

Nothing Can Stop The Kingdom's Advance (Visions 2 and 3)

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[0 : 00] Turn to the book of Zechariah, and we'll be reading Zechariah chapter 1, starting at verse 18 through chapter 2.

! He answered, These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise his head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people.

Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, Where are you going? He answered, To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and long it is.

Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel came to meet him and said to him, Run, tell that young man, Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it.

And I myself will be a wall of fire around it, declares the Lord, and I will be its glory within. Come, come, flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord, for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven, declares the Lord.

[1 : 35] Come, O Zion, escape you who live in the daughter of Babylon. For this is what the Lord Almighty says. After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you, for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye, I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them.

Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. Shout and be glad, O daughter of Zion, for I am coming, and I will live among you, declares the Lord.

Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. And I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.

The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the Holy Land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Let's rejoice as we hear his word preached. Well, when God wants to build his kingdom, can the governments of men stand against him?

[2 : 51] It's a very important question. Let me ask you a few more. You're watching the news, or however you get your news.

Maybe you don't watch it. You get it online. Is anything that you see out there going to slow down his work of building his kingdom?

And so when God takes up his tape measure and picks up his hammer and calls for wood, is anyone going to stop him? Be able to stop him from doing what he wants to do?

And that's really the all-important question as we come to this portion of Zechariah, because just like in Zechariah's day in 519 B.C., we need to see that those things out there, the hostile governments and the sinful world, they can't stop God.

And we need Zechariah's visions just as much as Jerusalem did back in 519 B.C. because they were beaten down. They were discouraged.

[4 : 01] They had lost their hope. They had lost their in-your-face courage. You know what I mean by saying in-your-face courage? When Peter was standing before the Sanhedrin and saying, well, you're telling me to do this, but you tell me, is it better to obey God or man?

And so I'm going to do what God says. That's what the early church had. And that's what Jerusalem had lost. And that's what is easy for us to lose as well.

And the problem was not that they were so weak. Peter wasn't incredibly strong. God puts his treasures in jars of clay so that the all-surpassing power might be seen as coming from him and not from them.

And so the problem is not our weakness. And the problem is not the enemy's strength either. The seed of the serpent has always been humanly and physically stronger than the seed of the woman.

They've always outnumbered us. They've always been richer than us. And so the problem is not our enemy's strength.

[5 : 10] That's not why we lose hope. And it's not because of our own weakness even if we keep those things in proper perspective. The real problem and the reason they were hopeless and the reason they were beaten down and stuck in the mud.

And the reason that we get so stuck in the mud sometimes. And where we feel like we have no spiritual fervor. And we're not making progress. And we're not doing something for the Lord.

Instead, we feel just beaten down. Is because they had lost sight of God. They had lost sight of God's power. They had lost sight of how in your face God is.

As he's building his kingdom. Because as we've been seeing in the book of Acts, God doesn't build his kingdom in some sort of abandoned peaceful valley that he finds.

He builds his church in the war zone. Where great cosmic powers are fighting. And he says, this is where I'm going to build my church. And so he doesn't find a nice quiet country where the leaders love him.

[6 : 13] He builds his church and the gates of hell can't stand against him. Now, gates are used for the defense. And so the picture is God is on the offensive.

God is attacking. He's advancing into the city of hell. And he builds his city with the fire all around him. And so, I guess, have we lost our courage?

Have we lost our hope? Our audacious effort? Where we have these big views. Where we're not only expecting great things for God, but we are attempting great things for God.

Well, if we are stuck in that place of low spiritual vitality. And that's where Zechariah was. And that's where Jerusalem was.

They were stuck in this place of low spiritual life. Well, we need to see what Zechariah saw. We need to get it.

[7 : 09] We need to capture it. We need to see something of God's power. Well, it's February 15th, 519 BC.

And the word of the Lord comes to a young man, probably a priest, named Zechariah. And, indeed, the word of the Lord was the star of the show.

The capital W. The word of the Lord, the Son of God. You see him all over the book of Zechariah. And he's this great hinge where they get lifted up out of their discouragement when they see him.

