

Have Mercy

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[0 : 00] Psalm 123. A Song of Ascents. I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God till he shows us his mercy. Have mercy on us, O Lord. Have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt. We have endured much ridicule from the proud, much contempt from the arrogant. Let us hear God's word. Two simple words. Have mercy. Have mercy. Time and again, God's people, we've cried, have mercy. Those words fill the Psalter. [1 : 11] Psalm 4, verse 1. Be merciful to me and hear my prayer. Psalm 6, 2. Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint. Heal me.

My soul is in anguish. I had to cut out about nine or ten other references in Psalms. Let's go to the New Testament. In Matthew 9, two blind men cry out, have mercy on us, son of David. Matthew 15, a mother, maybe mothers, you can relate to this woman. She's a Canaanite. She's an outsider.

She knows it. She knows she doesn't belong. She knows she doesn't have any right to be asking anything from the Lord Jesus. But Lord, son of David, have mercy on me.

My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession. This hellish tormentor had driven her to the point where in agony, all she can cry is, have mercy on me.

[2 : 21] I can't make this better. I can't take care of this. Have mercy. Two chapters later, it's a father's turn, and he is on the ground in front of Jesus pleading in anguish.

Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers greatly. He often falls into the fire, into the water. have mercy on me. Some of you have known, many of you have known, times of real darkness.

And the only prayer that you can utter is the prayer offered in Psalm 123. Three times he says, have mercy. Psalm 23 is short, and that's good.

It's good for when you need something short and sweet, and you need words to say to the Lord because your heart is in anguish. It's short, but it has everything we need, and it maps right on to where we are so often.

When pain is so real, agony is so palpable, that you have a difficult time thinking long and hard thoughts.

[3 : 34] You need concrete, simple thoughts, and Psalm 123 just maps right on to where we are. It's a song of a sense. Not so long ago, I think it's probably five or six years ago, it's hard for me to remember, but I did a whole series going through these psalms.

We took one a month during our luncheons, and maybe you remember these are pilgrim songs. They're songs that the Israelites would sing as they went up to Jerusalem for those feast days, and there is, at least noticeably, a progression.

As you go through the psalms, you start far away, and you end up, when the songs are all over, you end up in the temple worshiping and praising God. They're psalms for travelers, and they're for us. To be a believer is to be a child of Abraham, and you remember he had no real home. He traveled, he sojourned, he was an alien and a stranger going home.

So they're here for you. If that's how you feel, like this world is not my home, I am often in a place where I need mercy.

[4 : 53] Well, let's look at Psalm 123. We have four very simple headings, and they're four questions. Who we look to, how we look, what we look for, and why we look.

Who we look to, how we look, what we look for, and why we look. The last time I preached this, which I don't know again how long ago that was, I started with the last point, why we look.

Because we want to know in the Psalms the specific reason we're looking. And it comes at the end. We're filled up with much contempt.

The proud are pouring out their scorn on us. That's the specific reason. But I just want you to notice that the psalmist leaves that for the end. Because in some regards, in a certain sense, it's the least important question of all.

Because in the Christian life, in the believer's life, the reason is going to change. The reason we need mercy, the reason we're going to the Lord, it's going to change. It's going to change from situation to situation.

[6 : 04] The other three questions, though, get us to the place where we need to go. They get us to the place where we need to be. They get us to the person we need to get to.

We said this a lot last week in the preaching. Roger referred to it again in the Sunday school. The Christian life is about growing to know the Lord.

It's a relational experience. Psalm 123 begins with that relationship. It's a prayer. It's a prayer. And in prayer, you begin with the Lord. You begin with God. Everything else is of secondary importance. And so no matter the agony, we need the Lord.

So we're going to start with question one is who we look to. You see that at the very beginning. I lift my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven.

[7 : 05] Now this already helps us. It already helps us because this is how I am. And since I'm no different than you are, I'm sure this is how you are.

My tendency in pain, my tendency in darkness and agony and uncertainty is one of two directions. I fall in on myself. So I close the door of my heart.

And my tendency in the darkness is to close the door of my heart, to shut the eyes of my faith and to look, just stare into the abyss, to stare into the trouble.

And I just keep going over it. I ruminate upon it to focus on the pain, to focus on the people causing the pain, to focus on the failure, the sin, my failure, their sins.

That's one way that I have the tendency to look. And you'll notice that's not upward. That's not to the Lord. That's in here. The other focus that I tend to have is on what I need to do.

