

God is Faithful In Transitions

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Pastor Jason will be bringing us the word from Genesis 24.! We're going to read the whole chapter.! We saw in the previous chapter that Sarah has just died.

! We pick it up in verse 1 of chapter 24. Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.

He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.

The servant asked him, what if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from? Make sure that you do not take my son back there, Abraham said.

The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land, and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, to your offspring I will give this land.

[1:17] He will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine.

Only do not take my son back there. So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham, and swore an oath to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master.

He set out for Aram Naharam and made his way to the town of Nahor. He had his camels kneel down near the well outside the town.

It was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water. Then he prayed, Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.

She was the daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. The girl was very beautiful, a virgin. No man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up again.

[2:58] The servant hurried to meet her and said, Please, give me a little water from your jar. Drink, my lord, she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

After she had given him a drink, she said, I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have finished drinking. So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful. When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a Bekah and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.

Then he asked, Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night? She answered him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, born to Nahor.

And she added, We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.

Then the man bowed down and worshipped the Lord, saying, Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master.

[4:15] As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives. The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.

Now Rebecca had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. As soon as he had seen the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and had heard Rebecca tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring.

Come, you who are blessed by the Lord, he said. Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels. So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded.

Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. Then food was set before him, but he said, I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say. Then tell us, Laban said. So he said, I am Abraham's servant. The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, men's servant and maid's servants, and camels and donkeys.

[5:26] My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. And my master made me swear an oath, and said, You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, but go to my father's family, and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.

Then I asked my master, What if the woman will not come back with me? He replied, The Lord before whom I have walked will send his angel with you, and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan, and from my father's family.

Then when you go to my clan, you will be released from my oath. Even if they refuse to give her to you, you will be released from my oath. When I came to the spring today, I said, O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come.

See, I am standing beside the spring. If a maiden comes out to draw water, and I say to her, Please let me drink a little water from your jar, and if she says to me, Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too, let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master's son.

Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebecca came out with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, Please give me a drink. She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and said, Drink, and I'll water the camels too.

[6:59] So I drank, and she watered the camels also. I asked her, Whose daughter are you? She said, The daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, whom Milca bore to him.

Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, and I bowed down and worshipped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get to the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son.

Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn. Laban and Bethuel answered, This is from the Lord.

We can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebecca. Take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed. When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord.

Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebecca. He also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother.

[8:06] Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there. When they got up the next morning, he said, Send me on my way to my master. But her brother and her mother replied, Let the girl remain with us ten days or so, then you may go.

But he said to them, Do not detain me. Now that the Lord has granted success to my journey, send me on my way so I may go to my master. Then they said, Let's call the girl and ask her about it.

So they called Rebecca and asked her, Will you go with this man? I will go, she said. So they sent their sister Rebecca on her way along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men.

And they blessed Rebecca and said to her, Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands. May your offspring possess the gates of their enemies. Then Rebecca and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man.

So the servant took Rebecca and left. Now Isaac had come from Bir Lahai Roy, for he was living in the Negev. He went out to the field one evening to meditate.

[9:16] And as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. Rebecca also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel and asked the servant, Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?

He is my master, the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself. Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah and he married Rebecca.

So she became his wife and he loved her and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Come Pastor Jason, preach to us. Why is chapter 24 so long?

So repetitive. Lord willing, we're going to get to the answer to that question a little bit later. But for now, I want you to imagine a relay race.

Imagine the 4x100 at the Olympics. And in that race, what is the most, what are the most crucial moments, the most tense moments where when the race can be easily won or easily lost?

[10:43] Well, it's the passing of the baton, isn't it? Everyone holds their breath in fear. We don't want our team to drop the baton in their tense moments.

And in God's kingdom, there are passing of the baton moments, aren't there? We see it going on in our own church. We see it going on in our own association.

The older generation is not getting any younger and the baton must be passed. And they can be tense moments. They can be tense moments, especially for the older generation.

The older generation can look at the younger generation and ask, will God, can God, keep this going? Can God use these people?

They're so inexperienced. They're so naive. They're young, green, broke horses, half-tamed. They are tamed, but there's still a lot of that wildness in them.

[11:49] Sometimes they get into the wrong pastures and sometimes they are grazing in different pastures than what we're used to. And the old, plodding workhorses that have been at work for a long time can look with fear at what the young horses are doing.

Well, Genesis 24 is written to help us to trust God, to hope in God when the baton is being passed. When the old horses are being put out to pasture and the young horses are taking their place, it says something to the old horses.

It says, don't worry. Don't worry. God is faithful. And it says something to the young horses because they have fear and insecurity themselves as they take upon the mantle of responsibility.

