

Praying for Grace

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[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

If you are new or visiting with us, welcome. We are glad that you're here and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats but because we're following after Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which means that God has something to say to everyone in his word and so that's why we come to this portion of our service.

We take a look at what God has to say to us in the Bible. We're convinced and we believe that he has something to say to people who have been Christians their entire lives. He has something to say to people who have been Christians only for a short amount of time and he has something to say to people who would not consider themselves Christians, people who have doubts and questions and objections to Christianity.

God looks at all of those things in his word and so that's why we come to it today, this morning together. You know that we're in the book of Psalms this summer and I say this summer because I've gotten a few questions about how long we're going to be in the book of Psalms.

[1 : 15] I started at Psalm 1 and then I've just been going one after the other. And if you know the book of Psalms well, you know that if I kept doing that, we'd be here for over three years. Now that wouldn't be bad news, but I do want to let you know that we are going to be going to the book of 1 Peter come fall.

So it's great to do Psalms during the summer because they are one once-off units. Makes it helpful if you have a guest preacher coming in. It's helpful to take small bites out of the Psalms from time to time.

So we took a bite out of the Psalms in December. We're taking a bite out of the Psalms now and there may be some point in the future I'll reserve the right to take the bite out of the Psalms again. But fear not, we won't be here for three years.

However, I hope that many of you will be here three years from now. That being said, I've given you guys a lot of different images of ways to think about the Psalms. It is the hymn book, the prayer book of God's people in the Old Testament.

It was what people in the Old Testament used to worship God and it's continued in the New Testament. The book of Psalms is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book. And it's hard to summarize because it talks about so many different things as any hymn book or prayer book would.

[2 : 19] So it's the standard operating procedure for the Christian life. It's something that makes complicated things simple since it's poetry. I've talked a couple times about the ways that it's sort of like an Impressionist painting by Monet where there's differences between each painting but also things that are the same.

And I'm going to give you a new category this morning and it's this. The Psalms are not just all of those things but the Psalms also teach us how to pray. If you've noticed, all the Psalms that we've studied except for Psalm 1 and 2, which were introductions, were actually prayers, at least in part. Now part of this Psalm is a prayer, part of it's not a prayer. But if we want to learn how to pray, the Psalms perhaps teach us more than any other book because they give us different situations and then they show us, okay, in this specific situation, this is how you should pray.

So for example, we saw last week we had an imprecatory Psalm, which is a fancy way of saying a Psalm that asks for God's justice and His judgment. And that Psalm models for us how do we pray

when we face evil in the world and we need God to bring justice.

Psalms 3 and 4 were Psalms of lament. So how do we pray when we come up against difficult situations in life? How do we have hope in those situations? And now with this Psalm, we're going to be in Psalm 6.

[3 : 30] We have a new category. And that is a penitential Psalm. And that's a fancy way of saying this is a Psalm that asks God for forgiveness for sins. It's a Psalm that asks God for His forgiveness for sins.

It's also a lament Psalm. So sometimes these Psalm categories overlap because the Psalmist is asking for God's help because he finds himself in a bad situation. However, this bad situation, unlike the other bad situations, seemed to involve the Psalmist's personal sin.

In Psalms 2 and 3, the Psalmist had enemies who were coming up against him. He wasn't talking about his personal sin. In Psalm 6, he is. Now it's unclear if he's talking about sin that has led him into a bad situation or whether he's in a bad situation and it reminds him of his sin.

So it could be either one of those and I'll explain. So if it's situation number one, if it's a situation where it's a result of sin, it could be this is someone who has worked seven days and never rested, as we've talked about in the past, and his body is broken as a result.

It could be someone whose marriage falls apart because they neglected it. Because instead of loving their spouse, they hated their spouse. It could be someone who faces bankruptcy because of financial recklessness.

[4 : 49] Or it could be someone who has lied so much that no one in their family trusts them anymore and all their relationships have fallen apart. Regardless of what it is, it could be someone who, because of their own sin, has come to a situation that is terrible.

In this specific situation in Psalm 6, it seems to be a health issue. However, they also talk about their soul being troubled. So it seems to be this holistic sorrow and grief. However, because the psalm is not clear about whether that's the result or the cause of this lament, it could also be that the psalmist has found himself in a difficult situation that is not a result of his sin, but has caused him to realize his sin.

