

Guest Speaker Drew Byers

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Date: 08 March 2020

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[0 : 00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

It's a delight to be here for many reasons, and that's one of them. Psalm chapter 50. My goal this morning is for us to see a clearer picture of who God is.

And when we get a clearer picture of who God is, then we can rightly order our lives around that picture, around that image. I think one of the issues that we have in our lives, and one of the deficiencies that we have just as fallen human beings, is that we often try to order our lives around an incomplete picture of God.

That we like some attributes or characteristics of God more than other attributes or characteristics. So today we want to talk about, really about the judgment of God, and how God is a judge, and how that is a very good thing for Christians to understand, and a very good doctrine for us to hang on to. Let's give attention to the reading of God's Word. Psalm chapter 50, a psalm of Asaph. Psalm chapter 50, a psalm of Asaph. The mighty one, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth.

[1 : 12] From the rising of the sun to its setting, out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes. He does not keep silence.

Before Him is a devouring fire. Around Him a mighty tempest. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth that He may judge His people. Gather to me, my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

The heavens declare His righteousness. For God Himself is judge. Selah. Hear, O my people, and I will speak. O Israel, I will testify against you.

I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you. Your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds.

For every beast of the forest is mine. The cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you.

[2 : 14] For the world and all its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and perform your vows to the Most High.

And call upon me in the day of trouble. And I will deliver you. And you shall glorify me. But to the wicked, God says, What right have you to recite my statutes?

Or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline. And you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him. And you keep company with adulterers.

You give your mouth free reign for evil. And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother. You slander your own mother's son.

These things you have done and I have been silent. You thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. Mark this then, you who forget God.

[3 : 16] Lest I tear you apart. And there be none to deliver. The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me. To one who orders his way rightly, I will show the salvation of God.

Would you pray with me? And let's ask God's help for his wisdom before we go any further. Lord God, you are so faithful to us. And God, we praise you this morning for the good gift of your word. God, that you have revealed yourself to us through the scriptures. God, I pray today that we would have wisdom. That you would move in our hearts and move in our midst by your spirit.

God, that you would help us to understand your word. Lord, and that you would mold us and make us and conform us into the image of your son, Jesus. God, that you would change us.

Lord, as only you can. Lord, you know that I am in desperate need of your grace today. So Lord, use me as your instrument and as your vessel. And God, may your words be heard and not my own, that you receive all the glory.

[4 : 25] It's in your name I pray. Amen. Amen. I wonder how many of you had a childhood experience like mine. I was fortunate enough to grow up in a home with a mom and a dad who both cared that I practiced obedience.

And to say it another way, they were concerned that when they said something that I did it. Right? Regardless of my opinion about that. And I remember when I was a young kid, I was asked to do some simple task like vacuum the rug or feed the dog or wash the car.

And I would act like I was unusually and cruelly oppressed by that. You know, you've been that way. Maybe if you're a parent, your kids act that way. Right? Feed the dog. Load the dishwasher. I hated loading the dishwasher.

Right? The most simple task in the world. I just despised it. And I remember I would often ask my mom, I would say, why? Why do I need to do this task?

I'm busy. And I'm sitting there playing with Legos or whatever it is that I'm doing. I'm busy. Right? Why? Why right now? And my mom, in all of her authority, she would look me dead in the eyes. She would say those words that I feared to hear.

[5 : 32] And she would say, because I said so. Right? You've heard that probably. Maybe you've used that trick if you are a parent. And I knew in that moment, though I wasn't that bright as an eight-year-old child, I knew my eight-year-old self knew that I could protest.

I could try to work my way around the task. I could try to enlist my older brother to do the task for me. But my mom had decreed something, and that was going to come to pass, regardless of my opinion about it and the fact that I disagreed with her rationale as an eight-year-old.

Right? You've been there, I'm sure. However, this is a short little experience that I think demonstrates something deficient in the human heart, honestly. We've got to come to grips with the fact that as human beings, we are not always the ones who are in charge.

We learn that when we are young children, but I think we forget that as we grow older, as we grow more independent, that we think we are autonomous, that we're the ones who make the rules.

