

# Woe to Oppressors, Hope for the Weak

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[ 0 : 00 ] Brothers and sisters, what a joy to be with you. This morning we will talk about the solemn reality of hell and eternal judgment.

It is good that we come to a text like this every once in a while. Not only because integrity demands that we bring to you the full counsel of God, but also my prayer is it would sober us and make us thankful.

So let's pray for God's help this morning. Lord, we pray for your spirit, that your spirit would accompany the preaching of your word. Would we decrease and Christ increased?

Lord, a text like this ought to be preached in tears. I do pray for compassion and conviction. Give me this balance. Let my words be your words, O Lord.

We pray this in the glory and honor of your name. Amen. When you die, where will you wake up?

[ 1 : 02 ] Heaven or hell? Although not our text this morning, in Luke 16, Jesus presses into the reality of this very question.

He tells a parable about a rich man and a man named Lazarus. It's a story of two men with two different destinies. The rich man had all the pleasures money could buy.

Lavish luxury. And then there was Lazarus. A poor man. In the world's eyes, he was a nobody. A mere beggar on the streets who longed for crumbs from the rich man's table.

He had sores all over his body that the dogs would come and lick. Let's pause and ask the question, who would you rather be in this story so far? My guess is all of us want to be the rich man. But then this story takes a turn. The two men die, and death brings a great reversal. The rich man, rich and famous in this life, ends up in anguish in hell.

[ 2 : 03 ] In stark contrast, the poor man, Lazarus, dies and goes to glory in heaven. Although no one knew his name, God knew him. Lazarus' name literally means the one whom God helps.

Although having nothing in life, he now has the glorious riches of heaven. On the other hand, the rich man is not even given a name. Even his identity is stripped away from him.

He is defined by the thing that defines him while on this earth. His incessant lust for wealth. Jesus says of the rich man, being in eternal torment and anguish, cries out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.

This man was religious. He knew who Abraham was. But sadly, God did not know him. It is too late now. He asked for just a little water on his tongue.

But not even this would be given to him. Abraham explains he had his good things in life. Hell is a haunting place. The rich man feels haunted and doesn't want his brothers to end up where he is.

[ 3 : 02 ] He begs that a warning would be given to them. Abraham responds, God's word will give them a warning. They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

Chilly. The warning that the rich man pleaded that someone would give to his brothers is the text that we will consider this morning. In Micah 2.

We will read all of Micah 2 this morning together. And we would be wise to heed that warning. And that can be found on page 728 of the Pew Bible. Micah 2.

And if you recall, Micah is the country counterpart of his contemporary Isaiah. While Isaiah was out with the heads of state in Jerusalem, Micah was out with the country folk.

In a small village in the rural areas. If Micah was in D.C. If Isaiah was in D.C. Micah was 25 miles away somewhere in the backwoods of West Virginia. Last week, Micah 1 exposed the idolatry of the people.

[ 4 : 00 ] And Micah 2 exposes the fruit of that idolatry. So let's begin by reading the first half, verses 1 to 5 together. Let's pause there.

The main idea of this passage is to be warned about the end that God has for the wicked. And there is only one hope from the wrath to come. We will look at this text in four parts.

The problem, the punishment, the prophets, and the promise. The problem, the punishment, the prophets, and the promise. So part one, the problem in verses 1 to 2.

In the beginning of chapter 2, Micah is not bringing good news of great joy. No, in verse 1, Micah with prophetic thunder sounds the alarm. Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds.

Now Micah is not being smug or self-righteous. Rather, like Jesus, he pronounces judgment on Judah. The first word out of Micah's mouth is one of judgment.

[ 5 : 51 ] Woe. The Hebrew word was used at funerals. Mourners will cry, woe, over the death of a loved one. Now Micah isn't mourning the death of a loved one.

Rather, he is announcing a coming death. Like an air raid siren blaring, Micah warns that an attack is coming. Because of the people's collective rebellion against God, the wrath of God is coming for them.

God is beginning to unsheathe his lethal sword. Now let's ask ourselves, what is the problem here that is incurring God's judgment? The title of the chapter has the word oppressors.

Now in today's day and age, you get a bunch of people in a room and ask them what that word means, and there's no telling what you might hear. But the problem here is straightforward. The wealthy are viciously seizing lands from the middle class farmers, grinding them into poverty.

