

Isaiah 59

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[0 : 00] Ronald, take your Bibles and go with me to Isaiah 59 now, if you would. We are kind of barreling down to the last of the book of Isaiah. You probably think we've been in it forever, but it has 66 chapters.

I mean, give me a break. It's a long book, and we're working our way through it. And when you get to Isaiah chapter 59, there's this argument going on that's kind of being portrayed in the Bible between God's people and God.

And so the people of God are saying, God, you don't listen to us when we talk to you. And so the last chapter, God said, now that's not true.

I would listen, but I don't like the way you talk to me. And so we had a whole lesson on fasting. We had a whole lesson on how they should have talked to God.

And so now at the end of that chapter, there's basically the idea given, well, God doesn't listen and God doesn't hear prayer and God doesn't answer prayer. And basically they want to throw off on God and act like God's not measuring up and God's not who he ought to be.

[1 : 03] And so God is going to defend himself. And I'm going to take you through that in just a minute. The title of this message is After the Discipline Comes the Blessing. After the Discipline Comes the Blessing.

Because what we're doing, the nation of Israel has been in captivity for 70 years. And then there's all the picture of what God's going to do. And even tonight as we finish up the message, you're going to see Israel being brought back into their land.

They're one day going to inhabit their land again. Fact is, in the passage of Scripture that we'll read tonight, you just get your ink pen ready and be ready to mark it. But in that passage of Scripture, what's going to end up happening is everybody who cursed them and everybody who hurts them, all of those people are going to be the ones rebuilding the walls.

And everybody's going to be making trips to Jerusalem. And the whole world's going to be making trips to Jerusalem and saying, we're here to fix your city for you. We're here to take care of you and rebuild your walls and rebuild all your things here.

We know we've mistreated you, but you are the people of God and we now recognize it. And then the whole world's going to flow to Jerusalem to learn truth. That's really not about us because we'll be out of here and going to heaven.

[2 : 07] But God has a big plan for the nation of Israel. So it's exciting. If you'll just follow along, I think you're going to like the, I think you're going to love what God has to say. Look at Isaiah 59.1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save.

Neither is ear heavy that it cannot hear. You got your Bible open. You need to put a circle around that word behold. That's like, it's basically like yelling. Hey, listen up here. The Lord's hand is not short.

It is not that he can't hear. And it's not that his ear is heavy so he doesn't hear. He's not deaf. And it's not like he's weak. Listen to me. That's what he's saying. That's what that behold means. That behold is like, hey, pay attention.

Listen to what he's going to say. Now look at verse 2. He said, it's not that God's weak, verse 1, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God. And your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.

So he says, you're acting like I don't listen. You're acting like I don't want to help you. You're acting like I don't have the power to help you. You're acting like I don't have the ears to listen to you.

[3 : 07] Oh, no. The problem, you will not be putting this problem on me. It is your sin. It is your sin that you have. If you've got your Bible open in verse 2, you ought to circle this.

Your iniquities. Your iniquities. Your sins. And I'll show you more of that in just a minute. Go with me over to Isaiah chapter 60 because we're going to get there in just a minute. Here's a verse.

You ready? It says, and the sons of strangers. If you want to put a circle around the word strangers, go to the Margie Bible and write foreigners. That's all a stranger is. A foreigner is a guy that don't belong here.

A foreigner, a stranger is a guy that doesn't belong here. That's the idea. He's not one of us. He's from somewhere else in America, especially in a big city like Atlanta area. We've got people from everywhere.

If you're in the city of London, England, you're going to have all sorts of people. You go north in London, leave London, go north into England, and you get to places. Everybody is just plain old dull white, pale white.

[4 : 07] No mixed up race and none of that. No strangers. In fact, when I walk in, they look at me and they go, yep, he's a stranger. We walked into a leather shop because we were hanging out all the mysteries, and everybody was demorando, taking time.

