

Let God's Words Bring You into Deeper Dependence Upon God

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[0 : 0 0] to Psalm 119. That's where we've been studying for many, many weeks now. And tonight, we finally come down to the last section. I had never noticed this until I was working on Psalm 119 this week, that Psalm 119 is a series of 22 sections with eight verses per section. And it's exactly eight verses every single time. So tonight, we're going to take eight more verses, and that's going to close out the rest of Psalm 119. Now, let me ask you this as we get started. Who here enjoys a good story? This is one of the things, for whatever reason, I tell you, I just love a good story.

There's only a couple people. There's one that's unashamed, a couple that... All right. So I think all of us, there's something, I think, within human nature just that enjoys a good story. And a lot of times, especially, I guess, Disney has trained us to expect that the end of a story, we kind of come into a finish that is, you know, it's uplifting, it's exciting. There's some phrases we use, happily ever after, right? Good triumphs over evil. There's all kinds of things that are the kind of the typical story structure. You come down to the end, and everything's just tidy and neat and just wrapped up, and it's exciting, and it's beautiful. And sometimes there's a turn of events that, you know, it seems like the situation was impossible, but then the hero comes through. And I don't know about you, but I sometimes want to cast myself as that hero. And like, yes, that's what's going to happen to me, too. That I'm going to come down to the end of some period, and it's going to be happily ever after.

And it's going to be wonderful, and it's going to be exciting, and there's going to be victory, and it's going to be great. But if you've lived long enough, what do you know about life? It's not always a Disney fairy tale. It doesn't always end with happily ever after. Oftentimes, it is disappointing that we come to perhaps the end of a season in our lives, and it's like, man, I look back, and there's regrets. Or maybe I look forward, and there's unknowns, and there's fears, and there's things I wonder about, and there's things that I don't know about. And even, and this is the thing that's really been blowing my mind about this passage, that even someone like the writer of Psalm 119, that had such a love and devotion to God's Word, came to a point where he simply has to say, God, give me understanding. God, deliver me. I'm looking towards and anticipating what you're going to do, because I haven't seen it yet. Now, you would think that closing out Psalm 119, such an incredible chapter of the Bible, wouldn't we expect that with all the things that says about

God's Word? We would hope that it would come down to it and say, I loved God's Word, and all my problems went away. I saw God's Word, and He answered all my questions. But that is simply not how this Psalm closes. So I hope it's not too much of a letdown, but I figure I'd let you know a little bit early that this is going to be a little bit more introspective than celebratory. We can celebrate that we've finished Psalm 119, but it's also going to be a call that we would depend and lean more and more upon the Lord, because I think that's what this Psalm is doing. I think what's happening is that the Bible is, it is so realistic. The Bible doesn't pull any punches. You even read through the stories in the Old Testament, and it doesn't leave out the ugly parts. It tells you the good, the bad, and the ugly. And even in a chapter like this, that is just all of these things where He's looking and saying how wonderful God's Word is. I love your Word. Your Word does this. Your Word does that.

Your Word changed my life. But sometimes I'm still left with questions. Sometimes I still haven't seen the full deliverance, the full freedom that I expected. But you know what? I'm going to continue calling upon God. And I think that's what this Psalm is doing, is it's pointing us back to the God of the Word, right? He says, I'm going to look at the Word of God. And what does the Word of God do?

[4 : 06] It points me back into deeper dependence upon God. And I think that's where this Psalm takes us. It brings us into a deeper relationship of faith. So here's the title for tonight. And the challenge that I believe this Psalm gives us is, let God's words bring you into deeper dependence upon God.

Let God's words bring you into deeper dependence upon God. Would you read with me Psalm 119, starting in verse 169. And we'll do what Pastor Trent's been doing, where when we read through these verses, I'll read one verse at a time. And would you say with me at the end, well, we did it differently last week, right? Say with me the Word that refers to God's Word. So if it's testimony, say testimonies, commandments, you get the gist. But let's work through that together. Here we go. Psalm 119, 169.

Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord. Give me understanding according to thy word. Hey, perfect. You guys are on track. All right. The next verse, it says this.