[8 : 15] My wife will tell you I'm an invariable problem solver, sometimes to my own harm. But I can be relentless about looking for solution. So this is happening.

This is the situation. Whatever the situation is. Now what do I need to do to make it better? And so I can go searching for answers, for solutions. What do I need to do?

What can I do? Maybe I can try this. Maybe I can say that somehow. This isn't working so let me try something else. It's like I'm threading the needle and if I can just figure out how to just take the right tack then I'm going to be able to solve this.

I'm going to be able to get rid of this pain. I'm going to be able to make this all go away. The whole mess is a knot and maybe you've seen those knots where it just looks like just a mass of rope but if you know just the right place to pull the string the whole knot comes apart.

Well, that's how I tend to look at problems is okay, I just need to find the exact right thing to do and if I can pull that string that's going to resolve the situation.

[9 : 20] Well, now that's me. Isn't that you? One of those two things. Either naive optimism or paralyzing despair.

Now sometimes it's a mixture of both. Sometimes it's alternating. Sometimes if I have a good idea and I think I'm going to be able to solve this I get hopeful and then when it fails I'm in despair.

Well, I can tell you the whole time what are we doing? No matter if you're in despair or you're hopelessly or foolishly optimistic your eyes are my eyes aren't lifted to you.

But that's where we need to begin. That's where we need to go. I lift my eyes to you. Brothers and sisters we need to resolve and I use that word intentionally because resolving something is realizing you're not going to do this naturally.

This is not natural to sinful men. You need to resolve to look to God. Our eyes will look anywhere. Around, down, inside, outside, to us, to other people but it won't look up.

[10 : 36] that's part of that distortion that Stan was talking about. That's part of the indwelling sin and that's why we need to resolve.

So, I resolve, I'm going to lift my eyes to you. To you. Well, to who? It says, to you whose throne is in heaven. Jesus said, pray our Father.

And he didn't just say pray our Father, he said, pray our Father in heaven. That's who we're looking up to. That's what the eyes of faith see. So, we don't just look up.

We don't look up to the sky. We don't look up to some impersonal power. We need to thank God if we have the eyes of faith to see. Unbelievers, they see the sky but they don't see the one who's enthroned above the sky.

They see the clouds but they don't see the one who rides upon the clouds and delivering his people. They don't see the Lord. But that's what faith does. That's what we are doing in prayer.

[11:38] Our eyes, the eyes of our faith are piercing heaven. They're piercing the darkness. They're piercing the clouds. They're piercing the troubles. Moses saw him who was invisible.

That's what faith does. Faith sees him who is invisible. And that's what prayer is. And that's what we do in prayer. We pierce the skies. Our eyes look past the troubles, past the darkness, past the storm.

All those troubles are gathered around us and we see him whose throne is in heaven. Isaiah 40, 22, he sits enthroned above the circle of the earth and its people are like grasshoppers.

so these men that are tormenting us that we're going to meet a little bit later on, they're tormenting us, but we need to look up.

When all these troubles are gathering around us and assailing us and storming against us, our hearts, we need to look up. But what do we see is we see he's in heaven.

[12:46] He's in heaven. He's out of reach of the troubles of mankind. He laughs at the rebellion of men.

So, Psalm 2 has that picture of all men together conspiring, all the kings and all the rulers and all the authorities. There's a lot of talk about conspiracies in our day.

Only one is for certain and one is for sure and that is there is a conspiracy of all of mankind against the Lord and all of man's might and strength and power are conspiring and saying, we are not going to let God rule over us.

And to that, the Lord laughs. There are grasshoppers at his feet. And verse 2 says, our eyes look to the Lord, our God.

This is important because it's not just enough to see that God is sovereign, high, and exalted. We need to see that. But that's never where the Bible leaves us. With God who is sovereign.

[13:52] He's the Lord, our God. Verse 2 says, Remember, we're asking, who are we looking to? And we're saying, we're looking up. We're looking to heaven.

We're not looking at ourselves. We're looking to the Lord and we're seeing him who sits enthroned above the skies and he's our God. The Lord. You'll notice that that is the all capital version.

Capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. That is the Hebrew word Yahweh. That is the covenant name for God. So he's not just up there ruling all.

And all men are like grasshoppers. That is true. But he has a people. a people that he's in relationship with.

That he loves. We saw it in Sunday school. The great act of redemption is to bring a people who don't know God into this loving relationship with God.

