

God's Passover

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning.

It's good to have you with us. We are going to continue in our series this morning in the book of Exodus. And if you haven't been here, we've been waiting breathlessly for chapters 11 and 12. Because the whole book of Exodus we know is leading up to or is going to tell this story of deliverance. The story of God intervening on behalf of his people to do a great work to save them from slavery.

And we've been waiting for 10 long chapters. 10 long chapters of detours and 10 long chapters of disappointments. And 10 long chapters of hardened hearts and nine plagues.

Plagues and over and over again. And we've finally gotten there. We finally, as we come to chapters 11 and 12 this morning, we finally get to see what will it take for God to deliver his people.

[1 : 12] This is the question that our passage reminds us of this morning. And if you haven't been here for the last couple of weeks, I want to recommend you go to our website and listen to the last two sermons.

Because Pastor Nick preached two weeks ago on the nature of the nine plagues. The nature of the way that God was preparing both Egypt and Israel for this work of deliverance that he was going to do.

And that God was in the process of doing that. Demonstrating his greatness, his sovereignty, his majesty over all things. And then the week after, Pastor Greg tackled the challenging question of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart.

And called us to examine how easily we harden our hearts. And helped us to see how much we need a sovereign God to intervene in our lives.

To help us to respond to him in ways that we cannot do on our own. This is where we've come to in the story of Exodus.

[2 : 23] And it leads us to this great question. How will God actually deliver his people? What will it take to do that? Now, it's early.

So I'm going to take a risk here and read more than I thought this morning. I want you all to stand up. We're going to stand for the word of God. And we're going to read most of 11 and 12. I'm going to give you guys a little bit of a break.

Because chapter 12, verses 14 through 20, is all about not the work of deliverance, but the memorialization of it. Which is what Pastor Nick is going to preach on next week.

So come back next week. You'll get that. But I'm going to read chapters 11 and 12 for us. So let's look at God's word together this morning. The Lord said to Moses, And moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people. And so Moses said, Thus says the Lord, About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die.

[3 : 58] From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been nor ever will be again.

But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

And all these servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, Get out, you and all the people who follow you. And after that I will go out.

And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. And then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, this month shall be for you the beginning of months.

[5 : 09] It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their father's houses, a lamb for a household.

And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons, according to what each can eat. You shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

They shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted its head with its legs and its inner parts, and you shall let none of it remain until the morning.

[6 : 18] Anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it with your belt fastened and sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste.

It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

And on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are.

And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. And then skipping down to verse 21.

And then Moses called the elders of Israel and said to them, Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.

[7 : 25] None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning, for the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians. And when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your house, to strike your houses, to strike you.

And you shall observe this right as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, you shall keep this service.

And when your children say to you, What do you mean by this service? You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. For he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.

And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. Then the people of Israel went out and did so, as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. So they did.

Just as a note, all of this is now preparation. We've heard it over and over again. The Lord is telling Moses. Now Moses is telling the people. And now finally we get to, in verse 29, the action that happens.

[8 : 37] At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all of the firstborn of the livestock.

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all of his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead.

Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, Up, up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel, and go serve the Lord as you have said.

Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone. And bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We shall all be dead.

So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The people of Israel had also done, as Moses told them.

[9 : 43] For they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked.

Thus they plundered the Egyptians. And the people of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot besides women and children.

A mixed multitude also went up with them, with very much livestock, both flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

And the time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. And this is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Go ahead and take a seat.

Friends, the question I proposed at the beginning this morning is, what will it take? What will it take for God to deliver His people?

[11 : 02] And what we see as we read this story is that God's deliverance displays both a terrifying judgment and a gracious provision to save a people for Himself.

That's what we're going to look at. Basically, those two ideas, a terrifying judgment and a gracious provision as the dynamics by which God saves His people.

So let us first consider the nature of this terrible judgment. Friends, we maybe know this story too well and are easily numbed to the horror of it.

This night would have been a more terrifying night in the nation of Egypt than we probably could imagine. Let's look at it for a minute to remember the nature of this judgment.

First of all, we want to see that it was predicted way back in chapter 4. Turn with me for a second. Turn back a few chapters to Exodus chapter 4 verses 22 and 23.

[12 : 21] Moses has returned to Egypt and the Lord is telling him what is going to happen. He's saying, you will go and you will do all these miracles but Pharaoh will not let you go.

And then in verse 22, then you shall say to Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son and I say to you, let my son go that he may serve me.