Let my supplication come before thee. Deliver me according to thy word. My lips shall utter praise when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word. Oh, let's say, let's try that again. My tongue shall speak of thy word. Oh, I lost my place. For all thy commandments are righteousness. Excellent. We got two in that one. We might have to come back and try that one again a little bit later. Let thine hand help me, for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, and thy law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments. Excellent. Good job. Let's pray. Father, we come to you this evening, and Lord, I pray that you would use your word to bring us to a place of deeper dependence upon you. Lord, so often we want things to go just right. We want things to turn out how we imagine, and we don't want to be disappointed.

God, we know the reality of living in a fallen, broken world, and more importantly, you know that too. You know what it is to live in a body. You know what it is to face the evil in this world.

[6 : 33] You know the suffering. You know all the things that are wrong in this fallen creation. And Lord, there's things that aren't going to be fixed right now. In eternity, all will be just as you intended. But God, right now, as we grapple with the frustrations and the difficulties of life, as we grapple with the waiting, looking for your return, looking for eternal life, God, I pray that you'd help us to come into a deeper dependence upon you through your word.

Lord, I want to lift up anyone here tonight who is struggling in some way, whether it's a big thing or perhaps a smaller thing. There's nothing small to you. But God, I pray that your word would speak to hearts and that you would turn us back to yourself. As Jacob shared, that we would fall back, fall more in love with our first love. Lord, we thank you for this time to study your word.

God, I pray that you'd teach us tonight through your Holy Spirit. Praise things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So Psalm 119, we have a lot to look at and it's not a lot of time to go through it. So let me give you the first thing that I want to point out as we work down through this. When you're in need, there's one place you turn. Ask God for help. That's the first thing. When you're in need, ask God for help. And that's where we see this Psalm writer start. He starts off by asking God to do some things for him. He calls upon God and says, God, I just need your help. Would you notice with me, back up a little bit to the first two verses, 169 and 170? He says, let my cry come near before thee, O Lord. Give me understanding according to thy word. Of course, all of his petitions, all the things he asks, he's asking according to God's word. You know, the word tells us that God is willing to give wisdom to all that would ask. And so he's coming to God and saying, God, I ask for understanding. Now, if you're going to ask for understanding, why, what is the, the, what do you call it? The felt need, or what is the reason for asking for understanding?

Because you don't have understanding, right? Because there's something you don't know. The thing that, that kind of struck me in this is that this is the guy that has just written 168 verses saying, I am into God's word. I know God's word. I love God's word. I read God's word. I put in my heart, all of these things. He is the word guy. He says, word, word, word, word, word. God, give me understanding because I, there's still stuff I don't understand. Consider that. And I think that ought to be a little bit of encouragement to all of us because when we come to God's word, I don't know about you, but there's times when I look at something, it's like, I'm not sure I get that verse yet. I'm not sure I understand how this all works together. And that's okay because that's part of the purpose of what's going on here, that we would be drawn to God and that we would seek him and seek understanding from him. And so that's the first thing he asks. He says, give me understanding.

And then he says in verse number 170, let my supplication come before thee, deliver me according to thy word. Again, this is one of those things that's a little bit surprising, at least when I think about it. I mean, this is the guy that wins the award for the longest chapter in the Bible.

[9 : 51] It's like, all right, Paul, how long was your longest chapter? All right, other writers, how long was your longest chapter? Well, I've got the longest chapter and it's all about God's word. And the guy that wrote all about God's word, that wrote the longest chapter is saying, God, would you deliver me? And why is he asking God to deliver him? Because he's not delivered yet.

Because he's still battling. Because he's still struggling. Because he's still frustrated. Because there's still something that seems impossible that he cannot overcome on his own. And so he's looking at God and saying, God, I need understanding. God, I need deliverance. God, I need you.

There's one other thing. And this is, it's kind of split here. He opens with two requests saying, God, give me understanding. God, give me deliverance. God, give me freedom. And then when you get down to the very last verse, how's this? Think about this. How is this for closing out a chapter that is just, it's like this chapter's on the doorstep of heaven where he's standing there saying, man, I am just eating up and enjoying God's word. But look away, he says in the very last verse, he gives one more request. He says this, I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments. That wording is a bit familiar. It's pretty familiar to us, is it not?