[14:57] So he's not just up there ruling over all. He has a people. His very own. The people close to his heart. I think that's Psalm 149. These are the people that are close to his heart.

You know, there are, let's just say that. There are a people that are far away from God. And there are people that are close to his heart. He carries them everywhere he goes.

No matter where they are, his mind is upon him. And no matter what he is doing, his heart is on them. These are his friends. The men have been studying on Wednesday night the life of David.

And what we've seen on, I think, three or four occasions is David and his friend Jonathan making a covenant together. They're not just satisfied to have just a regular friendship.

They have a sworn covenant friendship. And that's what this is. This is what that word is. This is what this is talking about. That's who we are looking to. He's our friend. Our covenant friend.

[16:02] Our covenant God. In relationship to us, he's the Lord, he has a throne, but he's our friend, and he's our father in heaven. Now, he says, you are my people.

And we say, you are our God. There's mutual ownership here. That is the whole heart and the glory of the Christian life. Martin Luther famously said, the Christian faith is all about personal pronouns.

I am yours, you are mine. And so God says to us, mine, and we say to him, mine. I belong to you. You belong to me.

Now, what that means is, what it means is he's the Lord, our God, is that all that God is for these people who are close to his heart, for you, believer, all that God is, is now bent for your good. God. So all of his wisdom and his power are bent toward your good. And I, can I say this reverently? It's bent before you to serve you because that's what love does.

[17:10] Isn't that what Jesus did? Isn't that what we're seeing in Philippians chapter two is he humbly serves the ones he loves. So that trouble that you are, you are in, the trouble that you are in, whatever it is, you know, I can honestly say I don't know how long it will last.

We need to be honest about things sometimes. I don't know how long that particular difficulty that you are in will last. I don't more or how it will turn out.

Or will it turn out in this life? Some things in this life don't turn out the way we want them to. They never get better.

We go to heaven with tears on our faces. We go to heaven with tears and sorrows in our heart. And that's why he has to wipe them away.

Because they never got better here. It never was resolved. But that doesn't mean that God's wisdom and power and love isn't bent before your great good, your ultimate joy.

[18:23] God's Because in heaven you will be able to say, you know what, there was no answer down here. I never got to the point where I could pull that string and the knot fell apart and it all went away.

It all got better. In heaven you will say, you know what, there was no answer down there. it didn't necessarily get easier. But I kept looking and I kept crying for mercy and here I am.

And I can say that you know what, no tear was missed. No sigh went unrecorded in his book. Now, and you will be able to say, now all has been answered.

Those troubles were working for me in eternal weight of glory. God has been merciful to me. He was merciful to hold me up and keep me through it and now he's been merciful and giving me eternal glory.

But until then, you're never going to find peace until you begin where this psalm begins. Our eyes look to you, to you whose throne is in heaven.

[19:40] Now, the second question is how do we look? How do we look? It's verse 2. I hope you have your Bibles open. I hope you're looking at that. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid looks to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord, our God, until he has mercy.

Now, this is such a sweet, gentle picture. This is a picture that heartbroken people, that hurt people, that weak people, that afraid people, understand.

I'm just a slave. I'm a nobody. I'm a maid servant. Don't you love when Mary and Hannah and those other ladies, when the Lord comes to them and they say, I'm just a maid servant.

I'm a nobody. You're my God. You are for me and I can cry out with confidence, my father.

There is a certain amount of courage and confidence that faith gives you, but it's so perfectly mixed with something else that you are a great somebody and I am a great nobody and I need you.

[20:56] I'm completely dependent upon you. Turn over maybe four or five pages to Psalm 145. This helps us to understand what the psalmist is getting at.

There's a couple of times in the Psalms where the same sort of imagery gets taken up. Psalm 145 verse 14.

The eyes, there's the eyes again, the eyes of all look to you and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand, there's your hand again, and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

That's what is going on in Psalm 123. Eyes are looking. And what are they looking for? They're looking for God to provide for them. So here we all are.

We all. All creatures. All creatures. We all need the Lord. So cows and deer and sheep and lions and sharks and everything.

[21:59] He opens up his hands and he feeds. He feeds us. Listen to Psalm 104. You don't have to turn there.

The earth is full of your creatures. They all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up. And when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

And when you hide your face, they're terrified. When you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. That's what Psalm 123 is talking about.