And if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son. So when we begin to explore the nature of this, this death of the firstborn sons throughout the history or throughout the nation of Egypt, what we see is that it is happening because Egypt has withheld God's firstborn son.

That is, his people from actually worshipping him. There is a judgment on Egypt because they have not responded to God's call to respond.

This judgment is as horrific as it is with the death of all of these children. It is also, as we've seen before, in a deeper and more severe pattern, like the plagues that have come before, it is the undoing of creation.

[13 : 40] Just as the creation story in Genesis reaches its pinnacle in the creation of human life, now as God shows his power over all of creation and as he shows how the dissolution of creation creates chaos and destruction, so here he brings death to show his power over death and life.

not only does it do that, but it also strikes at the very nature of the gods of Egypt. For Osiris and Anubis were the gods that ruled over the underworld and ruled over the afterlife.

And in fact, they viewed the son of the Pharaoh as the son of God, the son of light, who was immortal and could not die. And God says, you have refused me again and again and again, and I will show you that your gods are false and they do not have the power that they promise.

Friends, the nature of this judgment, the death of the firstborn, was universal in the nation. Every household, without distinction, that's what verse 12 and verse 29 says.

Every household will be struck by this. From the throne room in Pharaoh's palace to the prisons to the most menial of workers, from the ivory towers to the homeless shelters, this judgment would have gone throughout the nation.

[15 : 20] Even the livestock were subjected to this. And friends, I want you to recognize that even the Hebrew households that were not covered with the blood of the Lamb would be subject to this judgment.

God was bringing one final, great judgment to show that He is God. God also says that this judgment will come swiftly.

His instructions to the people of Egypt is to basically have the Passover meal with their jackets on and their car keys in their pocket and their wallets ready to go. That's what it means by keeping your sandals on and tightening your belt.

It will come swiftly and when it comes, you must be ready to go. It is also an extremely personal judgment. Turn with me to chapter 12, verses 12 and 13.

I want you to look at this with me again. The other judgments, God said He was going to do it, but inanimate objects were changed or transformed or controlled.

[16:32] The weather was, the sunlight was manipulated. The gnats or the bugs were moved. But here, God Himself is the agent of this plague and of this sign and of this judgment.

Verses 12 and 13 of chapter 12, I want you to hear it again just to hear the number of personal pronouns. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and on all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgments.

I am the Lord. The blood shall be assigned for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

God is not using means anymore. God is coming Himself to execute this judgment. And friends, we need to sit and to see how horrific it was.

The narrator tells us this. And a cry arose in Egypt so great that it has never been heard before or since.

[17:58] I wonder how many of you all are firstborn children, firstborn males. I wonder how many of you have firstborn males in your family. Stop and think.

how terrible would it be in one night for death to come that fully. Friends, if we don't understand the horror of it, we won't understand the greatness of the deliverance.

That's why we're spending all this time thinking about this incredibly uncomfortable subject. we recognize the effect that it had on Pharaoh and on the people of Egypt.

Finally, Pharaoh, who had wavered and hardened his heart and then who had professed maybe he'd let them go and then changed his mind, he finally did not change his mind and his heart, though hardened, was now broken by the death of his son.

And he said, go, serve your God. And the people saw that, the Egyptian people saw that the presence of the Hebrews and the God of the Hebrews in their midst was such a dangerous thing that they said, go, lest we all die.

[19:30] Friends, it's hard to imagine how to combine the destructive power of a hurricane, the sudden fear of a terrorist attack, and the overwhelming threat of a nuclear war.

But if you can wrap all of those into one event, maybe you will begin to see how terrible this judgment was on Egypt.

God had warned them. God had said it was going to come. He prepared them for it. But when it came, it was just as terrible, probably more terrible than they imagined.

And of course, we're sitting there, you're sitting here this morning, and we struggle with this, don't we? How can God do this?

Is God fair? Is God right to do this? We recoil against it. Is the God of the Bible not a God of mercy and a God of love? Why would God do this?

[20:41] Friends, there's a long, long answer to that question that I can't fully give you this morning. There are many aspects to it, but I'm going to take one tack at it this morning that I hope will be helpful for you.

As I was reading, one commentator, a woman wrote a great study on the book of Exodus, said this, if you want a God who would never hurt a fly, that will have to be a God you manufacture in your own imagination.

That is not the God of the Bible. Nor will He allow you, nor will it allow you to define Him on your preferred terms.

