

"Phineas' Zeal"

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[0:00] Good morning. Can you hear me? Okay. Good morning all. My name is Kunle, and for those of you who don't know me, I'm one of the elders here at Trinity. Some of you here already know me, and know me enough to know a few things that I like, but I'm guessing only very few of you know just how much I love watching murder mysteries.

There's a reason you don't really know this. This is clearly not the kind of information that one volunteers during the eldership process, so again, it's no mystery that it is a mystery to some of you, but now at least you all know.

But if you have watched as many of these mysteries as I have, then you know that there is a general formula that most of them follow. Often the opening act is the hook, a single puzzling scene or short series of scenes that ultimately culminates in the murder of one of the people present. And over the course of the episode, you are slowly fed information and disinformation about several characters and their motivation that helped illuminate what happened in the opening scene that led to the crime.

Often a few additional murders and a lot more mixed information later, and you end at the closing scene where for some strange reason, all the suspects gather together and the detective brings all the pieces together, usually in a way compelling enough to make the murderer confess or at least make it readily obvious who they are and what their motivation is.

[1:37] A particular example of this is one by one of the most famous mystery writers, her name is Agatha Christie, and it's called Why Didn't They Ask Evans?

Where in the opening scene, depending on the version you've watched, a lady comes across a man on the beach who looks as if he's fallen off the nearby cliff. As she approaches, he opens his eyes, turns to her, and instead of asking for help, says in a melodramatic whisper, Why didn't they ask Evans?

And then just as dramatically, he dies. And then this leaves the discoverer with the question, as well as you the viewer, who is Evans?

Who are they? And what question were they asking? And why didn't they ask Evans? And of course, why is that the most important question for this dying man?

Okay, I know at this point, some of you, your question is not, wait, is this a sermon or is this an ad for BritBox, which contains most of these British murder series that I like?

[2:45] Why are we talking about murder mysteries? Well, perhaps it's because the passage that we're about to look at, I think, shares a number of the same hallmarks. At first read, it is deeply enigmatic, and in a few areas, it is partly troubling.

But my hope is that as we go through it together with the Lord's help, its message for them and thus for us will become clearer in a way that drives us to the Lord in confession, prayer, and praise.

But before I get into it, I recognize we are in August in a college town. And so today, and as you all know, over the next several weeks, we'll have people visiting. So I think it may be worth recapping where we've been for context on today's passage.

So for those of you who are new this summer, we've been journeying through the book of Numbers. And it's a book that traces the journey of the Israelites from the fruit of Sinai to the mouth of the promised land as they stand ready to take possession of it.

Along the way, we have seen them rebel, grumble, and complain repeatedly against God and against Moses. And several times, they have been judged or punished for their rebellion.

[3:57] Their rebellion is recorded in, their rebellion recorded in Numbers 14 was a high watermark and resulted in God judging them, decreeing that they will wander 40 years in the wilderness, and all of them older than 20, save Joshua and Caleb, will perish and not see the land.

Where we are now in the narrative is the 40 years are done, and they are once again at the mouth of the promised land. They have even already begun to experience some of what God had in store for them with victories over the Amalekites and the Amorites.

These victories had already begun to inspire fear in the hearts of the enemies. And the last two weeks, we explored the interesting story of one of them, Balak, the king of the Moabites, who in his fear invited Balaam, an acclaimed prophet for hire, to curse them.

And as we discovered, he was unable to. Three times, he was commanded by God to bless them instead, frustrating Balak's aims. We leave Israel now at the end of the chapter, securing the promise of God's faithfulness and desire to bless them and bring them into the land.

We also leave Balak and Balaam at the end of chapter 24, parting ways as though Balaam, having fulfilled what God sent him to do in chapter 22, was content to eschew the rewards of Balak and obey the Lord instead.

[5:22] So with that, I'll read chapter 25 and ask the Lord for his help in unpacking it for us. Because there is some continuity with the prior passages we have looked at, I will actually begin slightly earlier at the end of chapter 24 and read up to verse 15.