The picture of oppression is one of cruelty and tyranny. Verse 2 tells us, they covet fields and seize them and houses and take them away. Literally the sense is tearing or ripping something away.

[ 6 : 54 ] The commentators call them robber barons. What today we might call corrupt sharks, crooked defrauders, shady real estate developers. But now not everyone that buys properties and sells them for a profit is sinning against God.

The woman of wisdom in Proverbs 31 is making wise real estate investments as she buys up pieces of land. And in the passage we read earlier, that Koch read, Paul gives three valid uses for money.

The first is for food, clothing, and basic needs. The second is enjoying God's good gifts. So it's not wrong to have a nice vacation or enjoy a good meal. Enjoy some good music. And the third is being generous to others.

God gives us money to enjoy his good creation. But these greedy landowners had a simple calculus. If less for you means more for me, then I'll take it. Even if it means by violence, extortion, and leaving wreckage in the wake.

There is no fear of God in their eyes. Now why is land grabbing such a serious issue? God does not seem happy. Well, in a farming society, to take away someone's land was to take away their ability to survive.

[ 8 : 00 ] Because without land you couldn't live. At best you'd become a slave to survive. In fact, the law given through Moses carefully safeguarded a person's land. In the covenant with Israel, God himself allotted the land to the people.

It was meant to be a sign of their participation in the covenant community. That's why the land is called an inheritance at the end of verse 2. Now many modern commentators will say this oppression happened quite by accident.

You know, the poor defaulted on their loans, and the wealthy are just merely repossessing the land. Look, a deal's a deal. The explanation goes that wealthy aren't considering the needs of the poor. But this is far more sinister and darker.

It's stunning to see how similar this is to the Trail of Tears. A dark chapter of history in America, when gold was found on Cherokee land. Many in America began to covet the land and then forcibly seize the land through laws that were passed.

The land grabbing forced the Cherokee people to start on a trail where they cried tears. And many people, including women and children, were left on the side of the road to die of disease and starvation.

[ 9 : 06 ] And many Christian missionaries opposed such action, but sadly enough, church folk were involved in the land grabbing. And that's similar to what's happening here. Look at the verbs Micah uses in verses 1 to 2. Devise, covet, seize, take, oppress.

This was a Trail of Tears tragedy for the people of God. And this was no accident. In fact, verse 1, God sees the secret, wicked plans made in the bedroom. He knows what you click on when you're by yourself in the bedroom.

And this is a willful, calculated, premeditated, flagrant disobedience. Standing in the courtroom, the divine judge of the earth sees malice aforethought in their hearts. And this all began in rural villages away from the city center.

Why there? Well, that's because no one could hear their screams. Their desperate pleas for help fell on deaf ears. Except for one person. The divine judge heard their cries.

Well, how did they do this? Well, probably several ways. Micah 6 mentions dishonest scales and measures in transactions. Or they could have extorted people to make those transactions in the first place.

[10:08] With a threat of violence. Full on Godfather, let me make you an offer you can't refuse. Either way, this is not a chance, but a conspiracy. What verse 1 calls devising wickedness.

You know, the scripture consistently will say God has a particular care and concern for the poor. And our treatment of the poor is a proxy for how we treat God himself. Proverbs says, he who insults the poor insults his maker.

But here, their creed was, might makes right. The stronger in society, preyed on the weak. Look at the end of verse 1. It's in the power of their hands. Meaning they have the authority to do what they want, when they want.

Even if it meant grinding women and children into poverty. Forcing them from their homes. As it says in verse 9. God's so-called people were brazenly defrauding out in the open. But like a good police detective show, the crimes are much broader than you would expect.

The end of verse 1 hints at Israel's corrupt legal system. This will become plain in the next chapter.

The end of verse 1 says, When the morning dawns, they perform it.

[11:12] God is true and just each morning. And the morning was when the courts opened to hear the pleas of the plaintiffs. Bringing their petitions, the farmers expected justice. But instead they found fraud. Flagrantly disobeying God, these banana courts rubber-stamped the eviction notices.

In the next chapter, Micah denounces the judges because they were taking bribes. These judges were in the wealthy landowners' back pockets. Even the light is as darkness here. And people talk about the wrath of God saying, What kind of God is like that?