And it says, don't worry. God is faithful. What is Genesis 24 about? Four times in this chapter, there is that special Hebrew word that we've talked about before, *chesed*.

Steadfast, covenant, love, kindness, faithfulness. In our translation, in this chapter, it's translated kindness. And you see it in verses 12, 14, 27, and 49.

[13:09] That's the theme. God's steadfast love for his people. It's about that. And it's about the passing of generations.

Let me ask you, as Charlie read it, which patriarch did the story start with? It started with Abraham. Which patriarch did the story end with?

Isaac. Abraham sent off his servant to a far country and you would expect that that servant would come back to Abraham. That would wrap up things nicely.

That would make for a nice little bow on this present. But it doesn't happen like that, does it? It moves from Abraham to Isaac.

Passing of the baton. Now, so this chapter is about God's steadfast, covenant love as the generations pass. And as we hear it and as we look at it, it addresses those fears, those concerns, that anxiety, those questions that we talked about earlier.

[14:14] Will God, can God keep this going? Will God keep blessing the next generation as he has blessed the previous generation? And the grand answer of Genesis 24 is yes.

Yes. And so, the first thing I want you to notice about this passage is Abraham's faith as he looks at the next, as he looks forward to the next generation.

Abraham's faith as he looks to the next generation. I don't want to take too long here, but I just want you to notice that now Abraham is old, he's well advanced in years, and in the face of a difficulty, the fact that Isaac does not have a wife, and there's no one around that could be his wife, he, Abraham, trusts God.

Abraham says, I'm not going to help myself, I'm not going to take a bride for Isaac from these people, instead, and just hope that it turns out well, instead I'm going to send my servant to a faraway country to find a wife from my own family, where apparently, and this is just perhaps reading a little bit into it, but apparently some notion of the true religion is living on there.

Abraham is saying, I'm going to throw my bread upon the waters and I'm going to trust God that in time it will come back to me. And we just see how Abraham has grown.

[15:47] The last two trials that we've seen him in, or even the last three, Isaac and his sacrifice, Sarah and her death, and now Isaac needs a bride.

These trials that we've seen him go through, he's passed with flying colors. Older brothers, older sisters, keep believing.

And I say that to you as a younger man. Don't let the bitterness, the disappointment, the difficulty, the trials, the scars, the pain of life rob you of your faith.

Abraham lived through all those things. And here he is now well advanced in years, and he's still believing. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The same Jesus of your young faith of years ago is still on the throne. He's still reigning. His heart is still the same. And so trust him.

[16:51] You are those who go from glory to glory and from strength to strength because your strength is in the Lord. Now Abraham believed and what did God do?

God provided. Abraham believed and God came through. And so brothers and sisters, you can trust God. And we see God's response, God's *chesed* in the rest of the chapter.

And we see it in three ways. And that's the remainder of the chapter. And as we look at it, as we see the three ways that God shows his steadfast love, I want you to see that these are the three reasons why you don't have to worry as you look at the next generation of God's people.

God is faithful and he's going to exercise his covenant kindness and faithfulness to them as he has done as he has for you. So first we see God will exercise his *chesed*, his steadfast love in providence.

In providence. And you see that in how God answers the servant's prayer. How God answers the servant's prayer. Now the servant comes to the town of Nahor. That's the town from Abraham's father.

[18:09] He prays that when he asks a girl to give him a drink that she'll say, drink and I'll water your camels too. If that happens, let her be the one you have chosen for Isaac.

And he says, by this I will know that you have shown kindness. That's our word to my master. Now it's important for us to realize that the servant, we don't know who he is.

We do know that he must have been an important and wise man. He was the most important servant in Abraham's household. The servant isn't so much laying out the fleece. He's not putting God to the test.

So much as setting up a test of character for a young lady. for the girl. And that through this test of character, God's will will be made known.

He doesn't say, let the first one I see be the one. And it's not so much that if she says this, then I'll know. It's that the one who shows the kind of hospitality, the kind of kindness, and hard work, and industriousness, that watering ten camels involves, that the girl who would do that, that she would be the one for Isaac.

[19:35] So the servant isn't asking for the first one to come along, but that the young lady who shows herself to be of outstanding character, that she will be the one for his master's son.

Now, it's a character test, but it's also the servant trusting and depending on God's providence. And God's beautiful answer comes even before he's done praying.

He was done praying, even before he's done praying. Verse 15, before he had finished praying, Rebecca came out with her jar on her shoulder. God knows what we need before we ask him of it. Before the servant even started to pray, God had orchestrated things in his providence so that it would be Rebecca who would finish her chores. It would be Rebecca who would go to the water and get water that evening.