So let's begin from verse 25 of Numbers 24. Then Balaam rose and went back to his place, and Balak also went his way.

And while Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said to Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the Lord, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.

And Moses said to the judges of Israel, Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor. And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

[6:51] When Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced the both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly.

Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were 24,000. And the Lord said to Moses, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.

Therefore say, behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.

The name of the slain man of Israel, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, chief of a father's house belonging to the Simeonites.

And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cosby, the daughter of Zer, who was the tribal head of a father's house in Midian. I will stop here.

[8:11] Bow your heads with me and let us pray. Lord, your word says, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives willingly without finding fault.

We come to your word today. May you illuminate it before us. May we see where this passage reflects our hearts, and may it lead us to turn to you in repentance.

And may we see where it reflects you, your holiness, justice, mercy, and grace. And may it lead us to prayer and praise.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right. So in keeping with the mystery motif, this passage presents not just one, but multiple mysteries.

A mini-series, if you will. But thankfully, I love British mysteries, so their series are typically short, like three or four episodes. I was thinking, what if I loved Law and Order? We will be here the whole day.

[9:18] So for those of you taking notes, we will examine this passage in three broad mysteries. First, the mystery of Israel's apostasy. Then, the mystery of God's anger.

And finally, we will look at the mystery of Phineas' intervention. So let's begin with Israel's apostasy. On the surface, it doesn't look mysterious at all.

Like I mentioned in the summary I gave earlier, we've seen them rebel multiple times against the Lord. So rebelling against the Lord's commandments this time feels like yet one more dog-bites-man story.

The passage also highlights that the apostasy began with their men committing sexual immorality with the Midianite women, and then progressing ultimately to bowing down to their idols.

And here again, we see a story quite familiar to us as well. As a pastor once remarked, you talk to a young man who seems to be experiencing serious doubts as he all of a sudden begins to question the fundamentals of the faith.

[10 : 23] And more often than you'd want, you realize there is no grander mystery behind it than a desire to sleep with or moving with his girlfriend. There is often very little distance between persistent, willful sin and apostasy.

But in this case, the mystery of the apostasy of the Israelites goes a bit deeper, especially when you realize that chapter 25, rather than starting a new act in the story of the Israelites, is instead a continuation of chapters 22 to 24 of their interaction with Balaam.

Like a good mystery writer who doesn't reveal all the clues at once, we only discover later in chapter 31 that it was Balaam who spearheaded the seduction of the Israelites with the Moabite women.

Now we get to understand why Balaam was so desired by Balak in this endeavor and why he earned the big bucks as a prophet for hire. He combined spiritual dark arts with deep, dark cunning. Rather than going away, as it seemed at the end of chapter 24, fully in awe of the God of the Israelites, he chose instead to co-opt them.

[11 : 38] Perhaps he may have told Balak, if we can't curse them, we can bring them under the power of our own God by luring them to worship him instead, thus making them subject to him.

Or even worse, he may have come to understand that given the covenant they had with their God, the only way they could fail in their quest on the promised land was if they broke the covenant they had with him, their God.

There is a lesson here for us as the body of Christ. Jesus said to his disciples that he will build his church and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. In the unward march of the kingdom of God, supernatural forces are no match for the power of the resurrected Lord Jesus that goes with his church.

The enemy knows this and instead aims to use insidious means to attack the body. More churches have been broken by jealousy, division, and sin than by any supernatural act of evil.

And this passage is a reminder to beware. But the author is not done. He also records that this seduction happened in a place called Shittim, which is short for Abel Shittim, which was his full name, as we discover later in chapter 33.

[12 : 57] Shittim was the word for acacia, or the acacia tree, a precious wood that came to be used for much of the temple's furnishing. Abel Shittim in turn means stream of acacias, suggesting that the place they encamped was a luscious, wooded, forested place in stark contrast to the desert that they had been journeying through over the past several years.