In a world like ours, it would shock us if God is not angry. The idea that every human being has equal dignity and worth, treated equally under the law, is and always will be revolutionary.

God calls for complete impartiality. Equal protection under the law. Leviticus 19 would say, You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

God warns about partiality either for the poor or against the poor. Friend, there is nothing more insidious than a judge taking a bribe. It writhens everything it touches.

[12:23] Unlike us, God is no respecter of person. He does not take a bribe. No matter wealth, ethnicity, or position in society, the law must be applied equally to the small and great, rich or the poor.

In a real way, Micah is saying, The crowd is going to do what the crowd does. But as for you, Judah, you are supposed to be different. Yet you assault and make war on each other. Verse 8, Like enemies, you tear clothes off each other.

God's people have become bullies and thugs. At the end of verse 11, The land had become a heap of trash. And God is now dwelling in a garbage dump. God's name was being dishonored.

And Judah's public witness to the nations wasn't that God was on the throne. But it appeared that Satan was on the throne. Professing faith in God, they lived like devils. The primary application of this text is not to modern nations.

It's to the church. But it's still a warning to anyone who would mistreat the poor. Is it any different in our day? Ponzi schemes, consumer fraud? Landlords who terrorize tenants to break their lease because they covet a higher paying one?

[13:27] God will inflict vengeance. Some of you are thinking, Wow, this is really terrible. This has nothing to do with me. I'm not in the NBA program. On Wall Street. I'm not a CEO.

I'm not a judge. How am I supposed to make sense of all this? Well, look with me at the heart that was behind the grinding the people into poverty. The problem wasn't money, power, or engaging in

business.

But God, like an MRI machine, sees directly into their hearts. In the beginning of verse 2. The heart problem driving the bus was coveting. God sees the secret intentions of the heart. Greed is a central driving force behind their lives.

Dark hearts of idolatry lead to distorted desires. An insatiable lust after things besides God. 1 Timothy 6 verse 10. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evils.

Jesus would say, You cannot serve two masters, God and money. You and I covet something. It's either the creator or something created.

[14:24] The psalmist in Psalm 19 said, He desires God's word. And that's the same word for covet. The psalmist is saying, God's word is to be coveted more than gold. Even much fine gold.

Sweeter than honey. How do we determine if our desires are good or bad? Well, John Piper counsels to ask yourself, What does it do with your desire for God? One red light on the dashboard of your soul that you are coveting is whether you feel discontent in your life.

That God has not given you enough. Compared to God's infinite worth, everything else should be trinkets and bobbleheads. Friend, what do you covet more than God? We covet many things, and then we justify them.

In our modern culture, we label those desires as our true authentic self. But these desires often are wolves in sheep's clothing. Thomas Brooks once said, Sin is no less vile because it is colored and painted with virtue's colors.

I'll repeat that. Sin is no less vile because it is colored and painted with virtue's colors. We begin to justify in our heart that it's not even a sin. Look, I know that's not my spouse, but that person understands me.

[15:34] Doesn't God want me to be happy? We will sometimes say, even our concern for justice, that's not fair. What we really mean is, I'm entitled to have what they have.

Why not me? Some of you have told me that coveting can take the feeling of needing affirmation in the church or in your work. For people to notice you, to feel and be told that you're needed.

Friend, ask yourself, do you covet positions of leadership? In the church, because you want to serve others or because you want to be seen by others? Friend, do not be deceived. Do not make your peace with sin.

Sin tricks us. Coveting is a greenhouse for heinous sins to grow in your life, in my life. One person has summarized these verses this way. First comes coveting, then scheming, then devising wicked plans, and then you leave wreckage behind you.

Does that sound familiar? Here. But this text also has something to say about those who have been on the receiving end of sin in the church. The same attitude of showing partiality infected the churches in James' day.

[16:39] In Corinth, Paul said the rich excluded the poor at the table of the Lord's Supper. Have you been denied a participation in the body of Christ? Have you been excluded? Has your experience of church been a trail of tears?

Well, it is a tragedy if you have been excluded. But know that God sees your sufferings, your afflictions, and God knows. He sees and He cares. He will make things right.

But I also want to give a warning. Do not covet spiritual gifts or positions where you think people will notice you, especially if it's contrary to God's word. True greatness is not when we receive glory from others, but serving others through the glory of God.