In other words, I know and many of you know people who have come back to God and come back to the church not because they have done something wrong, but because they've met suffering in their lives and it's reminded them of their need for God's grace.

It's reminded them of the presence of sin in the world. So I'm not saying that returning to church is the point. I'm saying that suffering sometimes reorients us to reality. Some of you have experienced this.

Maybe things were going well in life. You didn't feel like you had any need for God and then suddenly you lost your job. I know someone who was in a situation similar to that and one of the first things they did was they went back to church.

[6 : 02] Because that loss of that job, that suffering in their life helped them remember and realize the reality of sin in the world, the fact that they needed God and his grace. This happens often for people with severe sickness.

So sometimes you'll have sickness in your life like the psalmist does here. It's not a result of your specific sin, but it still reminds you of the reality of death. And that reminder of the reality of death reminds you of the reality of sin.

And so it helps you remember your need for God's grace, the fact that your sin deserves God's punishment. And yet he's offered his son as a sacrifice to pay the penalty.

So there's all kinds of situations that bring us to this psalm. Whether it's someone who is in sin and their sin has brought them to suffering, or whether it's someone who's suffering and their suffering has helped them realize sin, what we know is that this psalm talks about a situation that seems to be life-threatening.

The psalmist is afraid for his life. Things are that bad. And regardless of how he got there, it returns him to talk to God about his sin. He is facing severe suffering that reminds him of death and brings him face to face with the reality of his sin and his need for God's grace.

[7 : 16] And so that's the situation that we're coming up against with this psalm. And so with that in mind, we're going to read together Psalm 6. You'll find it printed in your worship guide. You'll also find it probably on your phone or maybe on your Bible.

So I invite you to turn there with me. And as we come, remember that this is God's word. And God's word, God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

And he also tells us that it's sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And so because of that, we read it now. I invite you to follow along with me, starting at verse 1.

Oh, Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. Be gracious to me, oh, Lord, for I am languishing.

Heal me, oh, Lord, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, oh, Lord, how long? Verse 4.

[8 : 12] Turn, oh, Lord, deliver my life. Save me for the sake of your steadfast love. For in death there is no remembrance of you.

In Sheol, who will give you praise? Verse 6. I am weary with my moaning. Every night I flood my bed with tears. I drench my couch with my weeping.

My eye wastes away because of grief. It grows weak because of all my foes. Verse 8. Depart from me, all you workers of evil.

For the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea. The Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled.

They shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Father in heaven, we thank you that you're not surprised.

[9 : 15] You are not surprised by the situations that we face. You're not surprised by the suffering that enters our lives. You don't forget about us even when we may have forgotten about you.

And you don't walk away from us even when we walk away from you. So we thank you for the reminder that these psalms are of your faithfulness and your compassion.

We ask that you would help us this morning to see what you have for us in your word. That you would show us our desperate need for your grace and your forgiveness.

And you would also show us how you meet us at that very same point of need. How you come and help us when we're suffering but we cry out to you. We ask these things not because we have earned them, but because Jesus has earned them for us.

And so we ask them in his name. Amen. I have mentioned to you all before that while I grew up on the East Coast, I was born in Texas.

[10 : 16] And the reason I was born in Texas is because at the time that I was born, my parents were teaching at a university there. They had a relatively short stint as college professors, after which we moved to the East Coast.

But during that time, they got to learn a little bit about the game of teaching college and the game of being a student in college. And so when we, their sons, went off to college, they gave us the talk.

And the talk was the talk of how you interact with college professors. Speaking from their experience, having been on the other side, they knew how to guide us in the right way. And one of the things they told us over and over again was this.

If you ever get in trouble, if you're ever struggling in a class, if you're ever afraid that you're not going to pass, there is one thing that you have to do.

You have to go and talk to the professor. Because if you go and talk to a professor, they might be willing to help you. They might be willing to work with you.

[11 : 16] They might see your interest in the class. They might understand that you're really trying the best that you can. And they might try to help you and they might show mercy to you. If you never talk to the professor and then you're failing quizzes and you're failing exams, they will have no mercy for you.

And so you should not be surprised if at the end of the semester you end up with an F, if you end up failing. You end up with a D minus or a C or whatever that grade is that you don't want. So you show up, you ask for help.