And so he's the angel of the Lord. He's the commander of the host of heaven. He's the judge. He's the advocate of his people. He's coming to them. He's called the branch. He's going to be the priest that wears a crown.

And so that's the audacity. That's the thing that God is doing that's amazing. That all the peoples of this world and all the rulers of Jesus' day didn't want to happen. And that is the thing that God is going to do.

[8 : 13] That the stone the builders rejected, he is going to make the cornerstone. And that's what beaten down Jerusalem needed. And if you yourself are beaten down or if we are discouraged, that is what we need to see as well.

That God has great plans for us. He has great plans for Jesus Christ. And when we see what he is going to do and how nothing is going to be able to stop him, then what that does is that revitalizes hope.

That puts the possibilities way out there. And it gives us something to stretch for. And so tonight what we want to do is look at the second and the third visions.

And we had those. I had those read. So the second and the third vision. Remember, we already saw the first vision of the horsemen coming who came all over the world.

And they realized that the whole world is in peace. And instead of being a good thing, the angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, prays and says, How long, O Lord?

[9 : 19] He sees Jerusalem's low estate and he prays for God to do something. And God answers him. And so that was the first vision. And God answers by saying, I'm going to go and build the city.

I am coming to them. Now, in the second and the third vision, we see it's growing on that. It's telling us how God is going to build it. What it's going to be like.

And so I want to look at these two visions under just four headings. And the first one is God's protection. God's perspective. God's presence. And number four is God's invitation.

And I looked up the thesaurus to try to find a P word. And the best thing I could come up with, God's proffer. And that didn't sound very good. So we're going with God's invitation. And so the first or the second in the first place, the second vision, what we see is God's protection.

So the first vision fades out of Zechariah's mind. And now a new vision comes into into his sight before his eyes. And Zechariah sees four horns.

[10 : 28] And I really wish there was more description. But I think what we can imagine is these are big. They are daunting. They are powerful. They are symbols of royal strength.

And so when we think of these horns, we should think of something frightening to the people of God. Dangerous. Powerful. Destructive to the people of God. In the Bible, the horn is generally a symbol of strength, of power.

Sometimes it's applied to evil. And sometimes it's applied to good. But the picture in each case is it's something strong. So Daniel saw a beast with horns.

John in Revelation saw the lamb. And he had horns. And John also saw the beast that came out of the sea. And that's a picture of hostile governments.

A picture of Rome. It's a picture of evil empires. And he has ten horns and seven heads. The dragon, Satan, has seven heads with ten horns as well. So Zechariah sees these four horns.

[11 : 39] And it's representing world powers. Four is the number of the world. A little bit later we read it's the four winds of heaven. So all the wind.

There's four directions. And so in Zechariah 6, which we're not going to get, obviously, when we get there, we're going to see that four chariots go out to the whole ends of the earth.

So this number four in these pictures are symbolic of the number, of the world. And so you have these four horns, world powers like Babylon, like Assyria, like Greece, like Rome, like all the other world empires like the United States right now.

A world empire, a world power. And Zechariah asks, what are these? He's not sure what they are. What are these? And the angel says, these are the horns that scattered Judah and Israel and Jerusalem.

Now you understand the logic of what's going on here. In the first vision, God said, I am coming and I'm going to build the city.

[12 : 46] And immediately when we hear something about that kind of a plan, the immediate question is, but what about our enemies? What about our enemies?

What about our enemies? And that's not just something Zechariah had to worry about. That's something that we worry about as well. Yeah. God, yes.

God might show mercy upon me if I repent and get up and get moving and get building up. But what about the world?

What about the flesh? What about the devil? They're so strong. What about hostile governments? What are they going to do to me? What are they going to do? And so it is an immediate question that we have.

If we're going to believe God and take him at his word, we have to deal with this reality that God is opposed. And the enemies oppose us and they oppose him. And so what about the world, the flesh, and the devil?

[13 : 48] What about hostile governments? Well, God isn't hiding the enemies from us. Instead, he says, okay, here they are. Now, this is what I'm going to do about them. Here is my protection.