It wouldn't be someone else. It would be her. And think about how God in his steadfast love and kindness had prepared Rebecca for just this meeting.

[20:47] she comes out and she is everything that Isaac could want in a spouse. I love how it describes her.

Everything that she does, she does quickly. You see that again and again. Everything she does, she does with all of her heart. She was a virgin.

She was very beautiful. And it was this young lady that God had shaped and prepared in his providence to be, to come out and be the answer to the servant's prayer.

And so God exercised his steadfast love and providence for Isaac. Now, friends, this is why we shouldn't worry as we think about the next generation.

That's what this chapter is about. Will God be kind, steadfast in his love for the next generation? This is why we shouldn't worry. God is faithful. He's still in control.

[21:45] He's still on the throne. He's still controlling all of his creatures and all of their actions all of the time. He's still working all things together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

And so, are you of the older generation or are you the parent of a child and you have hopes for them but at the same time, this world is a dangerous place and it's increasingly becoming so? The God of providence.

is still on the throne. The church is safe. God's covenant love and faithfulness didn't stop with your parents. It didn't stop with the older generation. It didn't stop in 1930 or 1940 or 1950 and it's not going to stop in 2020, 2030, 2040 or ever.

God has said, I have made an everlasting covenant with you. I will never stop doing you good.

That's his promise. That's his heart for his people, this generation and any generation following.

I will not stop doing you good. He rules in the big things and he rules over when a girl is going to go fetch water. God will exercise his kindness in providence.

[23:04] Now, secondly, we see that God will exercise his steadfast love, his kindness through wise human action. God will exercise his covenant love through wise human action.

And before I show you what that means and before we talk about what that means, we need to back up and ask that question that we asked at the very beginning or I asked at the very beginning. Why is this chapter so long? I had Charlie read the entire chapter for this very reason. I wanted you to feel that question.

I wanted you to ask the question yourself. Why does the narrator tell the story and then the servant tells the story, the whole story all over again?

Now, the Bible is normally very concise. It doesn't go into a lot of detail on purpose. It's very simple in its telling.

[24:02] And so, why the long repetition? And that question perplexed me. I know the Bible is normally concise, so why go to the bottom of repeating everything that's been said all over again?

And incidentally, it's important to ask those kind of questions as you're reading Scripture. All Scripture is useful. All Scripture is useful, even the repetitive parts.

Now, you get the answer. You get the answer to the question when you notice the differences and things that are missing and things that are changed slightly between the first telling and the second telling, between the narrator's account and the servant's account.

They aren't exactly the same. They aren't word for word the same. And it's in the differences that you see the servant's wisdom.

You see his wisdom. He's not just telling what happened. That's part of the story. But he is winning. He is wooing.

[25:12] He is winning Rebecca's family. He's being wise and diplomatic in his presentation. Remember, his job is to get a wife for Isaac.

and he wants to bring a girl hundreds of miles away to marry a man that she's never met, that the family has never met.

Now fathers, if someone came to your doorstep with that agenda, he better have a pretty good argument. He better make a great case, right? If he's going to take your daughter away from you to marry some guy that she's never met, and if it just be, better make a great case.

And so it's with great wisdom and diplomacy that the servant wins over Rebecca's family. And that's why I say it's God exercises his steadfast love, his kindness to Abraham and to Isaac through the wisdom of the servant.

Let me show you what I mean. And this isn't exhaustive. This is just a sampling of what you see the servant changing and leaving out and how he's winning and wooing Rebecca's family.

[26:38] Let's look at verse 7, chapter 24, verse 7. And this is near the end of the verse. This is what Abraham says. He, that is Yahweh, the covenant God, the God of heaven.

He will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. Now, look over at verse 40. This is where the servant retells what Abraham said.

He's retelling this part of the story. The Lord before whom I walked, he's quoting Abraham here, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family.

The servant is saying the Lord is in this. The Lord will send his angel so that this mission will be successful. But notice that the servant's mission will only be successful if the girl is from Abraham's

family.

The servant is planting the seeds. I've come all this way. And the only way this is going to be successful is if you give her up.

[27:54] It has to come from your family. Now, look then back at verse 8. Abraham says, if the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine.

Now, in verse 41, the servant retells and he says, then when you go to my clan, you will be released from my oath. Even if they refuse to give her to you, you will be released from my oath.

Now, the servant makes it so it's a matter of the family's willingness and not the girl's willingness, not her willingness. Again, he's saying, I need you to be willing.

I need you, dad. I need you, mom. I need you, Laban, to be willing. He's being diplomatic. He's using wisdom to convince them to let Rebecca go. You see it in the changes, but then you also see it in what he doesn't say.