A lost sheep. A sheep that is out of the way. A sheep that has been perhaps separated from the flock. A sheep that is separated. What are they missing out on? Well, they're missing out on protection, right? The shepherd's not there to take care of them. They're missing out on nourishment. They're missing out on medical attention, right? There's all kinds of things that they're missing out on in this man, this writer who says, I love God's word. He says, you know what I need, God? I need you to come and seek me out. Come and find me. Come and pick me up and bring me back into the fold because even as much as I love thy word, I have gone astray. How's that for a confession, if you will? For one who wrote a chapter like this, say, God, come and seek me because I have gone astray. And what does this teach us? Well, I think it teaches us that we need to go to God for help and ask for God's help when we're in need. And here's something to consider.

When are you in need? When am I in need? Is it not really kind of every moment of every day? Of every week of our entire lives? That we stand in need of him. And this is one of the things I think this chapter is intending to do in our lives. To bring us to a point where we humble ourselves before God and say, God, I need you. I need you more than anything else. I need understanding from you. I need deliverance from you. I need you to seek after me because I am so prone to go out of the way. It's kind of like that hymn. How's that hymn go? Prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. There's something within man that we just struggle sometimes as much as we would want to love and stay close and to stay tied into God's word. He says, man, I know so much about your word and I love your word so much, but seek me, God. Give me understanding. Deliver me. Help me because I need you. And here's one of the wonderful things. If you find yourself in a place of need, it may be right now that it's very real to you that you're like, man, God, I need you because I cannot make this happen on my own. And if we're all being honest, that's really what the cry of every single one of our hearts should be that, hey, I need the Lord. I need the Lord every day.

[13 : 32] I need the Lord to know how to be a good parent. I know I need the Lord to know how to love my wife as Christ loved the church. I need the Lord to use me. I need the Lord to teach me. I need the Lord to guide me. I need the Lord. And the promise that the Lord has, he says, hey, come to the throne of grace. Come and ask. Come and ask for what you need because he is there to provide help.

What is our duty in that? Come and ask. Come and ask. Now, you might be skeptical. I hope you're not by this point, but you might still be skeptical saying, man, I'm not sure if this is really that big a deal for me right now. Everything seems to be going well. I don't have any major problems.

There's not a health crisis. Things aren't falling apart in a financial sense, but you may think, I've got it together. I've got everything going on. Friends, you better listen carefully to the challenge that is given in the book of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 10, 12. This is one of those verses that hopefully if those thoughts go through our minds, hey, I've got it together. It's all smooth sailing from here that the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance, I believe. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. When we are self-confident, just thinking that we have it all together, that's the time when we are most likely, I believe, to fall down and to fall flat on our face. And God has a way of reminding us again and again, no, you still need me. You never outgrow needing the Lord. And so what do we do in time of need? We come to him. We call to him.

And that's what God's word does. It drives us back to him to say, God, I need you. Now, that's the call. That's the asking. But along with the asking, there's something that to me is just really encouraging, right? Because I can certainly relate with the asking, being in need and saying, God, I just need you. But the other thing that the psalmist brings in, and this also comes from God's word, is he says, I'm going to ask according to your word, but I'm also going to anticipate your response. I'm going to look forward to what you're going to do. And this to me is just so cool, right? So think with me about the things that he asked for a second. He asked first, for, can you say it with me? What did he ask for first? He asked for understanding, right? He asked for understanding in, what's that verse? 169. In 170, he asked for deliverance, right? See that?