And that's what you see in verse 20. Then the Lord showed me the four craftsmen. Craftsmen. It's a word that means any kind of craftsman.

People that worked on jewelry. People that built stone buildings. Carpenters. The Greek translation of this word is technon. And that's what Jesus was.

He was a technon. Sometimes translated a carpenter. But it doesn't necessarily mean that Jesus was a carpenter. He could have been a stonemason. A cabinet maker.

Even a shipwright. Someone who built boats. It's a very humble word. We don't have any craftsmen running for president.

[14 : 48] No cabinet makers. No stonemasons. And so the question is, can the craftsmen stand up against the horns? And the answer is yes, they can.

And we're not going to see it today. But we're going to see it in about two or three weeks. But these craftsmen are powered by the Holy Spirit.

They have divine power in their arms and in their hands. And so as they come, instead of being afraid of the horns, these people terrify them.

Can humble people terrify people on high? Well, when they're preaching God's word and God's power, they do. And so the powers of this dark world can't stand against God's craftsmen.

And so haven't we been seeing that in Acts? Humble, humble origins. Humble fishermen taking the gospel, making the people in charge.

[15 : 55] Asking them, what are we going to do about these people? And so the powers rage and God goes on and Christ goes on building this church. And so the church is invincible until its mission is completed.

And these craftsmen are God's protection for Jerusalem. And so in the immediate context, what God is saying is, don't worry about what those enemies out there.

You get to work on the temple. See, that's what they needed to do to show their repentance. They needed to get up and start building that temple. And so can they do that?

And God's saying, yes, I will protect you from those enemies out there. Now for us, as we apply it to us and as we take it into the New Testament, where Jesus Christ is building his temple, his kingdom throughout this earth, here's God's protection for us.

Our enemies are just as strong, just as fierce, but we are not thrown down. Empires are thrown down. Empires are thrown into the dustbin of history and forgotten, and the church keeps praying.

[17 : 06] A thousand years the same. Voltaire, maybe you've heard of him. He's this French Enlightenment philosopher, leader. And he said, with my pen, I will throw down the church that it took the 12 apostles to build.

And that's exactly what the French Enlightenment tried to do. Tried to do away with all religion in France.

As much as they could. But, where is Voltaire? Where is Robespierre? Where is the French Enlightenment and the French Empire?

Half of you don't even know what I'm talking about. Why? They're forgotten. They oppose God, and yet the church prays on.

No power of hell, no scheme of man can stop God from doing his work. So, do you see, again, the audacity of God? He knows the enemies are there, but he's providing protection for them.

[18 : 08] He will take care of them. He will terrify them. He'll throw them down. And when he does, the builders will build on. And that's what Zacharias people needed to see.

And that's what we need to see in the midst of our hostile, our growing hostile environment. That's what we need to see as we look out of this world. Yes, we have enemies.

But God has ways of protecting us. So, that's the second vision. In some ways, it's the shortest. It's the most ignomantic. It's the most, you wish there were more details.

But the main point, you get it. God is going to protect his people as they go to work. Now, the third vision. That's chapter two.

The third vision. And here we see God's perspective. How God is looking at things. What God has in mind. And that's a very important thing, too.

[19 : 06] If we are going to get unstuck, one of the things that we have to do is get out of our small frame of reference. Our small thinking.

Because one reason that we get stuck is because we build bars and walls around what we think is possible. What we think God is going to do. And that's what happened there.

And we also need to see that God has something big in mind. And when we get to think God's thoughts after him, it stretches us out. And it gets us unstuck.

And so, in the third vision, we see God's perspective. So, the second vision fades. And this new vision fades in. And there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand.

We would say a tape measure. And so, I don't know if you've seen those 100 foot long tape measures. I think that's what I think of. We need something nice and long. And that's what he has in his hand.

[20 : 04] And the question is, well, where are you going? What are you doing with that tape measure? What are you off to measure? And he says, I'm going to measure Jerusalem. So, there's the city.

I'm going to go measure it, how wide and how long it is. And that makes sense. He's thinking, okay, God's going to rebuild the city.