And people talk about the wrong side of history. Being on the wrong side of history is being at enmity with God. And that leads us to point number two. Point number one was the punishment. Point number one was the problem. Now it's the punishment. Let's read verse three again.

Therefore, thus says the Lord, behold, against this family I am devising disaster from which you cannot remove your necks.

[17:44] And you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of disaster. The party is over. God is burning with anger. He is furious. God has drawn a line saying, you've come this far, you may go no further.

God has stored up His anger, and the dam is about to break. And what's scary about all of this is God is not losing control at all. This is exactly what God promises to do in the futility curses in the Mosaic Covenant.

The people said, we are God's special people. No judgment will befall us. God responds, yes, you are part of Israel, my special people, and that's exactly why I'm going to punish you. Verses three to five mirrors verses one to two.

The accused who are devising evil in verse one, while God is now scheming disaster upon them in verse three, He will break the people of Judah. He will break them both physically and emotionally. They have sown the wind, and now will they reap the whirlwinds. God can break oppression, and sometimes it's changing the heart of the tyrannizers, like the Apostle Paul, but sometimes it is to rending hellfire and judgment upon the wicked.

[ 18 : 47 ] You seek to cut off the poor, God will not only cut you off, He will cut you down. You will be left with nothing. All your coveting, scheming, it will come back on your own head. Building a name for yourself, you'll be a byword in verse four.

Ridiculed. It will bring derision, mocking. It will bring pain. Like the victims, they will moan and weep bitterly. Might makes right. Okay, now God promises temporal judgment from the Assyrians, who were known for their brutality and strength.

The teenage bully must now contend with Mike Tyson in the boxing ring, and God will not be with them. And there's no way you're going to win that fight. The Assyrians would swiftly pounce, sweeping them away in 722 BC.

And Micah declares in verse four, outsiders, non-believers, apostates, will take all the land away. They will be stripped of all that they have lusted after. And this lightning storm of temporal judgment did in fact come.

They got a taste of it from the Assyrian invasion. Assyria marched southward and plundered the people. And 2 Kings 18 says, the people escaped by the skin of their teeth under King Hezekiah. But then they continued in the disobedience for another hundred years.

[ 19 : 51 ] And eventually, after much patience, God sent the Babylonian army to raise Judah to the ground. But there is not only a temporary judgment, there is also an eternal one in verse five. In verse five, the oppressors of Judah will be cut off from the eternal inheritance.

When God gathers His people, the assembly, the ecclesia, which is translated as church, when the true church is gathered before that throne of judgment on that final day, apportioning an inheritance, there will be no one to apportion any inheritance for them.

Like the rich man in the parable, death will be the great reverser. God will throw them in hell. Imagine the eulogy at their funeral. The eulogist stands up saying, this person was great in business, entrepreneur, self-made, church member, Sunday school teacher.

But what does the profit of man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? Will you care if you had a nice eulogy at your funeral when God has pronounced an eternal woe over you, thrown into hell forever? Jesus said, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.

Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Friend, in a room this size, I can't help but think that some of us may be self-deceived. Perhaps some of you will run speedily into hell, all the while having full confidence that you are going to heaven.

[ 21 : 11 ] You know, sin is a slippery slope. Outside of Christ, you are exposed to sudden and unexpected slipping into the dark abyss of judgment. John Bunyan was once startled with a thought, will you leave your sins and go to heaven, or have your sins and go to hell?

I ask that to you this morning. You must let go of your sins if you are to take hold of Christ. Jesus would say, on that day, when God apportions the inheritance, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?

Cast out demons in your name. Do mighty works in your name. And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

I know none of us want to hear those words. Depart from me. Let me exhort you to examine yourselves. As Paul instructs in 2 Corinthians 13, one of the traps is thinking outward appearances are a sign of God's grace in a person's life.

That is not so. Life is not a video game where if you fall into a trap, you can just hit the reset button. Sooner or later, those who persist in suppressing the truth about God will be given over to judgment.

[ 22 : 17 ] And if you are here and you are not a Christian, it is by mercy alone that you sit here to hear God's word this morning. Wealth and success and promotions are no sign of God's favor in your life. Death is a great reverser of fortunes.