Now the outline of their seduction comes into much clearer focus. After a long trek, 40 years in the wilderness, they come to this luscious oasis where they are met with people who look beautiful, well, and prosperous, enjoying pleasures they had been forbidden by the laws of their God.

Slowly they are enticed. Perhaps the people tell them, your God was only a God of the desert. His power does not extend here. Perhaps that's why you spent so long in the desert.

He couldn't actually bring you into this land. You are not in Kansas anymore. To prosper in this land, you need to ditch those desert ways and be like us, the sophisticated ones.

Do we not see ourselves reflected in this, brothers and sisters? As I mentioned earlier, I suspect many of you new folks are settling into New Haven from near and far as you begin a new chapter of your education or your career.

[14 : 28] Some of you have come from backgrounds steeply rooted in faith in Jesus. And this is your first time in a culture quite alien to that. You thought you believed in God as the only path to life, to the life you aspire to live, and had seen this belief reinforced by the community and family you grew up in, only to come to the city and find many who do not similarly believe and yet sin to be living that same life.

And this begins to plunge you into crisis. This, by the way, is not just a test for the newly arrived or the newly believing. The psalmist in Psalm 73 also found himself seduced by the prosperity of the wicked.

It was only when he returned to the house of the Lord that his perspective got reset and was able to acknowledge the blessedness of faith in God. Dear brother and sister, therein lies the antidote.

Should the culture around you tempt you to forsake the way? Don't attempt to journey alone. Find a community of faith where, like the psalmist, you can again discover perspective in the presence of the Lord.

The story now quickly moves on to the second act and mystery, which is that of God's anger. Again, like the... ..people, more than any of the plagues before where the number of those who died was recorded.

[16:03] And for emphasis, and this we discover in the 1 Corinthians 10 passage that was read earlier, essentially all these people died in a single day. This was a little over 1% of the population.

To put this proportionally in our context today, it's as though a virus was announced in the U.S. one morning and the next day, the entire population of Connecticut was dead.

Secondly, the atonement God demanded was equally severe. That was that all the leaders of the people be hung and impaled for all to see. As far as I can recall, this punishment was never issued again in Israel.

Most people were put to death by stoning. This is especially significant as we recognize that in this culture, being impaled or hung on a tree was a visible sign of God's curse, as it says in Deuteronomy 21.

And that God commanded people who died to be buried quickly that they may not defile the land. So why this level of anger from the Lord?

[17:11] Well, we see it more clearly later in the narrative when God commends Phineas for his actions. This is a point we will return to in a little bit. But God commends Phineas for being jealous with his jealousy so that the Israelites were not consumed by God's rage.

We see now the anger was thus qualitatively different from the other incidents because it was not just a response to rebellion, but an anger provoked by jealousy.

But why jealousy? What's going on? As we read scripture, we come to see that of the many typologies that characterize God's relationship with his chosen people, one of the most dominant ones was that of marriage, with his people being the bride and he their husband.

Several passages allude to this. For example, Isaiah 54, where God calls himself their maker and husband. In Ezekiel 16 and 23, where God describes their relationship as one in which he found and nurtured Israel and married her when she came of age.

In Jeremiah 3 and 31, where he describes, like here, the violation of their covenant in marriage terms. This event, then, in Numbers 25, is in many ways the archetypal example of unfaithfulness.

[18:32] It is also the first time we meet the Canaanite deity, Baal, that will become the one with which they will repeatedly become unfaithful to their maker and husband, the Lord their God, throughout their time in the Promised Land.

This unfaithfulness is actually further highlighted in an interesting pun on the name of the deity itself. In Hebrew, the verb form of the word for Baal is also the root for the word to marry, with the word in other contexts actually meaning husband.

The word for yoke, used earlier when it says, Israel yoked itself with Baal, Peor, is also a word with sexual undertones behind it.