He asked for deliverance. Those two things are going to kind of be mirrored in the coming verses, where he's going to say, I asked for understanding and I'm trusting, anticipating that God will give me understanding. Let me show that to you. Would you jump down to verse number 71? 71 and 72, it's like he's looking forward saying, I've asked according to your word, and now I'm going to anticipate and expect that God will deliver. My lips shall utter praise when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word for all thy commandments are righteousness. You see what's he saying there? He's saying, I'm looking forward. My tongue, my lips, they are going to pour out praise when you do what? What does it say there? When he, when God has taught me thy statutes. He's saying, I asked for understanding and soon there's coming a day that I'm going to just overflow with joy, with praise, with thanksgiving, because God will teach me. God will help me understand. God will give me wisdom. And so it's just going to start bubbling up and it's going to flow out. Thanksgiving, thank you,

[17:11] Lord, for teaching me your word. Thank you, Lord, for showing me how good your word is. That's the other thing he says, right? He says, my lips are going to, what does it say? Let me read that one more time. Lips shall utter praise and my tongue shall speak of thy word for all thy commandments are righteousness. He basically looks at God's commands and he says, what am I taught? What do I receive from the Lord? I receive the fact that all of his words, every single one of his words, they are righteousness. They are right. They are good. They are beautiful. They give life to me.

And I'm just going to sing about it. And I'm going to talk about it because I am anticipating the day that God teaches me his words. You're in a place where it's like, God, I just need you to help me understand. God, I need you to, to, to reveal your, the meaning, the truth from your word to me.

Help me. Oh, enlighten my mind. And one day he will do that. And he will continue to do that. I believe throughout all of our lives. God enables him to know the word and the word is righteous. And so he's asked and he's anticipating God's going to teach me and I'm going to praise him when he does. But what was the other thing? So he says, I asked for understanding. I anticipate that God's going to teach me. I asked for deliverance. And so he's going to anticipate what salvation.

He's going to anticipate that God is going to redeem him from his troubles, from the distress that he finds himself in. And that shows up in verse number 174. Would you read these with me? Let's read 174 down to 176. I, uh, excuse me, 173. Let's back up one. Let thine hand help me for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, and thy law is my delight. Let my soul live and it shall praise thee and let thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

Seek thy servant for I do not forget thy commandments. Look at the things he says there. He says, I'm looking and I'm expecting that God, your hand's going to help me. God, you are going to bring deliverance. God, you're going to bring salvation. I'm longing. I'm looking forward to your salvation. He's, he's anticipating, expecting that God is going to deliver him. Now, where did he get that expectation from? From the word, right? Because he says, I've asked according to your word.

[19 : 34] And so I'm anticipating according to your word that all these things are going to happen. And what is he going to do when they happen? When the salvation comes, when God's hand helps him, he is, when his soul lives. I love verse 75, let my soul live and it shall praise thee. He's going to lift up his voice and say, God, thank you for saving me. I knew it was coming. I didn't know when. I didn't know how long it'd be, but I asked and I received and I praise you because you're God. You're good and your word is true. And so do you see there's like this, this gap. He's living in this gap where he's saying, I need understanding. So I'm going to ask and I'm going to wait. I need deliverance. So I'm going to ask, I'm going to wait. And amid all of this, there's like four commitments that he makes to the word, because this is the other parts. Like what do you do in the waiting period, right? Because it's hard sometimes to wait. If we're being honest, it's hard to wait for, uh, for us, it's, it's hard to wait for minutes, right? If somebody has taken too long in the line at Chick-fil-A, you start getting a little angry, don't you? Especially if you're hungry, you get hangry. And it's like, why can't you just get your order right and move on? Because I need to get my food. We struggle with patience, but what happens when it's days and weeks and months and years, and it's like, man, it seems like nothing's happening. It seems like God's not answering. Well, in the meantime, in the meantime,

I think we renew our commitment to the word. So there's four things I'd like to show to you that I believe he's saying, I am, I'm affirming my commitment to God's word because I've asked according to his word. I'm anticipating according to his word, and I am going to affirm my commitment that I am committed to his word. And really friends, this is an act of faith. It's an act of faith, right? Because he hasn't seen the deliverance. He hasn't seen the understanding come to him yet, but he's saying, I trust your word because I know who you are and I'm just waiting on the day that this comes. So the commitments to the word, let me give you these four and we'll close out tonight. I choose God's word. Verse 173, would you look at this with me? He says, let thine hand help me for I have chosen thy precepts. I think about it like this. It's like he's made a categorical decision that no matter what God's word says, I believe it. I've chosen it. All my eggs are in that basket. I'm not coming over here and saying, let me dabble in this philosophy and maybe this will help me figure out my life. He says, no, I've chosen your word. I'm not going to come over here and get advice from someone else, someone perhaps who worships another God or some other thing like that. I have chosen your precepts. I have put all my eggs in this basket. I have chosen thy word.