We've got to understand that exercising authority, people exercising authority over us even, is a part of life, and that we had better get used to it. And in this scenario, as the parent who is in charge has an authority that the child does not.

[6 : 47] And you know if you're a parent or you've been a child, that it goes best for that child if they recognize that parent's authority. I wonder if we don't see a little bit of our own hearts in even a silly illustration like that.

The fact is that we often desire a reordering of God's universe in the sense that we're at the center, that we want to put ourselves and our needs at the center of our universe.

And this psalm tells us that this is not the case. This is not reality, and this is not going to work. The remedy for a self-centered universe is understanding the God who has created the same universe that we exist in.

The problem with a self-centered universe is a deficiency in our understanding of who God is. We learn as we understand who God is that God is not really concerned with our opinions or concerns about how His universe should be run.

Rather, God is concerned with our understanding of who He is and how that understanding should cause us to approach Him in heartfelt worship.

[7 : 59] And this psalm teaches us today that the Lord is a just judge with all authority who delivers His people so that they might come and worship Him.

We see firstly this morning that the Lord is the judge over all the earth. It's important that when we think about God, we think about Him appropriately. And in fact, the way that you order and structure your life is based upon what you believe to be true about God.

You may not think about that often, but that's true for everyone. What we, the way that we live our lives is based upon what we believe to be true about God. And this psalm tells us very clearly in verse number six that the Lord is the judge of the earth.

Now, why in the world does it matter that we understand God is a judge? Well, how does understanding that God is a judge influence our lives for the rest of the week after today?

The judgment of God is one of the most unpopular doctrines in our current culture. I don't want anyone to judge me based on what I do. I want to be the one who determines what is right or wrong in a particular scenario.

[9 : 10] Because if I'm the one who determines what's right or wrong, then most of the time I'm right. You know, and that, that, that goes pretty well for me. And that's that same idea of trying to reorder the universe where we're at the center.

The judgment of God is, is a, is a despised doctrine in many ways in our current culture. But we've got to understand that just because the judgment of God is a despised doctrine doesn't mean that the scripture teaches it any less, right?

We've got to understand God as a judge and got to understand the judgment of God is a good doctrine for us to hold on to if we're going to rightly live the Christian lives. God is the judge of our lives.

And whether we do something right or wrong, morally or ethically, is determined by God. And no amount of disagreeing with God about something will change that.

Scripture teaches that every person will be judged by God, that no one will escape God's judgment. And again, we're tempted to think this is a bad thing, but the scripture says that's a very good thing.

[10 : 09] A few reasons that the psalmist gives us to, to help us understand why it's a good thing that God is the judge. The first thing he tells us is that the Lord is a creator. The Lord is the one who has created all of the things that we know and behold.

The opening of this psalm reminds us of the creation story. It says that the Lord speaks and he summons the earth, right? Let there be light and there was light, right?

We recall that from, from Genesis one, the, the Lord is qualified to judge the earth and to judge everyone on the earth because he owns the earth because he created the earth.

Verse one says the Lord speaks and summons the earth that from the rising of the sun to its setting, even if it's rising was an hour earlier this morning, Walt, right? Thank you for that. From the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, the Lord speaks and sustains the whole world.

The Lord has created and upholds everything by the word of his mouth. And the speaking of God reminds us that he is not passive. That God is not simply allowing the world to run its course and observing it from the heavens.

[11 : 22] That God intervenes in our lives by speaking into them in many cases. God, because he is the creator of the universe, is intimately involved with his universe.

And because of that, he has the right and the obligation to judge. What's more in verse two tells us that we can know about God because of his interaction with his people.

Look at verse two. It says out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Speaking of Zion as the perfection of beauty is talking about the fact that God created his old covenant people, Israel. He created them essentially out of nothing. That he formed Israel by Abraham, right? Through the promise he gave to Abraham. If you understand and study what Israel had going for them in the Old Testament, it was absolutely nothing by human standards, right?

Every other nation was stronger. Every other nation was richer. Every other nation was more powerful, right? Every other nation had land. It seemed the only thing Israel had going for them was their God.