And I walked in, and there was this big long leather case. And I looked at that, and Betty said, you know, we could put my Uncle Pat's sword in that. And I said, we could put a gun in that. And the guy looked across and said, in your country.

I think he was saying, you're a stranger. And I said, well, in your country, you could put a knife in there. That's what y'all used to kill people over here. But anyway, I tried to be nice, but I did say it. And it's not the smartest move to do that.

And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls. Look at that. He said, hey, Jewish people. Hey, Jerusalem. Hey, Israel. God's going to send foreigners' kids here to build your walls.

And their kings shall minister unto thee. Their kings. That means the presidents of other countries are going to go over to Israel and say, you little pipsqueak of a country that nobody could ever get rid of.

[5 : 12] We're going to build you up. That does not go along. You will not find that on CNN this afternoon. But you will find it in Isaiah, CNN. Look, if you would. It says, and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls.

And their kings shall minister unto thee. For in my wrath I smote thee. But in my favor I had mercy on you. There's your title. Look at it. In my wrath I smote you.

You guys made me mad. And I have knocked the slop out of you. Because you can't sin and get away with it. Can we just be honest about that? If a born-again believer can't figure that out yet, you've got a problem.

But this is about Jewish people. And he has disciplined the nation of Israel. They're being disciplined even now. Because they still don't love Jesus. They're still not respecting Jesus. And so they're under discipline.

But look what's going to happen. In my favor have I had mercy on thee. Go down to Isaiah 60 and verse 14. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee.

- [6 : 13] Now look at that. Let me put that tendency hillbilly for you. Everybody's been picking on you. He's going to come in here bowing and curtsying and say, excuse us. Sorry. We shouldn't have been mean to you people. We shouldn't have been rough on you.
- And they'll come bending. And all they that despise thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet. They're not going to come in and just say like a little bow. They're going to get on their face on the ground and say, you are the stuff and we're not.
- And they shall call thee. Look here. The city of the Lord. The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Israel's going to have a great future eventually.
- After the discipline comes a blessing. Father in heaven, I pray that you would. I know they're not going to be that interested in what you're doing with Israel. But they could learn these truths that you said to the nation of Israel.
- And they work in our lives and they apply to us. Please do a work in our lives tonight. In Jesus' name, amen. Number one, the problem isn't God. It's their sin.
- [7 : 12] And you can write that down about you too. The problem isn't God. It's your sin. The problem isn't God. It's your sin. Look at chapter 59, verse 1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither is ear heavy, that it cannot hear.
- It is not that God is unable to do a work in your life. It is not that God doesn't hear you. But here's what happened. Look at verse 2. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.
- And your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. He said, I'm not the one moved. I'm not the one that put up a barrier. I'm not the one that stopped listening. I'm not the one that stopped working. You guys chose sin over me.
- And your sin is separating us so that I won't work in your life. You got verse 2. You mark your sin, your iniquities, and your sins. Now look at verse 3. And you are personally responsible.
- Do you know what everybody who sins does? It wasn't my fault. I got tempted. The devil made me do it. It's not my fault I did this. It's not my fault I committed adultery. It's not my fault I lied.
- [8 : 15] It's not my fault I look at porn. I can't help it. And here's what the Lord God of heaven said to Israel in verse 3. Your hands are defiled with blood. Would you circle your, look at all these yours.
- Your hands are defiled with blood. Your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies. Your tongue has muttered perverseness. He's like, there's a problem here, guys.
- There's a problem here. You claim I don't hear you and I don't work in your lives. But the facts are you let sin come in. And don't try to blame it on anybody else. I'm going to use a personal pronoun so you get it.
- You're, you're, you're, you're, you're, you're. It's you, buddy. It's you, buddy. It's you. The nation as a whole is living in sin and rebellion.
- We're talking about the Jewish nation. And Isaiah's preaching to them. Isaiah 59, 4. And I need you to circle this because we're headed somewhere with it. Look at this. None called for justice. None. None.
- [9 : 12] Nor any pleads for truth. Underline none. Underline nor any. They trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.
- He said, I'll just be blunt honest with you nation of Israel. You need to listen to me. None of you want to do right. He's not talking to us. Not talking to born again believers. Although I'm going to show you how it applies to us in a second.
- None call for justice. Nobody's pleading for truth. Fact is, if you want the truth, you're trusted in things that are worthless and that speak lies. And what do they do?