And if there's office hours, you use them. And if there's study sessions, you go to them. Because my parents understood as former college professors how important this was. That they knew from their own experience that when they had students who were struggling, the students who didn't tell them, who didn't come and ask for help, those students they assumed often, maybe they didn't care, maybe they weren't trying.

But for whatever reason, there was no opportunity for them to show them mercy. And so we knew this going. I used this at one point. My brothers, at least one of my brothers, used this advice at one point.

And it ended up being very helpful. And so there's a principle here that we see in this psalm as well, which is that mercy comes through relationships, and it comes to people who ask for it.

[12:34] Mercy comes through relationships, and it comes to people who ask for it. And in addition to that, mercy is only available to people who ask for it.

Mercy is only available to people who ask for it. The psalmist in this psalm, understanding the severity of the situation that he's in, the very first thing he does is he talks to God.

We see this all the way in verses 1 through 4. The very first part of this psalm is in address, O Lord. Verse 2, O Lord. Verse 3, O Lord.

Verse 4, you guessed it, O Lord. The psalmist finds himself in this very challenging situation, and the first thing he does is he comes and he speaks to God in prayer.

He's asking here at the very beginning for mercy. Rebuke me not, nor discipline me. Be gracious to me. Heal me. Turn, O Lord. Verse 4, deliver my life.

[13:42] And so at the very beginning, if we find ourselves, when we find ourselves face-to-face with the reality of sin, whether it's in the world, and it causes us to realize the sin in our lives, or it's sin in our lives that causes us to realize the consequences and the seriousness of it, the very first thing God does is he calls us to talk to him and ask for mercy.

The psalms teach us how to pray. Now, I had a meeting with someone outside of our church recently, and they were asking me some questions because they knew that I was a pastor, and so they thought, well, I have a pastor here, so I'm going to just tell them what's on my mind and see what they say.

And so the question that they had was, first of all, does prayer change things? And second of all, if prayer changes things, why in the world is that okay? The first answer is easy.

Yes, prayer changes things. Their objection about why it was okay was essentially, why is it that if God knows everything, why do I have to pray to him? Why do I need to talk to him since God is the omniscient, all-powerful one?

And if my talking changes things, how is that fair in any sense? So I explained it this way. God is not just some abstract being.

[14:57] If you believe in the Christian God, you believe in a person. You believe in a person, and sin is not just a problem of justice, although it is, but it's also a relational problem that we are alienated from God, that our problems in this world are problems of broken relationships.

Some people break it into four different quadrants. We have a broken relationship with ourselves. We have a broken relationship with God. We have a broken relationship with the world.

And then we have a broken relationship with others. And so does prayer change things? And if it does, how is that okay? And the answer is this.

We should not be surprised when our relationship with God functions like any other relationship.

God's a person, and so we should never be surprised when our relationship with God functions like any other relationship.

relationship. This is only what makes sense in any other situation. You would never think about your friend, or maybe you do, and if you do, you'd be wrong.

[16:03] This person understands the situation, therefore, they should act. And I don't have to go and talk to them. I don't need to go explain it to them. I don't need to say anything about it. They know I'm just going to leave it to them.

Now, some of you do do that in your relationships. relationships. You can't blame someone for not acting on something you didn't tell them. And you can't blame someone for not knowing something you didn't tell them.

And so this psalm, first of all, shows us that if we find ourselves, if we come up against the reality of sin and suffering, we have to talk to God. We have to pray to Him.

That is what prayer is. And that is part of why the psalms are so important. That's part of why we're spending a summer in the psalms. Not three years, but a summer. It's because it's a critical book, perhaps the most critical book, for us to understand what it's like to talk to God.

When we went through the psalms in December, I told you several times that the psalms are models of what it looks like for us to talk to God. God's a person. Our relationship with Him

functions like any other relationship.

[17 : 05] And so we follow the model of the psalmist here by talking to Him. This psalm, however, does not just show us our need to talk to God. It doesn't just show us our need to ask Him.

It also shows us how and what we ask Him for. It shows us how and what we ask Him for, especially, and specifically, in this psalm, when we're tempted to despair.

When we're tempted to despair, facing the reality of sin and evil in the world. And it sounds like, in this psalm, the sound of reality and evil in the psalmist's life. He tells us in verse 2, I'm languishing, my bones are troubled, he's experiencing physical symptoms.