It is a sad thing for you to have your portion in this world. You might say, Tyler, this is really depressing. My response is, it's the truth. The Lord Jesus did all things well. And he spoke more about hell than he did about heaven. He spoke more clearly about hell than all the Old Testament. But we're not done. Point number one was the problem. Point number two is the punishment.

And point number three are the false prophets. Like a good police detective show, the camera now looks inside to see what's happening inside churches or synagogues. Here we see sheep, but if you look a little closer, you'll notice they are wolves clad in sheep's clothing.

Satan appears as an angel of light. Let's read verses six to 11 together. Do not preach, thus they preach. What should not preach of such things? Disgrace will not overtake us.

[ 23 : 19 ] Shall this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly. But lately, my people have risen up as an enemy.

You strip the rich robe from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war. The woman of my people, you drive out from their delightful houses. From their young children, you take away my splendor forever.

Arise and go, for this is no place to rest. Because of uncleanness, that destroys with a grievous destruction. If a man should go about in utter wind and lies, saying, I will preach to you of wine and strong drink, he will be the preacher for this people.

They were living their best life now. They were naming it and claiming it, their health and wealth. Do not preach of such harsh things. Micah, stop preaching against sin.

Give us smooth things, positive and encouraging messages. Tell us how God's plan is for us to be successful. Jeremiah says, the prophets prophesy falsely.

[ 24 : 17 ] And here's the worst part. My people love to have it so. Micah ridicules the people in verse 11. If a man should go about in utter wind and lies, preaching of wine and strong drink, he would be a preacher for this people.

The people bear responsibility for their false teachers. And these false prophets had a cheap knockoff counterfeit theology that focused exclusively on God's love.

A fake Rolex watch that falls apart the moment you get home. Verse seven, God quotes the false prophets. Should this be said, O house of Jacob, has the Lord grown impatient?

Are these his deeds? In other words, the false prophets were saying, is it ever appropriate appropriate to talk about God's anger or him growing impatient? Probably based on Exodus 34.

The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. These peddlers of God's word are writing books called love wins. I mean, God's love and mercy are so wide.

[ 25 : 19 ] Are we limiting God's love to say he could ever grow impatient? Like in the garden, they preach, Judah, you will not surely die. Disgrace will not overtake us.

Now the first doctrine that Satan denied in the garden is the reality of eternal judgment. These smooth shepherds were followers of the serpent. In the end, these prosperity preachers are likewise twisting the scriptures.

On the contrary, God responds to them in verse seven. God's word does do good, but to those who walk uprightly. The false prophets were preaching a half truth.

The whole truth is that God does do good to those who turn from their sin and walk uprightly. This isn't about merit, but meekness. Committing your life to him, you're all upon him.

And this is the message of Micah. God is in the light, so we must walk in the light. It is not knowledge about God. We must truly know God and walk with him in humility.

[ 26 : 21 ] You can memorize the entire Bible word from word and be no better off and die in your sin. Rather, it is true knowledge of God to do what is right, trusting in God.

It is the meek who will inherit the earth. It is those who walk in the light that are truly God's people. Not merit, but meekness.

If you are here and you are a spiritual leader at home in the church, meeting with other Christians for better or worse, what you teach, what we teach, greatly influences the people around us. Do not be content with teaching half-truth to the people of God.

Every one of you who teaches will give an account. By God's grace, we must be men and women full of grace and truth. To tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

But our half-truth is not the practice of our day and age. Christian hip-hop artist, Shia Lin, summarizes this entire section in his song, False Teachers, and he says it well.

[ 27 : 22 ] You want to know what all false teachers have in common? It's called selfism. The fastest growing religion, they just dress it up and call it Christian. Don't be deceived by this funny biz. If you come to Jesus for money, he's not your God.

Money is. Jesus is not a means to an end. The gospel is he came to redeem us from sin. And that is the message forever I'll yell. If you're living your best life now, you're headed for hell. Beware of sheep with sharp teeth.

Beware of teachers in the church who care more about what you think than what God thinks. In fact, in Galatians, Paul lays the responsibility for false teachers at the feet of the members of the congregation. If you are a member here, you have a responsibility.

If you hear from this pulpit that God wants you to be a millionaire, take your hat and your purse and run for the nearest exit. Do you realize that the reason false teachers can teach false things is because they have congregations that support them?