[12 : 24] And their God sustained and established them in their land. And when it talks about the beauty of Zion, it says, look at what God did to create and establish his old covenant people, Israel.

That you understand the goodness of God and the power of God and the word of God in many senses by the fact that he established and sustained Israel.

That the Lord is the creator of everything. And because he created everything, he owns and rules over everything. And we see God's sustaining beauty in creation and in the world around us.

That the Lord did not simply create and then leave us to figure everything else out, as some people might wrongly believe. But God is a God who speaks. The Lord is a speaking God.

The psalmist makes this point. Look at verse number three. It says, our God comes. He does not keep silence. The Lord is not silent towards his people. He is a God who speaks to his people.

[13 : 23] Calvin on this writes, the psalmist repeats that God would come in order to confirm his doctrine and more effectually arouse them. He would come and should not always keep silence, lest they be encouraged to presume upon his forbearance.

That God speaks so that we might be aroused to worship him. That God speaks that we might be moved into action and into repentance because we have heard his voice.

What's more is that verse three says that God speaks with the force of a devouring fire or a mighty tempest. Understand that when God speaks, it's not like when you or I speak. You see, because

oftentimes I speak and nothing happens.

I speak for some intended cause to come about and it doesn't come to fruition. I speak with some purpose and the purpose remains unaccomplished. I experience this daily in my life.

My wife and I have a puppy. All right. He's four months old. He's part Bernese mountain dog, part poodle. OK, he's he's a Bernadoodle is what he's called.

[14:31] That's his rightful, rightful genus and species and all that stuff. Right. We affectionately named him Bernie. Right. Because he's a Bernese mountain dog. All right. My wife and I, we love this animal for some reason.

Right. We love this animal. But he has this problem. At least I have this problem with him. My wife might be more successful. But I take this puppy out into the front yard to do what puppies are supposed to do.

And instead of doing what he's supposed to do, he runs into the woods and begins to chew on whatever substance he finds in the woods to chew on. Right. And I call out to him. I say, Bernie, Bernie, Bernie. And he just continues to sit there and to chew on sticks and not even pay any attention to my voice.

I have this experience daily. I'm reminded daily that I am not God. Right. By my four month old Bernadoodle. Right. Understanding, again, a silly illustration. But we understand that when God speaks, his speaking is not like ours.

My voice calls out and the intended purpose of my voice doesn't actually happen. But when the Lord speaks and when the Lord calls people, things happen and people respond.

[15:34] That you are here today if you are in Christ as a result of the word of God calling you to himself. Right. And what a joy that we can celebrate that. That God is not like us.

When the Lord says, let there be light, there is light. When the Lord says to Pharaoh, let my people go. The people are free. When the Lord Jesus says to the lame man, take up your bed and walk. He stands up, picks up his mat and walks away. When Jesus calls to Lazarus and says, Lazarus, come out of your tomb. Lazarus gets up and walks away from the grave that once held him. The word of God is not like ours. And that's something to celebrate today. We can contrast the picture. This picture of God is God who speaks with the Old Testament deities that Israel would have been familiar with.

In the Old Testament, the thing that set Yahweh apart from the other gods was the fact that all of the other gods of the Canaanites and of the Egyptians were dumb. They were mute.

[16:34] They did not speak to their people. The people who worshiped the gods of the Canaanites and the Egyptians never heard the voice of their gods. The fact that God has created by his word is significant because he is known by the fact that he speaks to his people.

And he still speaks to us today. Verse number four tells us that he calls to both the heavens and the earth that he might judge his people. It teaches us that there's no part of the created order that is outside of the reach of the voice of God.

He calls his people to himself. Hear me today. I don't know many of you. I don't know what road you walked through this week to get to this place today. Walt said earlier that you're not here by accident.

And we firmly believe that's true that wherever you're at today, you are not beyond the call of the voice of God. That whatever your life has been like, whatever other voices you've been listening to, the voice of God calls out to you today to understand who he is and how you might live your life in light of that truth.

Look at verse number five. The psalmist says, gather to me my faithful ones who made a covenant with me by sacrifice. The Lord wants his people, those who he's made a covenant with, to come and worship him truly.