Verse 3, my soul is also troubled, he's experiencing psychological, emotional symptoms. Verses 6 and 7, I'm weary with my moaning, every night I flood my bed with tears.

I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief, it goes weak because of all my foes. So how do we talk to God when we feel like that? When we feel like verses 6 and 7?

[18 : 08] When we understand the reality of sin and our need for God's grace. Well, the first thing the psalmist does is he appeals to God's mercy. Verse 4, Turn, O Lord, deliver my life, save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

And this steadfast love is the same word that we saw last summer, actually this time. It was this time last year that we were in the book of Ruth and we talked about God's never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

And if you recall, that's the Jesus Storybook Bible's translation of the Hebrew word hesed. And so the psalmist appeals to God's unbreaking, unfailing, never giving up love. And he appeals to it in verse 4 because of verse 1.

He appeals to God's love, who I would refer to as the good news of the gospel, because of the bad news of the gospel. Verse 1, Rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.

For the psalmist to understand the seriousness of sin in the world, it means that he understands that God has anger and wrath. And he knows that what he's experiencing is the effect of God's anger and wrath.

[19 : 19] And he also knows that God's anger and his wrath is something that is directed at him. And so he appeals to God's mercy here.

Now we talked about God's anger and his wrath last Sunday with Psalm 5, the psalm asking for God's judgment and his justice. And still, God's anger and wrath is something that's troubling for many people in this culture, in our culture.

And so I'll just say a couple things. If you struggle with the God of wrath and anger, what would you think of a ruler or a king who refused to punish the wicked?

What would you think of a ruler or a king who refused to punish the wicked? Would you consider that to be a good ruler or a bad ruler? It's a rhetorical question.

Last week in Psalm 5, I believe it was verse 5, it said, God hates all evildoers. Let's look at it from the other side.

[20 : 19] Would you want a ruler who did not hate evil? Do you want the governor, the mayor of Colorado Springs, the governor of Colorado to be someone who loves evil, who doesn't hate it, and who turns a blind eye to the wicked and the unjust?

Just like our relationship with God is like any other relationship. Now, there are things that are different about our relationship with God, but in terms of the relational aspects of it, we should not expect it to be different.

God as king is no different from any other good king. And so like any good king, any good ruler, his job is to hate evil and to bring justice.

What's offensive about the gospel, what's hard about Christianity is all of us agree that we want evil to be done away within this world. What we don't agree about is our role in that evil. To become a Christian, to turn away from sin in repentance is to acknowledge that we play a part in the evil in this world.

That it's not just people out there who deserve God's judgment and his justice, but it's also us. And so that's why the psalmist knows and understands the bad news of the gospel in verse 1.

[21 : 31] Rebuke me not in your anger nor discipline me in your wrath. But he also understands the good news of the gospel. He knows that God is not just a God of justice, but he's also a God of love.

And so that's why in verse 4, he appeals to God's steadfast love. In other words, he understands that he doesn't deserve God's favor. And he doesn't deserve God's deliverance, and so that's why it's called mercy.

That's why he asks God in verse 2 to be gracious to him. deliver my life. Save me for not, don't save me for the sake of everything that I've done. Don't save me because I'm a good person.

Don't save me because I've done a wonderful job raising my children. Don't save me because I'm an excellent employee. Don't save me because I care about the right causes.

Don't save me because I donate to the right organizations. No, save me for the sake of your steadfast love. This is why as Christians, we pray, when we end our prayers, we say, we ask these things in Jesus' name.

[22 : 40] Whenever we pray and ask things in Jesus' name, we are confessing that the things that we need that we're asking from God are things that we don't deserve. Instead, verse 1, we deserve God's anger and his wrath, but because of Jesus, God offers us his steadfast love.

In other words, everyone who has faith in Jesus, who has knowledge about the fact that Jesus came and died and paid the penalty for our sins, who believes that, has belief, not just knowledge, but knows that it's true, and then has trust, lives their life as if it's true, that person has God's steadfast love.

And so just like it would not be a good strategy to go to your college professor and tell them you're a terrible professor, the reason I'm not passing this class is because you can't teach. I'm an excellent student.