So, the first step is we need to see how big the city is. And so, we can get to work on the walls. If we're going to build up the walls, we have to know how big the city is. But there's a problem.

Again, there's a problem. That sounds good on the surface. And this man probably is a picture of the people in Zechariah's day. He's thinking, God is going to rebuild the city just like it was.

So, he's going to go measure the physical city of Jerusalem and see what it was like. Now, I think what we need to imagine when we're thinking about Jerusalem in that day is not a city full of people, but a city with a lot of abandoned buildings and much too big for the amount of people that are there.

[21 : 14] And so, it was an act of faith for this man to say, well, God is going to fill up this city. What's left? But his expectations are too small.

So, this man is a picture of human expectations for the city. He's going to measure what is visible, what is seen, what man can measure. So, one commentator wrote this.

This man has believed the prophet's message that Jerusalem will be rebuilt. And that's good. But he expects the new Jerusalem to be no different than the old.

And he would therefore conform its measurements to those before its fall. So, he believes God. And he's thinking God is going to rebuild just like what was there before.

So, he's thinking a visible city with walls so wide, so wide and so long. But again, what you see is the perspective, the imagination is too small.

[22 : 17] And that's why another angel comes from God and stops this man and says, don't bother trying to measure what is there. Run and tell that young man Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it.

So, man's view, man's imagination for the church or what God is going to do is so big. Measurable.

But it's too small. And God's view is, I'm going to build a city without walls. A city too big to keep people trapped in behind walls because they're going to be flowing over, spilling out bigger and bigger.

And so, often isn't that the case? That our human perspective, our imagination about what will be is tied too much about what has been.

Stuck in the past. But God says, don't waste your time measuring what was because that's not what it's going to be. You're looking in the wrong direction.

[23 : 23] And again, there's this contrast between what we think or what man imagines, the human view of the church, and God's view.

And so how the world loves to measure us. We're growing. We're shrinking. We're doing this. This is what is going to happen. Voltaire thought Christianity would die in his age.

Nietzsche, and he was wrong. Nietzsche, the German philosopher, said at the end of the 19th century, God is dead. And he meant no one needs God anymore.

He's an old idea. A lost cause. We've moved past him. And now man will be the measure and the sum of all things. And yet, Nietzsche is dead.

And his philosophy has come into vogue. And it has already gone out of vogue. And yet, the kingdom of God, the whole time, is filling the earth.

[24 : 29] Filling the earth. And so when you're looking at the church, are you taking your measuring lines from what is presently or what God has promised?

And when you're thinking and imagining the possibilities for the church, are you looking at what is now? Or are you looking at what God is saying, this is what it's going to be?

Or are you doing something even worse than that and maybe saying, taking the measuring line and the measuring tape from this world and you measure things that the world measures like popularity and numbers and surveys and money.

How much money do they have? And we're like that young man. We need our measuring lines corrected. We need our imaginations corrected.

We need to see what God has said. Jerusalem isn't going to be trapped behind any kind of walls. It's going to overflow. And that's what we saw in Acts last week, didn't we?

[25 : 33] Where did the church begin? I suppose it really began maybe 120 people in that upper room and then 3,000, but they're all there in Jerusalem, all there in that one city.

And the great persecution happens. And at the end of Acts 9, we read it just today. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Galilee. That's where the church is spreading to.

And in a couple of chapters, it's going to Antioch. Gentiles. And then in a few years, it's going to Asia. And then it's going to Greece. And then it's going to Rome.

And the march has not stopped yet. So where do we get our expectations? From what we see? What we see going on in Africa?

What we see going on in Asia? What we see going on in the church? What we see going on here in America? Or is it what God has promised? Because what God has promised is actually what's going to be.

[26 : 35] And what about our expectations for ourselves? Personal expectations. I don't know about you, but I think our expectations for ourselves are often way too small.

We want to be happy. We want to be secure. We want to be comfortable. But God isn't after making us happy and secure and comfortable.

He's after making us glorious and great. In mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis said, imagine yourself as a living house.

God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps you can understand what he is doing. He's getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on.

And you knew that those jobs needed doing. And so you're not surprised. But presently, he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense.