The mystery of God's anger at the event at Peor now becomes fully evident. Their sin of sexual immorality and idolatry is an exact picture of their spiritual state.

Adultery against the Lord, their husband, with another who wants to take his place. And the rage of God is the response of a jilted lover who finds the wife of his youth in bed with another.

[19:43] Hearing again lies another lesson for us, brothers and sisters. What often feels like trivial sin in our eyes is nothing less than idolatry and spiritual adultery in the eyes of the Lord deserving his wrath.

No wonder he beseeches like he did in Ezekiel 33 to turn back, to turn back from your evil ways for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Do you sense the Lord's call to repent today? Turn, brother. Turn, sister. before it's too late. The series now pivots to the final episode, which is a mystery of Phineas' intervention and atonement,

which, to adapt the famous Churchillian phrase, feels like a riddle wrapped around an enigma. But this time, hopefully the author has convinced you that there is often an underlying clarity to the story, which we will soon see. Let's start with the enigma. After God gives the command, we find the congregation lamenting before the tabernacle, presumably in sorrow over the command God had given.

The couple find out their names as Zimri and Cosby. They then walk in full view of everyone into a tent to commit their immoral act. This, again, is really quite puzzling.

[21 : 08] Wouldn't they, or at least Zimri, if not Cosby, have been aware of the command issued by God for the execution of all those who were involved in immorality with the Midianites?

Otherwise, why did they think people were weeping in front of the tabernacle? And if they were aware, why did they choose to be so brazen? One possibility was that Zimri was so confident in his position and his authority that he thought no one would dare execute him for his sin.

Remember, he was the son of one of the chiefs of the Simeonites. So perhaps, like those in authority, they think they are above the law. However, this doesn't seem satisfactory, especially as we know Moses enjoyed such unrivaled authority among the people since the events of the rebellion of Korah.

Unless, of course, this was no mere immoral act and there was more to it than meets the eye. To see this, again, it is helpful to know that the worship of Baal as a fertility god often involved sex with priestesses or prostitutes.

Hence, again, we see the intertwining of immorality and idolatry in the opening verses of the chapter. These acts occurred in the place of worship, often in a sacred tent where the priestesses dwelt.

[22 : 26] In that light, it may be easier to see the public nature of the act of Zimri and Cosby as representing the formal consummation of the yoking of Israel with Baal of Peor through a fertility rite performed in a tent for Baal's worship by a representative of the Israelites, which was the son of the leading house, and a representative of the Midianites, which was Cosby, who we learn, again, from the passage, was the daughter of one of the kings of Midian.

So now, what had begun as individual sins is now about to be formally ratified by representatives of the people? While there is some debate as to whether the tent where this act happened was actually the tent of meeting in front of which the people were lamenting, it's more likely that it happened in another tent, but another tent, no doubt, that was close to it, occupying a central position in the camp similar to the tabernacle.

You can imagine, perhaps, in Zimri and Cosby's telling, the plague, rather than being a punishment from God, maybe it was a result of them not officially rejecting God for bail.

Maybe the plague came from bail, and then they needed to do this act of public consummation to declare their allegiance to him, and thus, in their twisted view, attempt to stop the plague.

I think it is the recognition of this supreme act of public defiance that causes Phineas to rise and walk into the tent and spear them both, most likely in the course of the act of consummation itself, given the way the author coyly describes the event.

[24 : 19] But anger alone does not justify an action. Remember the apostle who caught up the ear of those who came to arrest Jesus, presumably in his defense, and was still rebuked by Jesus.

So here comes the riddle in our puzzle trifecta. Was Phineas justified in executing them, or was it a vigilante action that just happened to be ex-post justified by God?

A few things in the passage say otherwise. First, the decree had already been given by God that the leaders of the people involved in immorality with the Midianites should be executed. With God as the Supreme Court and the lawgiver, there was already a legal basis for his action.

Second, the leaders of Israel were meant to do the execution. And as high priest in waiting, Phineas surely was also a leader and thus had the authority to carry out this act.