I've made A's in every other class. I can't understand why you can't give me an A. Although there are college students who do that. No, the right approach is to say, I am struggling and I need help. What I have and do is not enough, and that's what the psalmist is doing in this psalm. So if we are talking to God, the first thing we do is we appeal to his mercy.

[23 : 57] We understand the bad news of the gospel. We also know the good news of the gospel. The psalmist doesn't just appeal to God's mercy, though he also appeals to God's mission in verse 5.

For in death there is no remembrance of you. In shale, who will give you praise? In other words, if you do not deliver me, if I do not experience your steadfast love, our relationship is going to end. I am going to be cut off from you. When I die, I will be cut off from you. And I will no longer be able to give you praise. As we looked at in December, the very end of the psalter ends with multiple psalms of praise because that is the end of the Christian life.

And you may remember we talked about the modern forms of praise, one of which is the Amazon.com review, where you extol the benefits of the things that you love. And so in this verse, verse 5, we're not talking about some boring activity in life, but we are talking about when we talk about praise, understanding and living out and praising God for everything that he is and has done and has created in this world.

It's enjoying all the goodness that God's given us and then giving him the credit for it. It's enjoying all the good things that God has given us and giving him the credit for it.

[25 : 23] That's God's, one of the pieces of God's mission in the world. We talked about this in Nehemiah that he gave the Israelites to the ancient Near Eastern world that they would be a light to the nations that everyone would know and see what it's like when God's people walk in God's ways.

And so the psalmist here doesn't just appeal to God's mercy but God's mission. He says, this is what you want for the world. You want people who praise you. And so I appeal to your love and your faithfulness on the one hand.

I appeal to what you love on the other hand. And so we can do that as well. If we're appealing for God's mercy, we're appealing not just for him to save us from sin and the consequences of evil, we're also praying that he would give us over to all the good things that he has for us in this world. He would give us to, and so we're appealing to what God loves. It would be as if you go to someone and you're trying to get them to enlist in your cause.

Well, you need to figure out why they care about your cause. If I told you I want you to come and I want you to give me \$500, well, you would want to know, well, why do you want \$500?

[26 : 36] And why do I care about the thing that I'm giving \$500 to? I'd have to convince you this is for something that you love. Let me think. This is in Colorado Springs and that's the city that you live in and there's this problem that you're experiencing and these \$500 are going to help alleviate that problem.

I'm appealing to something that you love. I'm appealing to your mission. That's what the psalmist does in verse 5. Who will give you praise? You're a God who wants this world to be filled with your praise.

your salvation of me is going to give your mission. And so we can do the same thing when we pray to God as well. In fact, it's a helpful paradigm. If I'm praying for something, how does it relate to what God loves in the world?

Am I praying for something that is in line with what God wants with his mission? That's what the psalmist does here. He talks to God. He talks to God because our relationship with God is like any other relationship.

When he talks to God, he appeals to God's mercy because he knows that's the only footing he has. That outside of God's mercy, all that awaits him is anger and wrath. And he also appeals to God's mission because he goes that God's mission is connected with his steadfast love.

[27 : 52] That his mission is to save this world. To do away with evil fully and finally. And for this world to be filled with the praise and enjoyment of God.

And I mentioned at the beginning that the psalms teach us how to pray but they're not all prayers or they're not entirely prayers. And the psalmist's prayer ends here in verse 5.

His prayer is finished. Which raises the question, what happens after we pray? What happens when we pray?

What happens here for the psalmist? Well, after he prays, the psalmist has two realities. First reality, verses 6 and 7. He is still in a challenging situation.

He's still weary with his moaning. He's still flooding his bed with tears. His eyes still waste away because of grief. The psalmist's prayer does not immediately solve his situation.

[29 : 04] In fact, probably many of you have experienced this. It is rare that you would pray, Lord, I need your help in this particular situation. And then, three seconds later, the situation is solved.

Often, you are still left in verses 6 and 7.

You're still weary with your moaning. However, that's not the only reality for the psalmist. That's the first reality. He's still in his situation.

There is a second reality, verse 9 and verse 8. The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. So on the one hand, I'm still weeping. On the other hand, God has heard it.

Verse 9, the Lord has heard my plea. The Lord accepts my prayer. And so the psalmist has both of these realities in his hand. He has the continuing effects of the suffering that he's experiencing.