They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. See, it's total wickedness. Look at Isaiah 59, 7. Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood.

Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Wasting and destruction are in their paths. Now, when you're reading this, you're like, man, I'm telling you that nation of Israel was one nasty country.

[10:09] Bunch of bums. Thank God we're not like that. When the apostle Paul writes the book of Romans, guess what he quotes about us? Take your Bible. Go with me, if you would, to Romans chapter 3 and verse 10.

Romans chapter 3, the apostle Paul says to the Romans, Gentiles and Jews, now this definitely applies to us. This definitely applies to us.

He said, I'm fixing to quote to you out of my favorite book of the Bible. It happens to be his favorite seems to have been Isaiah. He quotes Isaiah more than he does anybody. And this is what he said. As it is written.

Check out the book of Isaiah. Here's what he's going to say now. You need to write this down somewhere. Man is desperately wicked and desperately sinful. You don't like that.

It aggravates us to admit that humankind is not good. People aren't good. They're filthy, lying, killing, stealing thieves.

[11:09] That's who they are. Man is totally wicked. And that's what he's going to say. Look at it. Romans 3.10. As it is written. There is none righteous.

No, not one. There is none that understands. There is none that seeks after God. They're all gone out of the way. They're together become unprofitable.

There is none that doeth good. No, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher, an open grave. Their tongues they have used to seat. The poison of asp is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. You know, Israel is a pretty sorry country.

And that's what Isaiah is telling them. Could I just tell you, your sweet grandmother, if she's not born again, she's a pretty sorry lady. Was that mean enough?

[12:11] See, somehow we want to act like sin's not that big a deal. But we got to get a hold of something. Sin separates people from God. Sin separates people from God.

And your mother and your grandmother and your aunt and your uncle and your children that aren't born again. That sin's still between them and God. But you just hang on to these chapters. He's going to even bring up the fact he's going to send somebody to take care of that.

That's coming. We just ain't there yet. That's just how good he is. He says, I know y'all got problems. Ain't nobody wants to help you, but don't worry, I'm coming. It's a good book, isn't it? Every time I read the Bible, I'm like, this must be God's word.

So here's some lessons from the first thing that you should write down. God is able to save. God is able to save. The problem and the weakness is never with God.

He is ready and able to save. So it's my rebellion and my sin that have hindered God from working in my life. Before I leave this point, listen to me.

[13:11] Some of you, you've gotten cold and you've drawn away from God. And you're hooked up in porn or some other kind of filth in your life. And you're flirting with people at work or whatever it is you're doing.

And you're making up all these excuses. And you're acting like it's okay. In Isaiah chapter 59, God would say, I'm still strong and I'm still powerful. And I can still hear you.

But you're letting your sin hinder what's going on here. The fact is, if you're a born again believer, I'm pretty sure sin will mess up your prayer life. It says in Psalm 66, 18.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. The second thing I want you to look at. Go with me to Isaiah 59, 9. Their separation from God was their own doing.

That's what I want you to look at now. You see, the first thing was, God, you're too weak to take care of me. God, you're not paying attention to me. God, you're not listening to me. God, you're not strong enough to take care of me. What's wrong with you, God?

[14:11] And God said, there ain't nothing wrong with me here. It's you. Nothing wrong with me. It's you. And now in Isaiah chapter 59, verse 9, he says, it's you that did it.

Look at it, verse 59, 9. Therefore is judgment far from us. Neither doth justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity. For brightness, but we walk in darkness.

You see, they're alone. You remember what it said in chapter 59, 2 and 3, as you came down through there, it was your sin, and now they're alone, and they're separate, but they brought it on themselves.