Completely dependent. That's what a slave is on his master. That is what a maidservant is upon her mistress. So do you feel hopeless?

Do you feel desperate need? Well, then you are on the right track. Do you feel desperate need?

[23 : 04] Then you are on the right track. And now you're praying. You've gone past saying your prayers. You've gone past religion.

And now you're praying. someone once said, if I could teach desperation, then I can teach someone to pray. That's, you know, that's the difference between the Pharisee who went home condemned and the tax collector who went home justified.

One said his prayers, but the other cried, have mercy on me, a sinner. See, he had nothing. He had nothing.

He needed everything. He was helpless. If you don't save me, I am not going to be saved. Now, some of you are not saved here, not because you don't want to, but because you don't want to enough.

You kind of want to be a Christian. You kind of want your sins forgiven. You kind of sort of need to be saved, but you show me a sinner who is desperate.

[24 : 15] Lord, open your hand, give me mercy, or I die, and I'm going to show you someone who is near to the kingdom of God, and he is there pounding on the door.

Save me, or I'm ruined. I know I'm talking to some of you. I know I'm talking to some of you. That maybe you just kind of want to be saved.

Kind of want to be saved is not going to get you saved. I'm desperate. I need mercy. I'm a nobody. I'm a nothing.

I need everything. Please have mercy. My eyes are looking to you. So we look humbly. We look dependently. You also notice in Psalm 123, if you need to turn back there, turn back there.

We look continuously. That's that little word at the end of verse two of till he shows his mercy. We till that's a time word.

[25 : 16] That's a we are going to do this until he answers us till he shows us his mercy. Again, maybe some of you are not saved because you you haven't gone long enough.

You haven't shown that you were desperate. You haven't waited upon the Lord till he shows his mercy. That's what true faith does. We will not quit until he shows his mercy.

Some of you maybe are knocking on the door of God for salvation, but there seems to be no answer. Here's my keep knocking. Keep knocking.

Double down till he shows his mercy. The city of Mansoul was lost. It was condemned. It was ruined. They knew they needed help from Lord Emmanuel because only he could save.

They got a petition ready to send to their Lord. There was an argument about who should carry the petition. We need help.

[26 : 23] Who should we send with this petition to speak for us? At first they said, Mr. Gooddeed, he can do it. good. But they soon knocked that down, that idea down.

Mr. Gooddeed was just his name. He had nothing that could really impress Lord Emmanuel. So who should we send? And so at last they said, we'll send Mr.

New Desires because he wanted the Lord Emmanuel to come and save. and they sent with Mr. New Desires to others Mr.

Wet Eyes because they knew that Lord Emmanuel could not bear to look upon the tears of the needy and the brokenhearted. And for a third they sent Mr.

Persistent. And so off they went. And Mr. New Desires cried first, have mercy on us. Come and save us.

[27 : 26] We want you. We want you. We need you. We want to be saved. We need to be saved. And Mr. Wet Eyes cried and cried, save us, have mercy on us.

But there was no answer. And that's when Mr. Persistent took over. And he said, men, we have to cry again. And he took to pounding.

And when Mr. Wet Eyes was all cried out, you get to that place, don't you? You have no more tears left. And he was all cried out. And Mr. New Desires was thinking, maybe we should go home. Mr.

Persistent just kept pounding on the door, kept pounding on the door. Have mercy on us, have mercy on us. And he wouldn't give up. And you know what? At last the door swung open and it was

Jesus.

And he said, come in and eat, refresh yourself. I'm going to go get my army ready. And I'm going to come into your town today. We look until he has mercy.

[28 : 26] We are not done looking until he gives us the answer, until he gives us mercy. So again, thank God for faith. Do you realize your faith is a gift from God?

There's no way it could survive the pounding and the length and the duration that it has to go to. But you know what? If our faith was just from us, then we would have given up a long time ago. And that's one evidence of faith that isn't genuine, that isn't saving. It goes on for a little while and then it dries up. It cannot handle the heat of the day.

But faith that comes from God, genuine faith, is a gift from God. It's his work in us. And we would die in the darkness and the smoke and the difficulty of it. But faith lives on.

And it has its ebbs and flows. It has its ups and downs. It's sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker. But you know what? The heartbeat never goes away. It's always alive. And so have mercy, have mercy, have mercy until it reaches home.

[29 : 31] So that's how you look. You look as a slave or a maid until he answers you. You bring all your need, whatever your need is, and you just bring it to him and you keep bringing it to him and you keep bringing it to him until he answers.