The God of the Bible is, in fact, dangerous. He's not capricious or impulsive about expressing His anger. In fact, it is obvious from this story that He is, in fact, slow to anger.

But there is always an end to God's patience. We can be sure that His patience with those who continue to reject Him will come to an end, just as His patience with Pharaoh came to an end.

[21:51] We may want God to be kind and to let everyone get a pass, but what she is saying is, that is not the God of the Bible.

Why is this? Why do we understand this? Well, here's what I want to propose to you as your thought for this morning. The terrifying nature of this judgment reflects the terrifying nature of rebellion against God.

God. Remember, Pharaoh arrogantly set himself up and said, I, have you ever seen the Steven Spielberg Prince of Egypt animated version? I am the morning and the evening. I am the sun and the moon. He, I rule the world. I am God to you. And if I declare it, so it is.

I have the power to define reality. Pharaoh set himself up against God like this. And in fact, what the Bible says is that we are not so different, are we?

[23 : 02] If you want to read the full argument in Romans 1-3, I recommend it to you. The Apostle Paul gives you a lot to think about there. God is not but what he says fundamentally is that we are all born with an intuitive sense of the divine, that there is something greater than us in the world.

And in fact, that God has made himself known and yet, to the degree that we know him, we have rejected him and instead worshipped something else.

Worshipped ourselves, worshipped the creation rather than the creator, as he says in Romans 1, we have set up something else in God's place, just like Pharaoh set himself up in God's place.

And we need to recognize that this is a great offense against the creator God. It is like a petulant 17-year-old looking at a Supreme Court justice and saying, you aren't the boss over me.

You can't tell me what's right and wrong. The offense against the office and against the role of a Supreme Court justice is unimaginable.

[24 : 24] And yet, this is greater than that. And the Bible says that that is true for all of us. We have this God aspiration in our hearts.

We long to be our own gods. And this rebellion and this rejection of God is what fundamentally the Bible calls sin. Sin isn't doing something wrong.

I mean, it is, but it's much greater than that. Sin isn't merely doing something wrong. It's not simply antisocial behavior or destructive tendencies, but sin is this fundamental rejection of God saying to God, God, I don't want you to be God in my life.

I want to be the God in my life. Is this not, in fact, what Adam and Eve said in the Garden of Eden when they rejected God and said, no, I would like to be God myself rather than submitting to and receiving from a good God.

The Bible says that we all have this spiritual infection, this heart bent away from God. And so we're like the Egyptians.

[25 : 41] We make our own idols. We don't worship snakes and frogs and gnats, do we? But we worship other things. Our needs become the driving force in our marriages.

Our independence shapes our relationships and our friendships. Our lust controls our bodily appetites. Our reason becomes the final arbiter of what is right and wrong.

Our self-righteousness becomes the bulwark by which we protect ourselves from admitting that we're wrong or that we failed or that we are weak.

Our self-sufficiency allows us to reject our need for others. And our desire for control, control over all of our lives, is the very spirit that looks at God and says, God, why can you do this?

this is wrong. We put God as the object of our judgment as we try to replace him in our own hearts and lives.

[27 : 01] And friends, if we believe the Bible, we know that this is a terrible thing. And if we believe that God is the expression of all that is good and right and lovely in the world and our rejection of that is to move away from it and that a good God must judge evil for otherwise, evil will triumph in this world and in our own lives.

We are faced with the reality that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. As we read the story of the tenth plague and the judgment on the firstborn and the terrifying nature of it, we ought to be terrified that God's judgment is worse than we imagined on sin and that we ourselves deserve it.

But friends, this is not the end of the passage. And isn't that good news? This is not the end of the story. And this is in fact is not the pinnacle for what we see here is that the judgment is a part of God's delivering act.

But it is not the final. God has intervened and in this judgment he has provided, he has given a gracious provision to his people so that they might be delivered, not only from slavery to Egypt, but from the very judgment that he is raining down upon them.

And this is what I want to spend the rest of our time thinking about this morning. How is God delivering his people? Well, he's breaking Egypt's God-exalted, self-exalting power.

[28 : 55] But he is then now providing for his people so that they might be covered. Let's look again. The fundamental thing that God provides is the blood of a lamb.

which seems so small and yet is so sweet and so precious. Let's look at it for a little bit together. Look with me at the beginning of chapter 12. We'll see some of the things about the nature of this lamb that is provided.

Right? This lamb must be a perfect lamb without blemish, without flaw, because he must reflect the perfection that God himself is and that he demands from us.

this lamb that is, that is, that the people are called to gather, right, is a lamb that is dedicated for this one purpose.