[27 : 42] What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one that you thought of. Throwing out a new wing here. Putting on an extra floor.

Running up towers. Making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a nice, decent little cottage. But he's building a palace. He's intending to live in it himself.

Again, man's perspective. My perspective. My perspective. And God's perspective. The people in Zechariah's day needed to dare to dream bigger.

They needed to put away their small dreams and take up God's big dreams. One reason I love Christian biographies is because they tell me what is possible for God to do in a man.

Because if I just look around me and look at me, then I would say, well, a Christian can only be this big. This godly. This self-denying.

[28 : 46] And then I read people like David Brainerd and Jonathan Edwards and Athanasius and Augustine. And then I get a real picture of what God can do in a man, in a woman, in a Christian's life.

So being spiritually stuck like Jerusalem was and like we can get, it is a perspective problem. It's an imagination problem. We're looking through windows, shades when God is telling us to come outside and to feel the breeze and the sunshine.

And so my human perspective, God's perspective, we need to get the right one. If we're going to get unstuck, we need to get the right one. So that's God's perspective.

And then in the third place, we see God's presence. God's presence. Now a city with no walls, as he just said the city's going to be, if you're back in those days, you're immediately thinking that is a big problem.

It's a big problem. But God says, I myself will be a wall of fire around it. I myself will be a wall of fire around it.

[29 : 58] So who needs walls when you have God surrounding you? You know, Jerusalem had stone walls for years and years and it didn't protect them.

It didn't protect them. Genghis Khan said, it's not the stoutness of the walls, it's the spirit of its defenders that determines the strength of a city.

And that wasn't lost on Zachariah because all around him were just the burnout shells of walls that didn't do any good.

The people had put their hope and their trust in them and it was clear, if you had eyes to see it, that God was the only one who could protect them.

Only he can be a wall of fire. Now, think about that. A wall of fire is a wall that defends you, but it also destroys anyone who comes into contact with it.

[31 : 01] It defends those on the inside, but it destroys those on the outside. That's what kind of wall God can be. And so, you know, what a blessed people we are to be inside that wall of fire.

When you become a Christian, you get put inside that city and now instantly, you are invincible because God is around you. What a blessed people we are.

And so do you see yourself inside the wall where no evil thing can come unless he says so? Do you see yourself in there? I think a lot of worry and anxiety would just wither away if we saw what was around us.

It would dry right up if we saw the things as they are. God has a wall of fire around us. And it was Israel's folly all along to trust in those walls and to trust in other things instead of God.

It's almost invariably in the Old Testament, again and again, Israel goes and puts their trust out in Egypt, in Assyria, in Babylon, in all these different places and it ends up turning around and destroying them.

[32 : 12] But Hezekiah prays and one angel is dispatched and 180,000 people and in the morning all the dead bodies.

And we need to learn that same lesson. What do we imagine to be unscalable walls? We just memorized Proverbs which said, the wealth of the rich is their fortified city.

They imagine it an unscalable wall. Nothing can get over this wall. But is it? How easily do we trust our money?

But no amount of money will save you if God turns against you. If God decides to lower you into poverty, no amount of money will be able to save you from His hand and money is worthless in the day of wrath.

Maybe it's not money. Maybe it's political leverage. That's where a lot of Christians are right now, having the right people in office or hoping to have better people in office. But God says, don't put your trust in princes.

[33 : 16] So we vote, yes. But do we put our trust in those people? No. God says, I'll be a wall of fire around you. And so Jerusalem was invincible until the temple was built.

They had everything they needed to get to work on this temple. And the same is true for us. A wall of fire. And then God says, so we're talking about His presence. And here He has a wall of fire, but He's also a glory within.

A glory within. What's the real glory of the church? What's the real glory of what's going on right now? The church gathered.

It's not our beautiful decorations, as nice as they are, Joe's. It's not our beautiful building. It's that God is here, living among us.

For some people, it's all about how many people you have. And again, I would echo what Pastor John said today. Are numbers just totally irrelevant?