You know, God hadn't moved. You know, he's like stable. He's like staying in place. And if anybody's getting away from God, it's not like God pulled away. It's you threw up a barrier between you and God.

It's you that pulled away from God. And they are alone and without hope, without help. Isaiah 59, 10, we grope for the wall like the blind.

[15:08] They're walking. He said, here's what they said. We're so bad off and so far away from God. We're walking around like blind people feeling. The other night, a few weeks ago, I got up, and I don't know, but there's always a little bit of light in there, and I got to go to the bathroom because, oh, man, I got to go to the bathroom during the middle of the night, and I got up, and I started across there, and I was sure I was where the hallway is.

It's a big, wide hallway. Even a big boy like me can get down this hallway. And I just walked in and I just went, bam, and ran slap into the wall. I'm just standing there. I'm like, what in the world? They have moved the hallway. That's what's going on here.

But what separated them? It was sin. It was them. It says they grope. We grope. We stumble. They said at noonday is in the night.

At middle of the daytime, it's so dark, we stumble. Verse 11, last part, for salvation, but it is far from us. The reason for their suffering is their sin.

It's not God hurting you. It's not God hurting you. Look at Isaiah 59, 12. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us.

[16:19] For our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them. You see what's happening? Why are they suffering? You should circle hour, hour, hour, hour four times.

And here's the bad thing. They knew they were doing wrong. And they chose to stay in wrong. They knew they were doing wrong. They knew everything that's being said by Isaiah.

They all know it. Look at verse 13. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, and speaking oppression and revolt, and conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

That's who they are. That's what they're doing. Hey, our sins have messed us up, and we're groping, but hey, we're going to keep on transgressing, keep on lying, and keep on walking away from God. It seems like all hope is lost.

Verse 14, judgment is turned away backward. Justice stands far off. Truth is falling in the street. Equity cannot enter. Truth fails. And it says, and he that departeth from evil makes himself a prey.

[17 : 20] Even the guy who decides to do right is going to get hurt. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. So you got this whole filthy, stinking, sinful group of people, and they're just rebelling against God.

And even when one of them decides, I think I'll do right, and the second he steps off to do right, they beat him up. And they come after him. Because the world wants you to accept them.

They want you to be like them. They don't want you to stand up and say, I love Jesus, and I'm going to follow Jesus. They want you to be tolerant and to coexist. I love this part here.

It says, look at it. The Lord saw it. He saw that the guys that did right and stepped away, and it displeased him. There's no judgment. There's nobody helping these guys.

Verse 16, they desperately need an intercessor. And he saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him.

[18 : 25] Do you see what's going on here? In verse 15, the Lord saw it, and it displeased him. He said, there's nobody to help these people. There's no intercessor, nobody to stand for them before God.

And his arm, his arm, God's arm, brought salvation. The Lord steps in. Isaiah 59, 15. Thank God he stepped in. Amen?

Number one, I could have never fixed myself. Number one, I could have confessed my sins all day, and I could have tried morality treatments, and you could have redone my brain. You could do anything you want, but I was so filthy, wicked.

If God hadn't worked a miracle, I wouldn't be saved. And they were doing wrong, and God stepped in. Isaiah 59, 15. Again, truth fails. He that has departed from evil makes himself a prey.

The Lord saw it, and it displeased him. Verse 16 again. He said, there's no man, no intercessor. Verse 17. The Lord's going to make his enemies pay.

[19 : 23] He put on a breastplate of righteousness, and a helmet of salvation on his head, and garments of vengeance. And it was clad in zeal as a cloak. And it said, according to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.

Recompense to his enemies. To the islands he will repay recompense. God said, all right, you know what's right, and you continue to do wrong.

And when somebody tries to do right, he says, I'm coming down, I'm going to stand up for this guy who wants to live right and do right in the middle of a filthy and contaminated world. And bless God, I am coming to kick some backside. You chose to disobey me.