And that's an important commitment to make. And it's important commitment to reaffirm. Because again, remember, this is all in the context of waiting, needing, lacking understanding, perhaps even being frustrated or disappointed. I have chosen thy precepts. It's almost like he's coming back to God and saying, I've chosen them. I've chosen them. This is the way I'm going to walk.

This is the path I'm going to follow. I've chosen your precepts. I'm not going to look anywhere else because your word is true. I've chosen your precepts. That might be one of the things that you would make a commitment tonight to reaffirm your commitment to God's word. This is one of the things that I think is just a really kind of a clear application that we can make tonight.

Because you might be wondering, is all this worth it? Should I be looking somewhere else for knowledge? Should I look somewhere else for wisdom? Because there's all kinds of wisdom that's just floating and, well, floating is probably too passive. It is just swirling around this world. Things that are called wisdom, but that are not wisdom. And so we choose his precepts time and time again. The second one is delight. Delighting in God's word. Delighting in God's word. Verse 174 says, let thine hand, excuse me, I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, and thy law is my delight.

[23 : 39] Think about those words for a second. That's kind of a, to me at least, it's a strange phrase that I would delight in God's words. We delight in all kinds of things. We might delight in, in our family, our relationships. Might delight in ice cream. I know I'm looking forward to some of that tonight. That puts a smile on our face. That brings a little joy to our heart. But he says, I've, I've opened this book. Well, it's probably not book. I've, I've unrolled this scroll and all of these things, God, that you've written, those bring joy to my heart. Could we, is that true about us in our experience of God's word? You know, sometimes we come with, with a duty, right? With a, with almost like a requirement. Like, I need to do this thing. I need to read these words. I need to check off all the boxes on my bow ring plan to be a good Christian. But he says, God, I, I delight in your word.

Your word makes me happy. Your word brings joy to my heart and to my soul. Friend, what is your experience of God's word? And is it a delight? It might be something where you need to, to get alone with God and just read his words and allow them to become fresh and new to you so that there would be a sweetness that would come from God's words. Because God's words truly are sweet. But sometimes we don't slow down long enough to see it, to taste it, to enjoy it. He says, I've delighted in thy words. Verse 175, here's your next commitment. I will depend upon God's word. I'll depend upon God's word. Let my soul live and it shall praise thee and let thy judgments help me. Think about those last few words. Let thy judgments help me. God, what you say, what you determined to be true, what you, your judgments. Let them help me. Let them help me. I'm going to depend upon them for my help. And again, this is kind of like that, that wisdom where we choose his precepts. We choose his wisdom over everything else that's swirling around us. There's lots of places that you can go to try and find help.

And we do that all the time, don't we? If one thing's not working, it's like, well, get rid of that solution and try to plug something else in. If only I knew the right things, then I could fix this problem. So I better start, you know, Googling or I was going to say, go to an encyclopedia. Does anyone do encyclopedias anymore? Maybe Wikipedia, right? I'm going to go and I'm going to find the solutions to help me with what I'm facing. But he says, no, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to depend upon your word. Let thy word help me. Let the word be the thing I turn to that gives me strength, that assists me, that leads me through life. Finally says, I will remember God's word. I will remember God's word. Again, these are all so simple, but I think they're important. They're practices. We have to keep these commitments through our lives. Otherwise, we're very quickly to go off track. Okay, talking about remembering, remembering. Do you recall the stories of the judges, right? The judges, they kind of, during the time of the judges and in the book of judges, they went through this cycle, right? They were doing really good. And then a couple generations go by and they sort of forget God. And they start doing their own thing and everyone does what's right in their own eyes. They start deciding what's right and wrong. Instead of letting God's words be true and right, they say, what I determined to be true and right is what I will do. And so they go from being close to God and following God to doing their own thing, to receiving God's judgment,

God's correction, God's discipline upon them. Why? Because they had forgotten his words. They had forgotten what he said and they'd forgotten to obey them, right? They'd forgotten. And so then when everything gets really bad, they crash down to the bottom and say, oh God, we need you again. And they remember and they go back and they say, wow, what have we done? We're worshiping these idols. We're doing all this stuff completely wrong. And we are suffering the consequences of our decisions. And they remember the word. But you know what happens, right? You know what happens again? They forget. And they're on this like a, I don't know what you'd call it a, I want to say merry-go-round. No, that's not the right word.