[34 : 20] No. Numbers have meaning. But the better question, to see the glory of something, is God there? See, what good would it be if we had 10,000 people and God wasn't here?

I preached down in Warsaw, I guess at the end of last year, at the end of December, and there was only about 20 people there. But you know what?

God was there. And it was a good time. It was a wonderful time. So who needs a big building? A glorious cathedral? A huge band? Or whatever else?

Nothing wrong necessarily with any of those things. But none of that is glory. We're going to a city, brothers, we're going to a city that the sun doesn't even need to shine.

Because God is its light and the Lamb is its lamp. So what lame, temporary things we boast in. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom.

[35 : 26] Let not the strong man boast in his strength of the rich man and his wealth. But let him who boasts boast in the Lord that he, in me, let him boast and that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord.

So here's this vision. God is a wall of fire around Jerusalem. He's a wall of fire around us. And he is here within us. A glory within.

And now, the greatest kindness of all is how this ends. And we would say, who wouldn't want to live in that city? Here's the greatest kindness of all, is that it ends with God saying, come.

Come. Come to the city. Does God keep people away from and out of his glorious city? No, here he is. He's saying, come.

He's saying to the scattered people, come. And later, and we're going to see this next week, he's going to say to the nations, come. Be joined to the Lord. So the people are scattered, but God says, come together.

[36 : 33] Join the church. Join the city of God. Hebrews 12 says, but you've come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.

You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels and joyful assembly to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

So is God keeping people out? When you become a Christian, you come to the heavenly city. You come into the church, and so is God keeping people out? No, he's saying, come.

Come. Flee from the land of the north. That's not take your time to get to the city. That's leave as quickly as possible to get into this city.

So what did Jesus tell us? That the kingdom of God is like, the kingdom of heaven, what is it like? He says, it's like a king throwing a banquet for his son. And everyone is invited.

[37 : 40] So God has thrown open the doors of heaven, and he's encouraging people to come in, hungry, poor, destitute, come in. Now it is true, in that parable, a man was thrown out because he didn't have the right clothes on.

You have to have the wedding garments. But the wedding garments aren't anything that we've ended up providing. It's Jesus' blood and righteousness.

So, go to Christ. He's the door into the new city. So, we have to be dressed. We sing it, naked, come to thee for dress.

And so you don't have to bring your own clothes. You don't have to gather up your own righteousness. You don't have to fix up your old suit. You can come empty-handed and get your clothes from Jesus.

And so are you nasty and dirty. That's okay. Come to Jesus. Come as you are and Jesus will give you everything you need. But you have to flee.

[38 : 49] That's definitely on the pages here. You can't stay where you are. You can't stay in your old life. You have to, if you're going to get to the city of God, no one is born there.

We're all born far away and we have to flee there. And you have to get up from where you are and you have to leave. I guess, part of getting unstuck, whether you're a Christian or an unbeliever, but how do you get spiritually unstuck?

It always involves getting up and leaving. Leaving your sin. Leaving your ways of thinking. Leaving your life. Leaving your priorities. Leaving all the things that you've dreamt about.

Leaving those and saying, Lord, your kingdom come in my heart. And so there it is. The invitation is in your mailbox. You're far away, but the invitation is right there in your hands.

Will you get up and leave? Will you get up and leave? Or will you stay where you are? Stuck in your sin. Stuck in your guilt. Stuck in your shame.

[39 : 58] Going nowhere. And meanwhile, God is saying, come. Come. Just as you are. Come to Jesus. And be saved.

Let's pray. Thank you, God, that wherever we are, that if we would leave our sin and repent and put our faith in you and what you've promised and what you have said and what you've said that you could make us and you will make us if we come to you, that you will accept us and you will work again powerfully in us.

So we pray that you would revive your work. We pray that you would come and save tonight. That as this week goes by, that none of us would be stuck where we are, but we would begin moving forward into obedience, into greater thoughts of you and greater love for you and showing that love, showing that love in our actions and in our deeds.

Please take us out of ourselves and our death and our small thoughts and help us to come to Jesus and find in him everything we need, life and godliness, spiritual zeal and vigor, everything we need.

Help us to find it in him. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.