You chose to ignore me. And hey, God's a God of love, but let me just explain something to you. If you don't trust Jesus, you're going to hell. And as a Christian, if you keep playing with sin, you can expect God to step in and do something.

Amen. Verse 19. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun.

[20 : 26] When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him. When everything's lost, the spirit of God steps in and runs a flag up.

And Jesus sets up an earthly kingdom. Come, Isaiah 59, 20. And the redeemer shall come to Zion. And unto them that turn from transgressions in Jacob, says the Lord. Let me tell you, we're headed to the last chapter.

I'm about to sum it up for you. I don't know, sometimes I think maybe too much for you. You're not in Bible college. But here's what's happening. We just got a glimpse into the tribulation period.

We just got a glimpse into this time period in history when everybody is taking the mark of the beast and doing wrong. That's not here. That's in Revelation. We just got a picture of, and if somebody gets right with God, they're going to kill him.

And the Lord looks at it and says, I've had it. I'm going to go down there and I'm setting things straight. And he's going to come down. His feet are going to touch the Mount of Olives. It's going to split in half.

[21 : 27] And he's going to set up a kingdom. And he's going to make a covenant with his people. Isaiah 59, 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord.

So here's some lessons.

Before I get, I'm headed there. I got eight minutes. But I didn't preach it. There's one I might steal, too. Israel's sin separated them from God. Their sin brought horrible consequences in their life.

Sin always brings horrible consequences. God, through Jesus, steps in to help and be their intercessor. Jesus steps in and rights the wrongs and sets up a kingdom. And finally, in Isaiah 60, man, the Israelites, number four, they're enjoying the promises of God.

Look at chapter 60, verse 1. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. I know you've been getting hurt. I know you've been being disciplined because you did wrong, Israel.

[22 : 34] But for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness, but the Lord shall arise upon thee. And his glory shall be seen upon thee. So now, now we got the kingdom. We got Jesus reigning.

We got Israel lifted up and being used. Chapter 60, verse 3. And Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. You see, Israel had failed God to get the gospel out.

So God put in this little parentheses, the church, to get the gospel out and make these guys get jealous. That's Romans chapter 11. And he's getting them jealous. And then he's going to take us out of the way, and he's going to bring these guys back in.

And they're going to go into tribulation. They're going to witness like crazy. 144,000 going everywhere. Two witnesses come down from heaven. They're getting the gospel out. They're getting killed. People are getting saved. And then all of a sudden, at the end of that, they're getting killed.

Well, Jesus steps down, all dressed up, ready to set up a kingdom. And he says in Isaiah chapter 16, verse 7. Skip down to the end for me quickly. I will glorify the house of my glory.

[23 : 36] You know what the house of his glory is, don't you? Temple. The place where his Shekinah glory came down and settled on it. When they got through building the temple, when they got through building the tabernacle, both times God said, back off.

Back off. I'm moving in. And you couldn't be in there when he came in. And this great big power cloud or whatever it was settled down there, and they just stood there waiting to see when God said, all right, y'all go in now.

But God moved in. And that was his glory descending on them. Those who persecuted Jerusalem are now rebuilding it. Chapter 60, verse 10. The sons of strangers and kings shall minister.

For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor I have had mercy on thee. The sons of them that afflicted thee, that's verse 14, have come bending knees.

They that despise thee are down on their faces, and they call this city the city of our God. And then God promises Israel and Jerusalem great peace. The gates in chapter 60, verse 11, shall be opened continually.

[24 : 40] Their gates aren't open right now. Right now in the nation of Israel, which is not this nation of Israel we're dealing with here, because they're still not right. They did not recognize Jesus. But you know what? They got terrorists sending bombs in there and everything else.

But during this time, they're going to just leave the gates open. Drop the defenses. No need to worry about missiles. God's here to protect us. Look, if you would, in Isaiah chapter 60 and verse 11, gates open continually.