Now third, what are we looking for? Well, we're looking for mercy. Mercy. Three times he says mercy. Son of David, have mercy on us.

That's the cry of the desperate mother. That's the cry of the desperate father. That is the cry of the desperate believer. Have mercy on us. That's the cry in Psalm 123.

Give us relief. Act for us. Help us. We can't go on. We're going to wither up and die. Help us. Save us from their hands. Save us from their mouths.

Rescue us from these proud, arrogant people. From the harsh dealings of men. Maybe you've noticed also that what happens in the Psalm is it goes from the singular to the plural because you know what?

[30 : 39] The Psalmist where he began with himself realizes, you know what? I'm not in this alone. And he says, have mercy mercy on us as the eyes of the slaves.

So our eyes look to the Lord, our God. We switch from the singular to the plural because, Christian, you are a part of the whole.

You are a part of something bigger. Your troubles are a part of something bigger. It's a part of all of our troubles. And really, reading Paul and Colossians, you realize that all of those troubles are a part of Christ's troubles until all of his people are all safe and sound.

How the psalmist hangs on that word, mercy, mercy. Isn't that prayer? Again, we're talking about not saying your prayers, but we're talking about this is what it looks like to have a relationship with God.

This is what it looks like to be a pilgrim in a fallen world. We can't go on without it. These proud men, verse 4, you know, it talks about them.

[32 : 02] These men who are at ease, is how the ESV has it. They want justice, they want their way, or they're at ease, and they don't need God's help.

Psalm 73 talks about these men. They're strong. They're strong. Common ills don't touch them. And so they're harsh.

They're demanding. They're critical. They're strong. They don't need mercy. That's often the case of people who haven't suffered significantly. They're stronger.

But we need mercy. We need our Lord to rescue us, to help us, to pity us. So we're like Jeremiah and the bottom of the cistern and our feet are sinking into the mud.

And so we feel death all around us. How many times in the Psalms does the psalmist say, the cords of death entangled me? You feel like you're this close to withering away.

[33 : 00] And there's fear. And we say, oh, have mercy. My enemies are too strong for me. My sin is too strong for me. Martin Luther's friend, Philip Melancthon, said, old Adam is too strong for young Philip.

You ever say that? You ever feel that? The old me just seems so strong compared to the new me. You know, the old me seems so much quicker than the new me. You ever do that? You're put into a circumstance, you're feeling the heat, and what is the first and initial thing that comes out of you?

It's not grace and not mercy, it's sin. The old man, he seems so strong and so fast, and so we need mercy. You know, God does not promise to help us to save ourselves from all of our enemies. God does not ever promise to help us to save ourselves from our enemies. He promises to save us from all of our enemies. Did he say to Paul, Paul, with your effort and my grace, it's going to be enough for you?

[34 : 18] No, he said, my grace, period, my grace is sufficient for you. You bring the weakness, I'll bring the perfection. You bring the need, I'll bring the help.

That's mercy, and that's what we're asking for, for rescue, for God to bear his mighty right arm and to do something that only he can do because, you know what, I'm just, I'm totally in a corner, I'm completely helpless, I need mercy.

And so that's what we're looking for, for God to do something on our behalf. Now, that's what we look for, we want God to act. Now, the question is why? And we've already gone over this several times, so we don't really need to say much.

Why do we look to God in the psalm? It's because it's the contempt and the ridicule and the scorn of the arrogant, those, again, who are at ease.

You know what, we have time. Turn back to Psalm chapter 10. It's at the very beginning because I think Psalm chapter 10, or Psalm 10, excuse me, it shows us.

[35 : 33] It shows us the picture of the people that we are dealing with in Psalm 123. And you can, let's just read from verse 2.

And you'll notice this man's attitude, these people's attitude. This is sinful men living in rebellion to God. And look at their attitude, their heart, look at how they treat people, how they treat the weak and the needy.

Verse 2, in his arrogance, the wicked man hunts down the weak who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts of the cravings of his heart.

He blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. In his pride, the wicked does not seek him. Again, that's why they're at ease. They're not troubled to seek the Lord.

His ways are always prosperous. He is haughty and your laws are far from him and he sneers at all of his enemies and he says to himself, nothing will shake me.

[36 : 44] I will always be happy and never be in trouble. His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats. trouble and evil are under his tongue.