Even more specifically, the act occurred like I described earlier in the vicinity of the temple which the priests and Levites were meant to guard and prevent the Israelites from defiling them as God commands and as Pastor Matt taught us in Numbers 18 several weeks ago.

[25 : 34] Thus, Phineas in this act was also doing his duty of keeping the temple from being defiled or the tabernacle from being defiled. And finally, as I noted earlier, after God commands Moses to execute the leaders of the people, presumably the leaders of the people caught in the sin, we find the people lamenting the judgment that God had issued instead of carrying it out.

But while they are lamenting this command, what do you think is happening in the meantime? People are dying in the camp. Remember, the plague had broken out and only stopped after the intervention of Phineas.

Thus, in the period while they were lamenting, people kept dying. Contrast Moses' response here with the reaction in Numbers 16 when the plague broke out after the people's rebellion from the incident of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

Moses and Aaron responded instantly. Aaron took incense from the altar and stood between the people and the plague, which stopped when he did so. The Bible recorded that at that time, 14,700 people died.

No doubt, the quick response of Moses and Aaron saved more lives. Phineas' response is thus further commendable as he stayed for the deaths.

[27 : 04] One lesson for us here is that sorrow, weeping, and wailing is no substitute for atonement or action when God's justice or commands are at stake.

This was true then and is true for us even today. There is a further lesson for those called to be leaders, especially leaders of God's people.

When we fail to act in judgment in the face of sin and wrongdoing, there is danger for the people we lead. And we know this from the recent scandals and crisis in the church that we have experienced or seen in our world today.

Thus, the series concludes with the mysteries of the chapters resolved. So it seems. Israel is seduced to idolatry with bail through sexual immorality.

God, in his jealousy for his people, judges them with a plague. And Phineas, in his role as priest and judge, atones for God's people by executing their representative sinners.

[28 : 10] Plague is stopped. The end. Or is it? As you know, a hallmark of the best murder mysteries is where you get to the conclusion and realize that the puzzles you have been working through themselves mask a deeper mystery that brings them together.

This is not a murder mystery, but as many of you know, I love the Lego movie. And near the end of the original Lego movie, you realize that all you have been watching points to a more fundamental story.

I don't want to give it away. It's such a great movie. You should watch it if you haven't watched it. But such is it with this chapter. This individual mysteries together form the outline of a grander mystery, the threads of which we find the author has been pulling on as the Israelites journey through the wilderness.

This grander mystery is that of God's grace in his relationship to his chosen people. For here at the foothills of the promised land, in the depth of their apostasy, the generation of Israelites about to take possession of the land are confronted with the reality that this possession was not due to their worth.

Anyone who thought the earlier rebellions in the desert to be due to the particular wickedness of the hearts of those who left Egypt was quickly disabused of that notion by the events at Peor.

[29 : 38] As several commentators I read spent time highlighting how the apostasy of the second generation at the foot of the promised land mirrored that of their parents' generation at the foot of Sinai.

It's no wonder then in his farewell speech in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses reminds them that the Lord did not choose them because they were special, but because he loved them and kept the oath he swore to their forefathers that he brought them out of slavery in Egypt.

Their choice as his chosen people was a choice of grace and not one based on their works.

Connected to this is the second aspect of this mystery of God's grace.

How does a righteous and holy God dwell among sinful people without destroying them because of their sin and rebellion? And here again, the answer resounds as it has been across the book by providing for them a mediator who is able to stand between them and his wrath and make atonement for them.

We thus see that Phineas' action does not stand as an isolated incident, but continues the long line of atonement that has repeatedly saved the Israelites from destruction throughout their journey in the wilderness.

[30 : 53] A line that runs from Moses at Sinai and at Kadesh Paneah to Aaron at the rebellion of Korah and now to the atonement of Shittim. It is particularly poignant because with Aaron dead and Moses about to die, the Israelites may have begun to wonder who indeed will be there to stand in

the gap for them as the Lord showed.

