of the most precious things I have heard said in a long time was you know Gordon we used to pray people into the kingdom there they would basically when Ian McCaskill was preaching some of them would be off in the cafe in the weak space in the corner one of the other rooms in the building and they would be praying for the congregation who are there listening to the word being preached and it reminded me of something I'd read actually about the past about Spurgeon's ministry ministry in the metropolitan tabernacle and Spurgeon's ministry was characterized by that same thing there was in fact a group of people when Spurgeon preached who stayed aside out in the you know what we say almost the session room or out in the hall and there they would pray and intercede before God for the blessing of the word and the people who were gathered there that night and Spurgeon called it the engine room of the church it's really interesting in fact that that's the pattern of the

New Testament that prayer and evangelism go really hand in hand don't they and when Paul's talking about the Christian's armor he talks about us having the sword of the spirit which is the word of God but the other weapon that goes with it is prayer the offensive weapons in the armory of the Christian are the word of God and prayer and they go hand in hand we should be looking for the preaching of the word to be accompanied by prayer earnestly seeking God's blessing on the preaching of the word as we go on perhaps you'll pray together for missionaries and one of the great privileges we have as a congregation is we support Muriel over in Cambodia and other missionaries besides and we take time to stop and pray for their ministry and again it's a context where the church comes together to pray for the blessing of God on that work

[20 : 18] I've never been to Korea but some of you have and when you go to a Korean prayer meeting it's very different to ours Korean prayer meetings are characterized by open prayer prayer but not just open prayer where one person gets up after the other it's open prayer where everyone prays there's just a noise of people lifting up their voices to God and interceding for their nation for their community for their congregation for the work of the gospel for the progress of the kingdom so prayer together men and women young and old it is completely normal it is completely biblical it is also I would say just as a couple of asides before we get too far into this as well it's essential for discipleship young Christians grow by being in the company of older Christians and one of the things that older Christians have an enormous privilege to do is to teach younger Christians how to pray and often that is done simply by your example so as you pray as an older Christian in the company of younger Christians you're setting a pattern for how they in turn will pray as well and so the priorities that you have as an older Christian are going to really shape the priorities that younger

Christians have and that's a huge responsibility on men and women something that we need to take very seriously if you've got a skewed or a misplaced relationship with God that is reflected in your prayer life and you're praying with younger Christians you're going to pass that on if there's no

closeness in your walk with God when you pray with others that lack of closeness and familiarity and confidence before God is going to be passed on and so it's really important that we think about what we are going to do when we pray with others it's important that we have biblical priorities it's important that we allow the example that we set to be shaped by what Jesus has done what the apostles have taught us what the Bible teaches us throughout it so you know for example if you have a habit of addressing God in the third person you know as if your prayer is a formal letter written to a distant sovereign where you're asking the

Lord to do things and you hope that the Lord is going to do this and the prayer is constantly never addressed to you Lord even if you use these and those prayers in your prayer but if you simply address your prayer never to you personally to God you don't speak directly to God you speak of him in your prayer but never to him something like that can be passed on and be so damaging in the way younger Christians growing up think about their relationship with God and so we have to think carefully about how we speak and what we speak as we speak to our God in prayer as well as one other quick point as well just to think about is that prayer corporately is a covenanted activity it is an activity of a covenanted people by a covenanted people what I mean is a people who have been bought by the blood price of Christ's blood shed for us and where we are brought through that into a new relationship relationship with a triune

God and so when we think about prayer we need to understand it as having a relationship with God our father but we do so as a body of people who are united with Christ and we are as a body indwelt by the Holy Spirit which is why I think that passage that we're looking at tonight in Acts 4 is so crucial when they had prayed they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they continue to speak the word of God with boldness so the presence of a triune God is there they've addressed prayer to the father they've been told that the main point of the prayer is actually about proclaiming the name of the son proclaiming the name of Jesus and the person who operates in them is the Holy Spirit who comes and gives them boldness to go on preaching fills the church with boldness as they go on we are as a body children of the most high God we come to him as a father we come to him clinging the the royal promises of Jesus and we come also to the hope and power of the Holy Spirit and so because of that it's helpful to think of prayer corporately as a pact you know a pact is an agreement that we make with one another and when we pray together it's good to have a thought about what we're doing in that pact that consignment of of intention towards one another as we pray and one of the small things and this is a very incidental thing it's about the language that we use when we do it I mean plenty of people will quote scripture in their prayers and if the scripture you're familiar with is the