Abraham, again, in verse 8, Abraham ends with this statement and he says it twice. Whatever happens, do not take my son back there.

[29:06] But then in the servant's retelling in verse 41, it says nothing. nothing. That part is completely missing. And you can imagine why, can't you?

It could sound a lot like Abraham has a problem with his family, doesn't it? And like someone saying, whatever you do, don't let my son go be with them at their house.

You can imagine how that might appear to be rather insulting. And so the servant leaves it out altogether. then in verse 49, he wraps up his story and he waits for a decision.

Now, if you'll show kindness, that's our word, kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me, and if not, tell me so that I may know which way to turn.

Now, if you've ever done sales, you know the key to closing a sale is making your pitch is doing your best to convince, you ask for a decision, and then you be quiet.

[30:17] You stop talking. And that's what the servant does. He says, God has shown steadfast love to Abraham.

He brought me here. His angel went in front of me. He brought Rebecca out to me when I prayed.

Now, will you show kindness to Abraham too?

Yes or no? Will you take God's side or not? And verse 50 says, Laban and Bethuel answered, this is from the Lord.

We could say nothing to you one way or the other, which is their way of saying this is beyond our ability to say yes or no. Obviously, it's from the Lord. Here is Rebecca. Take her and go and let her become the wife of your master's son as the Lord has directed.

Success. The servant's wisdom, his winsomeness, his diplomacy, his courtesy, he wins Rebecca.

[31:25] And it's through his wisdom that Isaac is blessed. Now, God's covenant love flowed to Isaac. And it flowed to Abraham through the wisdom of the servant.

Now, the Lord has this great reservoir of kindness stored up for Isaac for the next generation and it flowed through the pipeline of wisdom.

Now, I want to suggest to you that the Lord has a great reservoir of kindness, of steadfast love for the next generation. I'm talking about the next generation of his people.

And a great deal of that love will flow, parents, will flow older people through your wise preparing and providing for them, like the servant did.

Moms, dads, older men, older women, don't be paralyzed in fear. That's what this passage is addressing. Will God keep blessing the next generation.

[32:30] Don't worry, God is faithful. In wisdom, come alongside and help the younger generation. Your wisdom and the way you go about helping them could be a great blessing to them.

Be winsome, be wise, be courteous like this servant. it. And I'm especially thinking here of not just families and fathers and our parents and children, but of the household of God.

Older women, the younger women do want you to be a Titus 2 woman to them, but they need you to be wise and diplomatic about it.

Win them to yourself. Don't impose yourself upon them, but win them to yourself. Be diplomatic. I love so much, and if you have a chance, you should listen to what Matthew Brennan said in his presentation this week.

Matthew is our missionary to Ireland, and he said young people do have a bit of a rebellious streak in them, a bit of a teenager know-it-all streak in them.

[33:49] Younger people don't always know what's good for them, and he said be patient with them. They'll grow out of it. You did. And so wisely come alongside the younger folks.

Come alongside us and be a Titus 2 woman to a younger lady or a father to a son like Paul was to Timothy. God has this great Christ size.

Christ one reservoir of love for the next generation of people. And that love will flow to the next generation through your wisdom. So be that pipeline for them.

Now third, and very briefly, we see God will exercise steadfast kindness through willing human action.

So we saw wise human action, this time it's through willing human action. The servant has won the family over. But there is still the question that is out there.

[34:59] Even Abraham asked, the servant asked, or the servant asked of Abraham, what about if the girl is not willing? The question is whether Rebecca is willing. Is she willing to leave her family and her friends and go hundreds of miles away to marry a man that she has never seen, never met, because it was the Lord's will?

Will she do that? It almost sounds like an Abraham-like call, remember? Going to a place you've never seen. That's what Rebecca is in front of. Was she willing?

What does it say? Yes. She was willing. The next day, she got up and they left. They sent her off with their blessing. The family takes God's side and says, may you increase to thousands upon thousands.

May your offspring possess the gates of your enemies. It's interesting that the same promise, the same benediction is found in Genesis 22 to Abraham.

You will possess the gates of your enemies. And so Rebecca leaves her family and she joins herself to God's people. And so she becomes an heir of God's promises.

[36:22] And she was blessed and in turn, through Rebecca's willing spirit, God showed covenant love to Isaac. Rebecca and Isaac married and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

God loved Isaac. Isaac. He wasn't his father Abraham. If you read on, we're not going to go into the story of Isaac, but as you read on, you'll see he was not his father Abraham.