And he also has confidence that God has heard him because he's prayed. Like any other person or any other relationship of someone we go to and talk to, he knows that God now also knows and understands his concern.

[30 : 15] Now, there are enemies here in this psalm. I'm not going to talk a ton about this. It's not the focus of the psalm. Our best guess is that these enemies are people who are maybe gloating or delighting in the fact that the psalmist is down.

Whatever situation he's in, they find pleasure in it. It's not exactly clear. It does not seem that these workers of evil are the ones who've caused the situation. There are many other psalms for that.

In fact, we saw one of them in Psalm 3. However, he does have the confidence now, also in verse 8, to say, depart from me, all you workers of evil. And so, his situation too, his confidence in God, his knowledge that God has heard him and he can trust God for deliverance, also allows him to have a different perspective on his enemies.

And so, the point is this. The psalmist still lives in the first reality. He's prayed to God. The situation is still ongoing. So, he doesn't leave the first reality, but he lives in the second reality.

He hasn't left the first reality, but he lives in the second reality. He's still weeping, but the Lord has heard his plea.

[31 : 31] He is still filled with grief, but the Lord has accepted his prayer. And so, what he's doing now here is he's trusting. He's trusting that God has heard his prayer and that everything God has promised he will do, he will do.

I was talking to someone recently and they told me, you know, the psalms are kind of like a sitcom. Everything gets solved in one episode. I'm here to tell you this psalm is not like a sitcom.

Everything is not solved in this episode. The psalmist prays and at the end of this psalm he is still waiting for God to act. At the end of this psalm he is still waiting for God's deliverance.

And so, in some ways this is less like a sitcom, it's more like a Netflix show. We've seen the first episode. We're going to have cliffhangers to the very end. And then we're going to have a final cliffhanger to get us to go to the second episode or the second season.

So, the psalmist doesn't leave the first reality, he lives in the second reality. He does not know the end of the story, but he knows that God is faithful. He knows that God is faithful and he's promised to hear his prayer.

[32 : 48] And so, while the situation is not solved, one thing is. The psalmist knows that he will not ultimately face death because of God's steadfast love. The psalmist knows that he will not ultimately face death because of God's steadfast love.

This is a penitential psalm, it's a psalm of repentance. The psalmist knows that God's steadfast love, his forgiveness is for everyone who turns away from their sin in repentance and turns back to God.

And so, while he doesn't leave the first situation, he lives knowing that God's steadfast faithfulness is for him. And so, whatever happens, even when our mind and our body are failing us, like the psalmist is here, we know that God's faithfulness is more true.

When verses 6 and 7 are true in our lives, we know that verses 8 and 10 are more true. So, we don't deny reality, we don't have pie-in-the-sky hope, we don't pretend, but we also know that God's steadfast love is greater than what the psalmist is facing.

And so, what does the psalmist have because of his prayers? Right now, as we're in the midst of his story that we don't know the end of, we know that he has confidence and faith and hope and trust in God. And he has confidence and faith and hope and trust in God because he knows God's steadfast love, he knows his never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

[34 : 24] And that's the confidence that we have as well when we come to God in prayer as a person with whom we have a relationship with and we ask him to deliver us, to have forgiveness for us, to forgive us of our sins, to deliver us from his anger and his wrath, knowing that God forgives and saves anyone and everyone who comes to him in repentance.

And so while we don't necessarily exit the situation that we're in at the moment, we also live knowing that Jesus died so that we could live.

We live in that faith and that hope and that trust and that confidence. Not as a magical experience or experiment but because we've prayed and spoken to a person with whom we have a relationship.

I invite you to pray with me now and speak to that very same person. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you again for your word which gives us hope.

We ask that if we do know you, you would grow us up, that we would cry out to you and talk to you and speak to you more and more, that we would understand your care and your concern and your love for us.

[35 : 41] If we don't know you, we ask that you would help us to understand the reality of your wrath and your discipline but also the even greater reality of your forgiveness that you offer to us in Jesus.

I ask for everyone here that you would challenge us with the truth of your word and you'd also encourage us with it. That as you show us our need for your grace, you'd also show us how you meet and more than meet that need through Jesus.

We have not earned these things but Jesus has and so we ask them in his name. Amen.