You might wonder, why did he talk about the not boiling and not, like, and then the burning up and all that, like, what is all that about? It's because, it's because God wants this lamb to have one single purpose.

[30 : 06] The single purpose is to die so that the blood may go on the doorframe and so that the people may feast on it. It has a single purpose.

It is also, this lamb is sufficient. Did you notice the little piece about, like, oh, and if your household is too small to have a lamb all by yourself, you go get your neighbors and you bring them in, and you think, what in the world is all that about?

It's because this lamb was meant to be eaten fully and so this lamb was meant to be sufficient for the gathering of the people. And so if your household was too small, you'd bind together with your neighbors so that the meal would be, so the lamb would be the right, the proper, the sufficient offering for the number of people who were there.

This lamb, of course, is a substitute. For the very nature of this judgment is that death would come to every household. And recognize, friends, this is exactly what happens.

There is no household to which death does not come. It is either the death of the firstborn, of the families that reject God and His instruction, or it is the death of the lamb, those who receive God's instruction.

[31 : 27] salvation. This lamb is a substitute for the firstborn, and it is a sacrifice.

The lamb is killed, and before it's cooked, the blood is taken, and it's painted on the doorposts to say, here we have obeyed the Lord.

Here we have submitted to His instruction. Here we have done what God has asked us to so that death might come to this house in this way, rather than in the way that it will come in judgment.

Friends, not only the provision of the lamb, the nature of the lamb, a beautiful thing, but it is also a call for all to turn to God and trust Him.

Think about the Egyptians. They've watched over the last, we don't even know how long, a couple of weeks, a couple of months, just the destruction of the society in Egypt, the ways that these plagues have systematically unraveled the beauty and the glory of this place.

[32 : 45] And now God is saying, do this, and it will finally happen. They've longed for the deliverance, but maybe, like some of us, they were skeptical.

Really, God? Are you really going to do it this time? Do I really have to obey you this time? Are you really going to do it? They've waited a long time for it. But the call to act, to do this exactly the way God did it.

Not only kill the lamb, put the blood on the doorpost, but also pack your bags. Pack your bags, because when this comes, you have to be ready to go. Have you ever thought for a moment, if your house started to burn down, what would you go and grab and take?

God is saying, pack those things. Have your go bag ready, because when it comes, it's going to come quickly. Do you believe this?

If you do, prepare for it and be ready. And friends, just as the judgment that would fall on every household without the blood on the doorframe would come to the Egyptians and the Israelites, I want you to see that so too the provision is offered to the Israelites and the Egyptians.

[34 : 11] It is true that God says, I will make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites, between the people who stand up against me and those who submit to me.

But God always invites those outside of national Israel to submit and to believe and to come. And so you saw at the very end in verse 38 of chapter 12, it wasn't just Israelites who were saved.

That's what that phrase, a mixed multitude, means. That there were Egyptians who believed and Egyptians who were saved.

And God's saving work is not ethnic. It's not national. It's universal. And it has been always. And it always will be.

And the call to faith is no respecter of persons. Just as the judgment of God falls on everyone from the throne room to the prison cell, so the delivering act of God, the delivering offer of God, the delivering call of God, comes to all.

[35 : 27] And friends, the most beautiful thing about it, the response to the people who listen to God and obey, to those who take hold of the lamb and do what God has said with it, those who sit under the covering of the blood of the lamb, God passes over.

This is why it's called Passover. If you haven't ever put that together, now is the time to do it. He passed over the households that had blood because they had obeyed God and were covered by the blood of a lamb.

Verse 23, the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians. And when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses or strike you.

Friends, can you imagine what it would be like that night? At midnight, in the dark, waiting, wondering.

You've done what God has asked you to. There's blood on the door. You're trying to fall asleep, but it's uncomfortable because you have your belt on and your sandals on. And you're using your bag as your pillow.

[37 : 01] And then a loud cry rises up throughout the nation, wailing, weeping, mourning, but for you, joy.

There is no death in this household for the death has already happened because of the blood of the lamb. God has spared us and God has freed us and God has delivered us.

God has set us free to go and serve him. And not only has God set us free to go and serve him, but he's provided everything we need.

We don't have to fight Pharaoh to leave because he's telling us, get out. We don't have to fight our neighbors because they've given us stuff that we didn't have as slaves so that we could go and worship him.