They're on something that spins. They're in this cycle, right? Where they forget and they suffer and they turn back to God and God blesses them and they forget and they suffer and they turn back to God.

[28 : 01] You get the idea. This is much more important than we think it is. We can very easily say, man, I wouldn't forget God's word. I wouldn't forget the things that I've known maybe since I was a child or maybe I've even taught these things myself. How could I forget them? It's very easy to forget them, to lose sight that they would be out of our minds and that we would forget what God says. And he says this, I have gone astray in verse 176, like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments. And I believe truly that's the thing that God was using to chase after him. God's words were calling him to return, calling him back, bringing him back to a place of trust and obedience.

So what does God's word do? God's word, it brings you to a place of deeper and deeper dependence upon God. Because friends, here's the thing. There's, I believe there's always going to be things that we don't know, things that we don't understand, that we grapple with and we struggle with. I remember there was a lady that I was talking to. She had just lost her husband. They had been married like almost 60 years. And it was amazing, this lady that is, I mean, she would be my grandmother's age. She's looking at me and saying, you know, I'm, I'm just not sure what to do now because I've never faced this before and I'm entering a new season of life. And it's like, you know what? I don't either. Let's ask God to help us. Let's ask God to direct you. I'll pray for you that God's wisdom would help you. Because here's the thing, no matter what stage we're at, there's always going to be new territory. There's always going to be unknowns. There's always going to be things that don't make sense, that we don't get. There's going to be things that we struggle with. There's going to be places where we fall down. I think the psalmist shows us that. Remember, this is the guy that won longest chapter in the Bible award and he comes down to the very end and he doesn't wrap it up with a nice tidy bow and say, and I lived happily ever after, after I had learned God's word. He says,

I've learned God's word. I've loved God's word. God's word has been in my heart and I've realized I still need God. God, give me understanding. God, deliver me. God, seek me out because I'm prone to wander, but I want you. I depend upon you. Would you bow with me for just a second? It may be that tonight you're in a place where some of these words that the psalmist has written, they're really resonating with your heart and your soul. That you're in a place where you need understanding from God. You're in a place where you need strength from God. You need deliverance from God. What's your story right now? What are you battling? What struggle are you facing? What uncertainty is just right there in the pit of your stomach and you're just not sure where to turn, what to do?

Friend, there's one that you can turn to and you know it. You can turn to God. You can call out to Him. You can ask Him for understanding. But friends, don't miss the lesson that this writer, that He shows us, that you can ask and you can be confident that God will give you what you need. There's a gap between the asking and the receiving and in the middle. That is where faith is exercised.

That's where we just come in dependence and say, God, I trust you. God, I need you. I have chosen your precepts. I've chosen your word. We're going to sing a song in a moment to close out the service as Zachariah comes. We're going to sing a song to close out. But I want to ask you in this moment, I'm going to pray and then we'll stand and sing. I want to ask you, maybe you need to pray one of those things that the psalmist prays or make one of those affirmations that the psalmist reaffirms. Let me give them to you one more time. You might need to say, God, I need understanding. You can just ask Him that and He knows what you need. God, I need deliverance. God, seek me. I'm wandering. I'm struggling. You might make one of these affirmations. God, I choose your word. I choose your word. God, I delight in your word. God, I depend upon your word. And God, I will remember your word. May those things be true of us. Father, we come to you this evening and we just thank you for your kindness.

[32 : 44] We thank you for your goodness. That you step into our lives right where we are and you give us exactly what we need. You develop our faith, a faith that pleases you. And Lord, we are so grateful that we can come to you in confidence and anticipate the fact that your power will be shown and your answer will come in due time. God, I pray you'd strengthen your people tonight. I pray that their faith would grow through hearing and responding to your word. Praise things in Christ's name. Amen.