King James version it's fine under these contexts I think to quote scripture in that way but very few people today fluently speak 16th century Elizabethan language and when you try to contort the way you speak to God into that because you're not familiar with it yourself sometimes what comes out is gibberish and so we should try and the confession teaches us this we should try to speak in the ordinary language of the people around us when we're engaged in these activities together so the language we use is important because of not reverence for God that we think we're emulating but because of respect for the people around us who we're seeking to be blessed when we pray together and it's that sense of a community bound together through the blood of Jesus under the sovereignty of God connected by the Holy Spirit uniting us and binding us together in the love of Christ that we should seek to be a blessing towards one another so what does this pact look like the first thing is that there's praise you see it in the prayer here in Acts 4 when the disciples and their friends come together they begin their prayer by saying sovereign Lord maker of heaven and earth and so on and what they're doing by that is elevating their perception of who God is and the majesty of

[27 : 24] God and you see it in plenty other places in scripture I've got an example for you the notes tonight the bulletin have these cross references you can go and read them when you when you go home perhaps if you want Solomon's prayer of the dedication of the temple he begins his prayer by saying oh God God of Israel there is no God like you he calls out the uniqueness of God the marvel of God the the the blessedness of God's connection to his people and he is leading the people as he prays into praise for God that's one of these things to remember as you pray with others you're privileged as you pray with others to bring them into the presence of God with you you have an opportunity to bring the people you're praying with to see and marvel and wonder at a God who loves them a God whose care for them sent his son into this world to die in their place a God who seeks to indwell within them and bless them through his presence and his power administered

through the power and working of the

Holy Spirit and that's true in every context in which you can pray with others so it is of course true in the context of prayer with your spouse with your husband with your wife when you pray with them it's it's easy it's tempting I know from my you know from from from married life you know sometimes the problems and the things that you're wanting to pray about are so overwhelming and so pressing you would almost rush towards the shopping list of things you want to pray about but but how good it is to bless your husband your wife your spouse that when you come in prayer you draw them into the praise of God it's the same with your kids you're having family worship bring them into the praise of God with you with your Sunday school class I hope the Sunday school teachers are not afraid to pray with their Sunday school classes it's a good place to teach them to bring them into the presence of God if you're with a seeker and you're opening up the Bible together and you're wanting to read scripture together in a one-on-one Bible study again you've got an opportunity there to pray with them it's always good to pray before we open the word anyway but to pray with them and draw them into the presence of God and worship and praise with a Kirk session with the deacons court finance subcommittee with the vacancy committee with the group that are praying for Muriel and Cambodia you know these are practical things that we think we need to pray about the practicalities yes there are practicalities to pray for but lead people into the praise of God bring them with you to the adoration of our God and Father maybe it's with your prayer triplet a lot of Christians have accountability structures like that people that you're close with and you walk with God you meet with them regularly you pray with them remember in that place praise of God is so crucial you don't know how much of a blessing you'll actually be to the others who are there perhaps you're confused and you're thinking well they're confused and thinking I don't know where God is in all of this life that I'm going through just now and I haven't even shared with this people I'm praying with and yet the fact that you can lead them to a place of praise is such a blessing maybe it's with your businessman's lunch or with a road to recovery group or with a WFM or maybe it's a same grace before you eat your dinner but in all of these contexts there's an opportunity to praise God and to bring others into that praise perhaps it's a funeral perhaps perhaps it's when you go to visit people who are grieving perhaps it's when you're going to hospital to see someone who's battling an incurable cancer there is no context where the praise of God is not relevant there's no context where it's not needed it's not necessary it is a right place for us to bring people into the awe of God and so we begin with praise secondly there's also admission I see the time is very much tramping on again it's a big topic I'm sorry there's a place of an admission of sin a recognition of sin that the disciples when they pray in Acts 4 they talk about the death of Jesus and they recognize that there is a sense in which it has happened under the planning and the foreknowledge and the predestination of God but they don't say the Gentiles did it they don't point the finger at Herod and Pontius Pilate although they recognize Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles had a role to play it was a Roman execution detail that killed Jesus but they also say also the peoples of Israel and they include themselves in that if you're familiar with the opening chapters of the book of Acts they see themselves themselves as Israel and so they put themselves into the heart of that confession that's why I highlighted Daniel 9 as a great example of this Daniel is acknowledging the sins of his people of his nation and he includes himself in that we have sinned we have done wrong we are responsible for the exile that has now come to us we are responsible for the fact that we are separated from the place of the temple where we can worship our God we did this and one of the great practical applications of this is that when we come to confession of sin when we're praying with others we need to own it we need to own it and very often when we come to confession of sin we're we're really thinking about confession of sins of our community of our nation a good example would be abortion the steadily worsening abortion laws that our country is enacting and a situation that seems to be just slipping away into worse and worse outcomes all the time and it's almost as if we might want to point the finger and yet it's us we're not admitting the sins of others we are confessing our sin our nation's sin our need of God's grace our nation's need of God's grace it's a place to confess not a place to complain it's not a place to complain about the things we don't like in the church