That's the world we live in. Those are the Psalm 2 men who are in rebellion against the Lord. And we say, woe is me.

I'm a man of peace. But when they speak, they're for war. Do you ever just crave peace for people to be at rest with each other?

To just leave well enough alone? To love? But these people, they scorn the weak. Their lives are wonderful and they despise the hurting and they berate the struggling and they ridicule and hold everyone with contempt.

And so we look for mercy. We look for mercy from them and we find none. Now that's the Christian experience in the fallen world. And what Psalm 123 is saying is it gets to the point where we just can't take it anymore.

[38 : 00] We've endured much ridicule. That means we're saturated with it. We are filled up with it like a sponge that is just completely filled with water.

It can't handle, it can't take anymore. So how can we go on when you're saturated with the violence and the contempt, the rebellion, the arrogance, the harshness of men?

You know, faith is not rising above it and just like, oh, it's not stoically understanding like, yeah, this is God's sovereign and this is all okay and it'll be all fine. It doesn't matter.

It's turning to God when you're filled up. When you're hurting. When people are heartless. That's what looking to God's sovereignty.

That's what looking to the Lord looks like. We need God's mercy and he can sovereignly bring it to us. And so there's the psalmist says, when you're filled up with grief, when they are heartless, God is saying, come to me.

[39 : 02] When you're weak and heavy laden, come to me. When you're about ready to fall under the load, come to me. So they despise you, I pity you. They heap insults on you, I'm going to heap mercy upon you.

So here we are, we're on this pilgrimage and we're walking through a harsh and a cruel country and you're about done, you can't take it anymore, what do you do?

You take Psalm 123 and you pray it to the Lord. You take it right out of the scriptures, right out of the psalmist's mouth and you take it to the Lord. Do you need saved?

You know, are you living under that cruel heartless master Satan? Well, you know what? Here's Psalm 123. Take it and pray it to the Lord. Have mercy on me.

And this is the promise. He will give mercy. You seek him with all of your heart. And that's exactly what Psalm 123 is showing you. This is what it looks like to seek the Lord with all of your heart.

[40 : 06] There's repetition, there's insistence, there's desperation, there's need. This is what it looks like. This is what it feels like to seek the Lord with all of your heart. You seek him with all of your heart and the Lord says, you will find me.

You'll find me and I will give you mercy. The Lord delights in showing mercy. It makes much of him. It makes much of his richness. It gives an exercise to his love.

Mercy is God being himself. He delights in mercy. He delights in showing you mercy. So what do you do? Whatever your need is.

Psalm 123. These are words for you to take to the Lord. And I just encourage you to do that. Well, let's pray. Lord, we do look to you, to you whose eyes are upon us and our eyes are upon you, to you whose throne is in heaven.

You do rule over all. You rule over the evil one. And you rule over the whole world. But we are poor pilgrims here.

[41 : 33] We are slaves. We are maids. we are we are we are all we're all need.

And apart from you, we can do nothing. And so we do pray that you would have mercy upon us. We know we are locked in combat, not with flesh and blood, but with authorities and powers rulers and high places.

The Lord Jesus is here. And so are his enemies. And we know that they are busy right at this moment, diverting people's attention, taking away the word, making people think of other things, sending lies and discouragement.

And we say these enemies are too strong for us. And so Lord Jesus come and Holy Spirit fight for us. Give us mercy. Save us from our sin.

Save us from ourselves. Save us from that self-reliance where all we do is look at our trouble. Or all we do is try to fix our trouble.

[42 : 57] But the very last thing we seem to ever do is to look to you. Please turn us around. Change our hearts. Make our faith quicker to look to you.

Cheer us on our way. I pray for those who are lost this morning who only have a mild interest in salvation. Oh, make them to understand this is the most essential thing.

You can do that. You can come crashing down upon a human heart and making it so that salvation in Jesus Christ is the first, the last, and everything else.

And so I pray that you would do that. For those who are only half-heartedly seeking you, make them to seek you with all of their hearts. For those who have no interest, who are at ease, with no fear of the Lord before their eyes, have mercy on them.

They are foolish rebels that don't know what they're doing. They don't know who they're fighting against. Lord, have mercy on them, I pray.

[44 : 12] Do us good as a congregation. Revive us, encourage us, and help us to live this week looking to you. I pray this all in Jesus' name. For Jesus' sake, for his glory, amen.

Amen. Amen.