[17:57] And just as Israel made a covenant with God in the Old Testament to be his people, we share in these same promises as the new covenant people of God. That God wants us to understand who he is.

Understand our relationship with him. And that we're in a covenant relationship with the God of the universe. And when we understand that, we come to him and worship him rightly. Verse six tells us one of the reasons God calls his people to himself is so that he might judge them.

That he might say what is right and what is wrong. What we're going to see in this text is that the fact that the Lord is a judge is a good thing. Because only God will judge his people in

righteousness.

So the way that we understand the worship of the Lord is significant. If God has revealed to us that he is a just judge, what does that mean about the way we worship him?

Secondly, this morning we see the Lord desires a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The Lord hates hypocrisy. The Lord hates religious activity that has no motivation from the heart.

[19:01] These verses tell us that the people of God were continually offering sacrifices to the Lord. But their hearts were far from him. They have the name of God on their lips.

But the desires of the Lord were far from their hearts. These people showed up for religious events as if by showing up they might appease the Lord enough.

So that he might leave them alone and that they might live however they pleased. Verse 7 tells us that the Lord testifies against his covenant people. It says, Hear, O my people, I will speak.

O Israel, I will testify against you. The Lord knows that the people are constantly offering sacrifices on their altars. But this text says the Lord will not accept them.

Why? Because while they offered sacrifices on their altars, their actions denied the God they claim to serve. The psalmist paints a clear picture for us that the Lord does not need our sacrifices.

[20:00] God is not in need of our worship this morning. God responds to his people and says, I'm the judge of the whole world. Do you think I need your sacrifices?

Do you think your continual offering of bulls and goats on the altar is really helping me all that much? Why was God not impressed with this? Because the Lord doesn't need the sacrifices of his people.

The sacrifices on the altar were meant to be an expression of their heart, not merely a duty of their flesh. Look at verses 12 and 13. If I were hungry, I would not tell you.

For the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? And the answer is no. The Lord doesn't need our sacrifices.

The fact that the Lord is a judge is very significant for us here. Because if the Lord is the judge of the whole world, the Lord judges perfectly and righteously as corresponds to his character.

[21:01] And the Lord will rightly judge every religious activity we participate in. Jesus warns of this strongly in the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6.

He says to be aware of religious affection that's void of thanksgiving. Matthew chapter 6. Jesus says this. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them. For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet. As the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may be praised by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. So that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The secret parts of our hearts are known by the Lord. He knows the difference between true religion and false religion. Between a true expression of worship and a false expression.

[22:05] Jesus says to watch out for the appearance of religion if it is unaccompanied by heartfelt thankfulness to God. I pray that this church might be a church that pursues true and heartfelt worship before the Lord.

That songs are not just true when they're sung from our lips, but they're true in our hearts. And they're true in the way that we live in the community around us and serve the people that are around us.

Because the Lord doesn't need our sacrifices. He owns the whole world. If He wanted something, He could get it. Rather, the Lord desires our obedience.

Look at verse 14. Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and perform your vows to the Most High. While the Israelites were busy offering bulls on their altars, they were not seeking the righteousness of God in their hearts.

We know the Lord hates hypocrisy in the hearts of His people. The Lord doesn't need our worship. God's not sitting in heaven just hoping that you would worship Him today. Rather, the opposite is true.

[23:09] That we need to worship God. That all human beings worship something. The question in this text is, what is the thing that you're desiring to worship?

Because God says, you're not worshiping me. You offer your bulls on your altars. You offer all day and all night. But I don't need them. You're really worshiping yourself.

The tragedy of this text is that Scripture tells us there's a category of people who have the appearance of worshiping God, while in reality they worship something else.

This plays out in our lives all the time. We go to church and appear righteous, but we don't practice righteousness in our personal lives. We might give money to the poor and feel good about that, but we don't treat the people in our lives with dignity and with honor that they deserve as being created in the image of God.

We might read the Bible on our phones or post a verse on our Instagram page, but then use that same phone to view something that we shouldn't or send a harsh message to somebody.

[24 : 18] Though we don't offer sacrifices like old covenant saints, God is not impressed with our religious activities if they're tainted with hypocrisy. A theologian named W.S. Plummer, he writes, Mere profession, even of true religion, though it be decent and to the eye of man consistent, is not only vain but is offensive to God.