Those who sit under false teaching are under God's judgment just as much as the teachers are. And we see the nature of humanity so far. Dead in sin. Total depravity. Even the preachers are following the serpents.

[ 28 : 30 ] Prisoners. There is none righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. Minds are corrupted. Mouths are full of deceit. And feet are swift to shed blood.

But judgment will not be the final word. The next section is the promise. This is Micah's but God moment in this chapter. God is rich in mercy in verses 12 to 13.

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob. I will gather the remnant of Israel. I will set them together like sheep in a fold. Like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.

He who opens up the breach goes up before them. They pass through and pass the gate. They break through and pass the gate going out by it. Their king passes on before them the Lord at their head. The speaker changes and now the Lord is speaking to Micah.

And this section is like being in a dark tunnel and instantly you're in light. Micah sees such a clear vision of God's mercy. And the transition is so stark. It's disorienting at first.

[ 29 : 32 ] God seems to say the opposite in verse 12 as he does in verse 5. God declares, I will surely assemble all of you the remnant of Israel. And many commentators are fumbling on what to make of this gathering.

Surely it must be a gathering of judgment. No, but it's a gathering of the remnant. The true people of God. God says, I will surely do this. God is certainly going to do the work.

And this mercy will be when he sends a king. A protector. A shepherd who will gather his sheep and assemble them. Everywhere God sees greed, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness.

Widespread idolatry. So what does he do? God promises mercy and grace. The very people whom God says he will judge, he will now come to save.

How does that make sense? This is sovereign grace. If you know the character of this, God makes complete sense. It's unexpected. It doesn't logically follow from what we have deserved.

[ 30 : 33 ] Humans make a mess of things and God shows mercy. It's in the intervention of God himself in this dark world that is our hope. And there is hope for the victim and the victimizer. To all of you in verse 12 it's going to include even some of those whom God has pronounced judgment over.

His mercy is wide. Even the worst sinner can be forgiven. And that is a testimony of every Christian. We deserve wrath but God has shown us mercy. And we see sinners are not only lost sheep that need a shepherd but in verse 13 we see sinners are captives that need to be set free.

We're not only lost but we're slaves. Slaves to sin chained to evil. And this shepherd king will lead the prisoners out breaking through the gate to set them free. Like the cloudy pillar guiding Israel through the wilderness God will go before them and set them free from slavery.

The picture is the king is at their head a victorious captain. The leader and commander of the people. And the Lord Jesus is the king who will lead his people into freedom. From the greatest enemy. The enemy within.

We heard last week the enemy was of sin and transgression provoking God's wrath. That was a problem. And the good news of the gospel is that God is our creator.

[ 31 : 42 ] Because of that he has authority over us. Our sins provoke God's just anger and condemnation. It would not be unjust for God to send humanity into the sewer. For that is what you and I have deserved.

But God is rich in mercy. While we were still enemies God's being rich in mercy he sends his own son Jesus. Fully God and fully man to rescue us.

He sends him as a servant. He fully obeys his father. He comes as the remnant. The faithful one in the midst of mass apostasy. He walks a trail of tears.

He goes to the cross to bring life. He leads his people out of slavery by dying. And the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Taking on the wrath of God for all who had returned from their sin and put their trust in him alone.

And on the third day he rose again. And his resurrection is where he opens up the breach in verse 13. When he came out of the grave he is the strong champion that breaks the iron gates of our prison cell.

[ 32 : 43 ] He breaks the yoke of slavery. He breaks the power of sin. He sets the captive free. He breaks the power of the grave. He breaks the power of hell. He breaks the veil that separated a holy God and sinners.

And he breaks the dividing wall of hostility between Christians. And one day he will wipe away even the very presence of sin. And one day he brings all of his people together.

The end of verse 12 says when he gathers there will be a noisy multitude. They are celebrating, shouting, rejoicing. God will wipe away every tear and heaven will be one big party as we give thanks and praise to God.

He is a holy God that delights in steadfast love and mercy. Is there a God like this? There is none but him. Money will not save you on that final day.

Only Christ can do that. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we pray that you, we would turn from our sin and trust in you.

[ 33 : 46 ] the broad way is tempting but we pray we would be people of the narrow way. Would we walk uprightly with you?

Walking in the light as you are in the light. Oh God, have mercy on us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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