They've given us golden jewelry that in Exodus 35 will be offered to the Lord for the adorning of the tabernacle and for his worship. God has set us free and this is the beginning of the rest of our lives.

[38 : 11] And we start a new year and a new day and a new calendar at this time because God has done the most amazing thing in delivering his people.

God did not simply judge, but he provided graciously a deliverance from that terrible judgment to save a people for himself.

Well, friends, we're not Egyptians or Israelites. We don't, we're not living 4,000 years ago. We're living today. How are we to respond?

Well, we're to respond knowing that the same God who did that for his people in Egypt has done that for his people throughout the world.

God did not simply judge the world in its sin, but in fact, God sent his very own son, his firstborn son, to be the Lamb of God.

[39 : 27] By his blood shed, we are covered and rescued and delivered and redeemed to be his people.

Friends, consider with me for just a minute this Jesus. Jesus who was a greater Lamb, the one who John the Baptist called the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the people of the world.

Jesus, who is perfect in his sinlessness like the Lamb. Jesus, who is dedicated to one purpose, to glorify God by coming to be the ransom for many, not by exalting himself, but by laying himself down as a sacrifice that he might be poured out to save sinners.

Jesus, who took on human flesh and blood so that he might be a perfect identifier with us. The Lamb was never quite sufficient and as you look through the book of Leviticus and then as you read the book of Hebrews, you know all of this was saying this isn't enough, this isn't the final act of God's deliverance, but this is pointing to an even greater deliverance because Jesus in his incarnation identifies with us fully so that he can be the perfect one to die in our place.

He who is our substitute, who hung on the cross bearing the terrifying judgment against the firstborn, the terrifying judgment against us in our sin.

[41 : 16] He bore the full wrath of it. He endured the beating. He endured the scorn. He endured the shame.

He endured God's anger against sin. He endured being forsaken by his Father. He endured death itself for us.

the author of life put to death for us. But friends, this Jesus is not only the perfect Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but he is also the firstborn Son of God, firstborn from before the foundations of the earth, but also the firstborn from the dead.

for this Jesus did not stay in the grave. This Jesus did not, having submitted to all of that judgment, did not then leave, but instead showing his perfection and showing his sinless power over sin and death, he rose from the dead to be the firstborn among many sisters and brothers.

others. This Jesus is alive today that he might be the firstborn of a whole people who by faith in him, by trusting in his blood shed on our behalf, this Jesus now is making for God a people from every tribe and tongue and nation that we might worship him, that we might leave the land of slavery to sin, that we might forsake the idols and the worship of other gods, that we might abandon our self-exalting nature and live instead for him.

[43 : 16] This is the great salvation that God has worked for us. He calls you to respond this morning. Will you believe in this? Will you believe that this Jesus is enough for you?

Will you entrust yourself to him as God's provision for the forgiveness of your sins, for the breaking of your idolatrous heart, for the new life that he now offers you in Christ?

Friends, will you paint the doorposts of your life with the blood of Jesus? Will you put on your sandals and tighten your belts and set your sights not on the things of this earth, but on the kingdom that is to come with God when he comes in his glory and his righteousness?

Will you live your life now worshipping him, worshipping this God who is not only a terrifying God who will judge sin, but a loving God who has borne that terrifying judgment for you, that you might be his people?

Friends, this is the good news of the gospel. This is what we're going to celebrate for the next two weeks as we come into the Easter season and Palm Sunday and Easter, Good Friday and Easter, we're going to remember these events more fully.

[44 : 45] God calls you today. Will you believe? And will you worship? Let's pray. Lord, we have touched on mighty and weighty things this morning.

And Lord, we are humbled before your righteous wrath against sin. We are, we tremble, Lord, before your judgment seat.

Lord, if we stood in our own, on our own before you, what a fearsome place it would be. But God, you have provided for us one who would intercede, a lamb whose blood was shed for us so that we might stand before you, forgiven, accepted, called to be yours because we're covered by Jesus.

Lord, I pray this morning for those here who might be exploring Christianity and wondering, what kind of God are you and what does it look like for you to be a God who saves people from their sin? Lord, I pray that they might know, Lord, the glorious provision that you have made in Jesus, that they would come to faith in you. I pray for those here this morning who have known of Jesus' death on the cross for their sins.

[46 : 23] Lord, I pray that it might be precious and sweet. And Lord, that it might not be simply a peripheral part of our lives, but that it might be central, central in our heart, central in our worship, central in our everyday lives.

Lord, that we would believe and trust and worship as you have called us to. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.