But his father's God loved and cared for him. And that love came through Rebecca, through her willing spirit. it.

Now, the older generation sometimes worries that the younger generation won't make the needed sacrifices.

They won't give up what they love and sacrifice themselves. They won't fight the good fight. They won't be willing to leave family and friends to go where God leads like they did.

[37:33] But I want to remind you that it is God. It is God who works in you to will and to do according to his good purpose.

Rebecca was willing because God was at work in her heart. God makes his people willing. God makes his people willing to sacrifice. King Jesus has the key to every heart.

And he isn't giving up that key when the next generation comes on the scene. Psalm 110 says your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like the dew in the morning's womb.

Young men will be willing. They'll be willing. So are you of the older generation? Are you of a parent looking at your children? Don't worry. God is faithful.

He made you willing. He will make the next generation willing. The same spirit that lives in you lives in the next generation of God's people. So even now a young man and a young woman and their three children are looking to sell their house, looking to get rid of their house, looking to get rid of their children, leaving everything they have in this country to go to the Middle East.

[38:51] And the younger mother I know, she would gladly stay here. But her husband has heard the call, and so she gladly goes.

Giving up everything, putting herself, her family, her husband in danger. She'll gladly go. God knows how to make his people willing to go.

So especially to the older generation, I would gently and humbly ask, say, rein in those worried thoughts.

Yes, there's a big, bad future out there, but there's a bigger and better God, and he's with his people. So confront those worried thoughts with the truth.

God is the ruler yet, and it's his goodness, his faithfulness, that ensures the success of God's people. It's not you, and it's not them.

[39 : 56] And besides, worry doesn't do any good, does it? Can't add a day to your life. Can't add an inch to your height. Your worry will paralyze you, and it will turn you into someone that the younger generation won't listen to anyways.

We are looking for people to lead us by faith. We have fears of our own. We have worries and concerns enough as it is. Will you show us our big God?

Will you show us our big God? And then as you grow older, don't stop trying. Don't stop taking chances. Don't be afraid. Abraham trusted God and he sent his servant to the ends of the earth because he expected God to meet that servant there.

He sent him off not knowing what would happen, but trusting in God's goodness. So be in Abraham for us. You've been hurt.

You've been disappointed. You have scars and you have wounds from the battle. And those things can make you fearful. people. And I just say, do you want to do good to the church as you begin to move off the scene?

[41 : 22] Then keep going forward. Keep pressing on. Didn't we see that in Pastor Bob? Didn't he become more evangelistic as he got older?

I think he did. More bold, more brave, more kind. He finished strong. He showed a willing heart to obey, to follow God to the end.

And I just want to say, be that for us. And believe God that he'll make us willing too. So Christ is building his kingdom, brothers and sisters.

He's building his kingdom. And the gates of hell will not stand against us. He will have the prize for which he died. An inheritance of nations.

We are not a conquered people. We are a conquering people. We are those who overcome by Christ Jesus. And so age to age we will go on because Christ is risen.

[42 : 23] Christ is reigning. And brothers and sisters, God is faithful. Amen. Let's pray. God is going to to God.

Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are faithful. We thank you for your many great and precious promises and that they are all yes and amen in Jesus Christ.

And that we become partakers of these promises through our union with him. Thank you that you have given us faith. Thank you that you have joined us to him.

thank you that the church has such bright hope and expectation. Not because we are strong, but because you are strong.

You are good. You are faithful. You know the end from the beginning. You have planned all things and all things are working according to your plan and to your purpose.

[43 : 20] And so help us by faith to rely upon you, to look to you, to take our place in this great, wonderful thing that you are doing, in building a kingdom for your son, in building a kingdom for yourself.

I pray that we would be those who would have confidence and hope as we get older, as we look to the next generation, as we prepare. I pray that you would give us that wisdom, that kindness, that courtesy.

Please give us faith to be those who depend upon the Lord Jesus. I pray that you would give us eyes that would see past the wickedness and the difficulties and our pain and our suffering.

And though they are all true, to look through them and to see your plan and your purpose. Thank you that you are committed to your people.

Thank you that tomorrow you will meet us and goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives. Thank you that we can never outrun your kindness. We can never grow old and age out of your kindness.

[44 : 37] But every day of our life you will meet us and do us good. Thank you for this great heart of yours. Thank you that out of your great love you sent Jesus Christ to be our Savior, our advocate, our Redeemer, and I pray that we would live upon him and live in him by faith.

Pray for those who are lost. May the words that they have heard today show them their need. Show them that they have no hope of a good future and then run to Jesus for salvation.

Please send us on our way rejoicing in who you are and what you've promised. In Jesus name, Amen.