But when a religious profession does not restrain us from overt wickedness, it is not only hateful to God but an abomination to all right-minded men.

Who do you think you're fooling if you're going through the motions of religion without a heartfelt thankfulness to God? Plummer says it's an abomination to God and in fact it's also harmful to your fellow man.

So if you're trying to fool God, that won't work. But if you're trying to fool man, that doesn't do any good either. Mere profession of religion does no good for anyone, but we think it helps us.

We must guard against the hypocrisy of our hearts. Look at verse number 15. This warning is wrapped up in the grace of God. But call upon me in the day of trouble.

[25 : 32] I will deliver you and you will glorify me. The Lord is faithful to deliver those who call upon him. Faithful to rescue us from the hypocrisy of our own hearts.

The Lord will deliver his saints so they might truly worship him. And we can praise God for this great salvation. That he does not leave us to our own devices. And this is why God delivers his people.

The reason God delivers his people is so that they might glorify his name. That the glory of God is the great goal of the Christian life. And we can rest in that truth today.

Rest in that promise. God hates hypocrisy. But just as God is faithful to judge the hypocrisy of his own people, he's also faithful to judge the wicked by their deeds.

This psalm shifts gears a little and tells us that the Lord is also going to judge those who are wicked by their deeds. The question that this psalm calls us to ask is, Are we like the righteous who offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to God?

[26 : 39] Or are we like the wicked? Those who appear righteous but neglect to honor the Lord by their deeds. Understanding it's only the Lord who truly knows the righteous from the wicked.

It's only the Lord who truly knows the heart. But the psalmist tells us there's a category of people who are aware of God's commands in their lives. And yet they deny God's lordship over their lives by their lifestyle.

Look at verses 17 and 18. For you hate discipline. You cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him.

And you keep company with adulterers. Plummer, again, is brilliant on this. He writes, One of the surest signs of swift destruction coming on a man is hatred of reproof.

Hatred of warning, of counsel, of good doctrine, and of timely admonition. And when this amounts to a scornful rejection of God's word, the case is indeed fearful.

[27 : 40] We should be fearful if we knowingly reject God's command and God's word in our lives. What does the rejection of God's word look like? The psalmist gives us a clue.

He tells us in verses 19 and 20 that it affects our words. One of the signs of the rejection of God's word in our lives is that it affects our own words. Look at verses 19 and 20.

You give your mouth free reign for evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother and you slander your own mother's son. Contrast these two ideas.

Contrast the word of God with the word of the wicked. While God's words bring abundant life to His creation and to His people, the words of the wicked bring destruction to others.

The wickedness of man's heart is often displayed by the carelessness of man's tongue. Look at verse 21. These things you have done and I have been silent.

[28 : 41] You thought that I was one like yourself, but now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. God is not like us. He is a just judge and on the judgment day He will speak and declare who is righteous and who is wicked.

We must remember that God is a just judge if we are to live rightly before Him. And the fact that God is a judge is a good thing for Christians. Like I said, we sometimes want to avoid the judgment of God in our culture as if ignoring the reality about God might change Him. He might be changed by our opinions about Him. Let's be honest. It's easier to talk about a God that is a God of love or forgiveness or grace.

And all of those things are true about our God. But they're only true insofar as He is also a just judge. A God who does not judge wickedness is a God who is not just.

And an unjust God is not the God of the Bible. A God who does not judge is a God who will not save. The Lord will judge the whole earth and we must remember that.

[29 : 51] That none of our deeds remain unseen by the sovereign Lord. And friends, let me assure you, the fact that God sees all our deeds is not as much cause for alarm as it is cause for thanksgiving this morning.

Because the fact that God sees all of our sins and our wickedness and the hypocrisy in our hearts should lead us to fear and tremble before His judgment. Because it is only when we see the severity of our own sin before a holy and just God that we can finally be saved from it.

We must see God as He is if we're to be saved from the sin in our hearts. When we see God for who He is, then we see our sin as what it is.