I'd say this when you're gathering with your brothers and sisters in Christ your private opinions stay at the door if you don't like the church's church planting policy the gathering of the saints is not a place to just rant about that it's a place to pray it's a place to intercede it's a place to seek God's blessing and so remember prayer together it's a place for confession not a place for just generally

complaining about what's going on and so we come and confess it's a place as well for calling out to God so we have praise we have acknowledgement of our sin it's a place for calling to God for requesting his help and his blessing second chronicles chapter 20 Jehoshaphat calls for God's help on behalf of the people we don't know what to do in this situation he says but our eyes are on you that's one of the great privileges of praying together as a church as individuals gathered together as people who want to pray to God in all of these different contexts that

[36 : 23] I've already mentioned one of the great privileges that we have is of expressing our dependence on a covenantal God do you not think that God who did not spare his only son will he not now bless you abundantly more than you can ask or think that means we pray big and with this I am nearly done it means we pray with boldness we pray with boldness and confidence in a God who holds the entire cosmos in his hands and that's one of the things that I fear when the church prays together I always fear that we we forget how great our God is and how bold we can be in coming to him in prayer the great things that we can ask for the wonderful things that we can request the marvel of his grace we can ask for those who are dead in their sins to come to life you see it in the way the disciples do it here when they pray they pray about the persecution they're facing they pray about the the affliction that they are under the threats that they have received but they're not rushing to pray for something small what they're rushing to pray for is the mercy of God not judgment over all those who are opposing them and over the preaching of the word and for all of the countless hundreds and thousands of people who are still there to hear the gospel in

Jerusalem let us be bold in how we pray let us also be indicative let us be deliberate about what we pray for you know when we're praying with one another we can pray specifically for the matters at hand we don't need to be vague our God is big enough to hear our specific prayers in fact that's part of God's condescending he comes down to the level at which we are at and he hears the specific things that we're praying for and the things that we're interceding for and we can be such a blessing to one another with specific prayer and to encourage one another along that way is a covenanted community praying to God and the other thing about being praying big is also not just to be bold and indicative in what we pray for but to be God glorifying you know there's often a feeling perhaps that God will not be glorified if we pray for things that we want but actually if we want God's glory we will be satisfied with the things that glorify God and that is what we'll pray for and so let us have that kind of boldness that John Piper speaks of that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him that's what it means to pray with hearts alight for God burning with a passion for the glory of God and the things that we are asking for and the intercessions that we are raising acknowledging God's great mercy and the blessing that he will give the final thing just is thanksgiving praise acknowledgement of sin calling out for God's blessing and doing so with thanksgiving

Ezra's public confession and the renewal of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem there in Nehemiah as well actually you can read in both passages but but Ezra is heavy his prayer is heavy with confession but but he also acknowledges God's mercy and his preservation and he goes through the whole history of the nation and all of the things that God has done to preserve Israel and he just pours out thanks that's what we do that's how we're going to conclude our worship just now praising God for the certainty of his mercies and the enduring grace that he shows and how firm and sure that is to all eternity that is our God that is a God that we can come to with praise and thanksgiving and so let us bow in prayer to him just now for just a moment heavenly father we want to come before you this evening and seek your blessing upon us lord we thank you for the privilege of being able to come before you in prayer as a church as a gathering tonight and we pray father that as we do so we would be reminded of just how glorious a God you are you are worthy of our praise because you have loved us and you have sent a salvation for us and you have glorified your name and redeeming us through the blood of Jesus and I pray tonight father that that would be what we make most of what we rejoice in where we find our hope and our confidence and why we remember that we have every reason to be bold in coming to you in prayer because you have done so much in working out our salvation for us we thank you that you are a God who hears we thank you that all of us tonight can perhaps speak of times where we have cried out to you and you have answered and so we pray father that you would continue to show yourself as a God who is faithful and merciful abundant in mercy in fact and may that overflow in our lives and be seen in how we glorify and exalt you continually help us Lord to bless one another then as we would seek to pray together multiply Lord the opportunities that we have to pray together as a congregation as

individuals within our families help us to cultivate good patterns and practices and how we do that help us not to be ashamed or afraid of praying together either but to have boldness in how we come to our God and to see the fruit of that prayer to see the answers to prayer to the praise of your glorious name and we ask these things for Jesus' sake

Amen we're going to sing in conclusion in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 136 the second version of the Psalm page 428 in the Blue Book page 428 we're going to sing verses 1-4 so just two stanzas to the tune St. John praise God for he is kind his mercy lasts foray give thanks with heart and mind to God of God's always for certainly his mercy's durer most firm and sure eternally let's stand and sing two stanzas please please God, while he is kind, his mercy lasts foray.

Give thanks with heart and mind to God of God's glory. For certainly his mercy's due, most permanent should eternally.

[44 : 04] The Lord of Lords, praise ye, his mercy still endure. Faith wanders only he, that work by his great hand.

For certainly his mercy's due, most permanent should eternally.

Now the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with each one of you now and always. Amen.

Amen.