Isaiah 60, 18, violence shall no more be heard in the land. Look at that. They shall call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day. Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light.

I think I read that somewhere in the New Testament. And the glory of God. And the sun shall no more go down. Neither shall the moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be your everlasting light.

[25 : 39] You want to tell you what you need to take on? Now listen to me. You're a Bible student, so we really go through the Bible. And I guess, to be honest with you, probably the majority of your friends have no idea about what I just taught you tonight. But you need to go read these passages.

Some people say, why do Christians seem to like Israel? Because we read Isaiah. Because we read our Bibles. That's what gets you in trouble. If you read your Bible.

And so God's got these big plans. And God's going to do something in Israel still. God's going to do something in Israel. Don't count her out. These things haven't happened yet. Many of these are promises will apply to us as well.

But that's another day's lesson. So let me give you lessons to take home. Lessons to take home. Number one lesson that you should have gotten out of tonight. Because you're like, well, I'm not doing interesting in Israel.

You wouldn't be if you read your Bible much. I'm just saying. You start in Genesis chapter 11. And you're kind of covered up with the people all the way to the end of Malachi. And then you start up in Matthew. And you're still covered up with them.

[26 : 38] You get all the way into getting towards the end of the New Testament. You've got the book of Hebrews. What's that, Jews? And it's everywhere you go. Everywhere you go. Here's our lessons.

Number one. Never doubt God's ability to save. Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 1. Everybody could go home with this. The Lord's hand is not shortened. That it cannot save.

His ear is not heavy. That it cannot hear. God still saves people. And you can witness the people knowing this. I can't save them. And I can't change them. But God can. Number two.

Know how desperately wicked people are. In their need of salvation. This is a sad truth. And may be true in our church. He's got a good heart. No, he doesn't. If they're not born again, they don't have a good heart.

Everybody needs to get a hold of something. Sin's horrible. And it's everywhere. And the only person free from that is a person who's born again. It's gotten that old heart taken out.

[27 : 36] Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 2. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. And your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. I don't have time for it. But in that verse, sin and rebellion will hinder your prayers from being answered.

Here's another thing for you to remember. You can't blame anybody for your sin. Man, this is America. Nobody's responsible for anything. It's my mama.

It's my psychologist. It's the drugs they're giving me. I don't know what you want to blame it on. But the Holy Spirit of God said in Isaiah 59, 3. Your hands and your fingers and your lips and your tongue.

Don't try to blame anybody else. It's on you. Could you get an amen right there? How about this one? God knows the future just like it had already happened. Did you know this part of the Bible was written before Jesus.

That's putting it like 2,500 years ago. And God's like, 2,500 years from now, this is what's going to happen. And you're like, he couldn't know that.

[28 : 43] Oh, he could. He's God. We can trust him. He knows what he's doing. And he still has plans for Israel. Here's another lesson for you. He may discipline his people.

But after the discipline comes the blessing. Hebrews chapter 12. If you'll let God's work in your life have its way, it'll yield a peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Look at what it says in Isaiah 60, verse 10. And the sons of strangers. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls. And the king shall minister thee. For in my wrath I smoke thee.

But in my favor have I had mercy on thee. Now, I need you to understand something. We can't sin like nothing matters.

You're a born-again believer. You are not your own. You cannot sin. And you need to know God still deals with our sin. You didn't get saved and God just take all your sin away and you're never going to have a problem again.

[29 : 42] You are called to obey God. And when you choose not to obey God, you need to know that just like he did with his chosen people, his elect in the Old Testament, he does not have one problem smiting you.

Go to Hebrews chapter 12. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 when he says y'all don't take the supper willingly or correctly. And that's why some of you are weak and some of you are sick and some of you are dead.

Because I don't want you messing around. You belong to me. Live a holy life. Lord, help me. I better go preach to them Spanish people again.

This don't play with sin. Amen. Let's honor God. Let's believe the book. Let's live the book. Father, thank you for the chance to serve you.