Only when we see the severity of our sin we understand that God's judgment of sinners is just. So where do we turn? Where do we hide to escape this judgment of this just God?

We turn to the Lord Himself. There is none who can deliver us from the judgment of God but God Himself. Ask the question this morning. Are you ready for the examination of the judge?

[31 : 03] If you're hoping on something else to save you, you will not be saved. That there is only one who can save and it is the Lord. Look at verse 22. Mark this then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart and there be none to deliver.

This text tells us there's a category of people who forget God. Who pretend as if God is not who He claims to be. That God is not a speaking God. That He is a silent God.

There's coming a day where God will judge everyone. None of us will escape the judgment of God. How will you stand before this holy judge?

There's only one way any of us can stand today. And it is if God in His grace saves us from our sin by His Son, Jesus Christ. Look at verse 23.

The one who offers thanksgiving as His sacrifice glorifies me. To the one who orders His way rightly, I will show the salvation of God. The one who the Lord saves is the one who the Lord has changed by His grace.

[32 : 10] This verse does not teach that we are saved by our works or by something that we can do. But rather, it teaches us that if we have been changed by the grace of the Lord, we will glorify Him by our deeds and by our thankfulness for His salvation.

Not merely an expression of religion. How can we be saved the way that God has saved His people? It's through the work of His Son, Jesus, on the cross.

That Scripture teaches that Jesus, who is truly God and truly man, came and lived a perfect life to be a sacrifice on the cross. That Jesus was crucified to make atonement for our sins because they were terrible before the eyes of a holy God.

That Jesus died and was placed in a tomb, but rose from the dead on the third day. And that anyone who places their trust in Jesus in repentance of their sins can be saved.

That's the good news of the Gospel today. Jesus is the one who can save us from our sins because Jesus was judged on the cross in our place.

[33 : 16] The only place we can stand under the judgment of God is under the blood of Christ, who was slain in our place to save us from our sins. And this truth changes our entire lives.

When we understand the Gospel, it is then we can offer right sacrifices to this holy God. And when we know that Christ has covered our sin and we understand the grace of God, the fact that God is a judge is no longer something that we fear, but something that we can celebrate.

The Lord is a just and righteous judge who upholds the universe by His word. And He has judged Jesus in our place so that we might stand with confidence before His throne.

Knowing that in the justice of God, if God is perfectly and truly just, that if He has judged Jesus for our sin, He will not judge those who are one with Christ through faith.

This is the good news we can rest in today. This morning, maybe you're wrestling with hypocrisy in your own heart. Maybe you're wrestling with sin in your own way.

[34 : 22] Maybe you're struggling to understand how you might live rightly before the Lord. Maybe you're struggling with the idea that everything in your life is seen by this just judge.

Let me comfort you with these words today. If you're burdened with sin beyond what you can bear, that Jesus is a faithful Savior. That He begs those who are weak and weary to come to Him so that He might give them rest.

And Jesus has truly given us rest today in Him through His sacrificial death and His resurrection.

Today, if you are in Christ, you need not fear the judgment of God because God has judged Jesus in your place.

And God is a just judge. He is not like us. That's something we should celebrate. The question remains today, will you hear the speaking God? Do you hear the speaking God?

The God who is not passive, but the God who is actively at work in your life. His voice calls out to you today. Will you hear the speaking God and obey His call upon your life?

[35 : 29] Let me pray for us this morning. Father God, we thank You so much for Your grace to us. The grace that You have shown us in Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord, that we could never earn our way to You. Lord, we can never do enough good deeds, never do enough righteous acts to merit Your forgiveness.

But God, in Your grace, You have reached down to us. Lord, You have given us this free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Lord, we praise You for this truth today. God, I pray You'd help us to rest in this truth. Lord, and that we might open our eyes wider and wider to see how You're at work in our lives.

God, and how Your voice calls to us and calls us to obedience and to repentance. And that we might see that living under Your authority is the best place that we could live. Lord, we thank You for Your Word.

[36 : 28] God, I pray that You'd continue to work in and through Your Spirit, by Your Word, to mold us and make us and shape us to be more like Your Son, Jesus. It's in that name I pray. Amen.

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