And the Lord showed, I should say, both in the action of Phineas and the promise of an everlasting priesthood that he gave to Phineas after this action, that he would always provide that mediator. Alas, however, this provision, as we all know, will fall short. And it is this recognition, is in this recognition that the deep resonance we have seen repeatedly with the book of Hebrews as we have journeyed through the numbers, the book of numbers comes to light.

For all its grace, the old covenant and its associated priesthood was limited in its ability to fully mediate the relationship between a sinful people and a holy God.

First, because the problem, as we now see with the Israelites, was not the law or not with a particular generation, but with their hearts.

[32:11] As Hebrews 8 reminds us, quoting Jeremiah 31, for if there had been nothing with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault not with the covenant, but with the people.

And he said, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt because they did not remain faithful to my covenant and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

Even when they had good mediators like Phineas, like Moses, like Aaron, those mediators were limited by their finiteness. As you come to see here and the rest of the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Judges, their relationship with God was repeatedly characterized by a cycle of sin and apostasy met with God's judgment.

God, in His kindness, raises a mediator or judge to intercede for them and deliver them. They keep to His ways while the judge is still alive and they return to apostasy after the judge or mediator dies, beginning the cycle all over again.

This is like another movie I really like, Edge of Tomorrow, where the cycle repeats over and over and over. So how does a holy God who loves His people fix this?

[33:41] He does this by establishing a new covenant that does not just address the rebellious behavior but changes the heart. And this new covenant is mediated by a superior priesthood or mediator that will be truly everlasting.

For the passage I just read in Hebrews is sandwiched between two other passages that highlights the solution. In Hebrews 8, verse 6, we are told, as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better since it is enacted on better promises.

And afterwards, again, he says from verse 10, for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

And they shall not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother saying, know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest.

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more. Thus, there is a new covenant and a new everlasting mediator.

[35:04] But there is one catch as the writer of Hebrews also points out. Mediation requires atonement, which implies sacrifice.

And while chapter 9 and 10 of the book of Hebrews details this sacrifice, it may perhaps be better for us to return to Numbers 25 and hear the gospel preached from there.

Because from there, as we saw, God had decreed that the atonement for the apostasy was to be the execution of the heads of the people with their bodies impaled or in other words, hung on a tree for his wrath to be taken away.

Phineas fulfilled this in part by spearing the people caught in sin. But Christ, the greater mediator, fulfilled this by himself hanging on the tree and having a spear run through himself instead.

For he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we were healed. Christ, like Phineas, entered the tent where we were caught in sin and instead of impaling us on the spear of God's wrath, ran the spear through himself that the covenant of peace that would have been his as it was for Phineas would come to us instead.

[36 : 44] T.S. Eliot once said, we must not cease from exploring and the end of all exploring is to arrive at the place where we started and know it for the first time.

When we started, Balaam seemed to be the connection between this chapter and the preceding ones as his failure to curse the Israelites morphed into his near success in destroying them through seduction to apostasy.

The high point seemed to be Phineas' zeal mediating and averting God's wrath against his sinful people. When we return to it, however, in light of the gospel, a deeper unity seems to emerge. It's not found in Balaam's approach to harming the Israelites, nor is it in Phineas' intervention. Rather, it is in Balaam's final prophecy of the star of Jacob and the scepter of Israel who was to come.

And it was not in the zeal, but in the atonement of Phineas. For both the scepter and the atonement together point to the same picture, the very picture to whom all Scripture points, which is Christ the Lamb, who is also Christ the King.

[38 : 11] Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we can never thank you enough for your sacrifice on our behalf.

May the truth of your love for those of us who know you warm our hearts and spur us on to love and good deeds, rejecting the sins and pleasures of this world for the greater joy and pleasure of knowing you.

And may it melt the hearts of those who don't know you as they see your mercy and grace towards them reflected in the sacrifice you took for all our sin.

We ask this in your name. Amen.