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SPEAKER

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People Of The Kingdom

PART

13

TITLE

Blameless At His Coming

SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28



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Good morning, Providence. It's so good to see you. If you thought that Brian was going to be back this morning, you were right. Brian is back. He is back from sabbatical. He was in the office all week, but towards the end of the week, started a cold, which got worse instead of better. And I was told to tell you that he's really feeling bad and he would be here if he could. But one thing I do know about Brian is that, if he could be here, he would be here. I know that he has missed being here and is excited to be back. So be praying for him that he will regain his strength and be back next week. We'll look forward to hearing from him then.

So I get the joy finishing this series. We've been in the Book of 1 Thessalonians all summer and moving through this book and we will finish it this morning. At the end of chapter five, we'll look at Paul's last words to the Thessalonians. And we've been moving through this series and we've been calling it, People of the Kingdom where Paul The Apostle has been writing back to the Church in Thessalonica, where he is really been commending them. You can read in Acts 17, about how Paul came to Thessalonica, preached the word there. Many people believed, and then there was some jealousy that stirred up among some of the other religious leaders. They stir up a riot. He's forced out of town. He goes on to Berea and then to Athens. And what we find out in the Book of 1 Thessalonians is that, he begins to feel this burden, once he gets to Athens. He's worried about the Church in Thessalonica and he's worried that he hasn't been able to teach them enough or that they might be confused about why he left.

So he sends his companion Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the Church. Timothy goes, he checks on them. He comes back and brings a glowing report that the people in Thessalonica are thriving in the Gospel, that they are appreciative of Paul and his ministry. They understand why he has gone. And so he writes this letter back to them, commending them for their progress in the faith and encouraging them to excel still more. He is encouraging them over these marks that he sees in them, these characteristics of people of the Kingdom of God. And what he is really saying to them is, you are serving as this advanced sign of what the Kingdom of God will be like. As you live together as God's people, you become this sign to the world of what the Kingdom of God is like.

So we've been studying this book this summer, looking for those instructions. How are we, Providence supposed to live as People of the Kingdom in this world? This morning's sermon is titled, Blameless At His Coming, because as Paul is going to look towards the future, he's thinking about how God will sanctify them completely and keep them blameless at the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. So people of the Kingdom are blameless. They're kept blameless and that immediately introduces attention, I think. Attention for many of us, because I'm guessing that most of you don't feel blameless all the time. And all of us can remember a time, probably in the recent past, where we didn't feel blameless. And so what does it mean that the people of the Kingdom are supposed to be kept blameless, until the coming of the Lord?

That's what we're going to talk about. Maybe you've come in this morning and you're feeling discouraged and defeated, maybe overwhelmed by a certain sin in your life, or maybe just feeling cold towards the things of God. It's true that you can't walk in blamelessness on your own. It's true that you will never be able to do all

these things that Paul has instructed Thessalonians to do in your own strength and in your own power. But the encouragement that I hope we'll see this morning, as we study these last few verses, is that God is here to help us. It is his desire and it is his character that he is moving among us and will be faithful to do what he has promised to do.

So let me say a prayer and then we'll read these last few verses together. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, will you help us this morning as we open your word? God, will you speak clearly through it? I pray that your Spirit would guide us into all truth. And as we think about your word together, as we learn from it and submit to it, God that you would change us, you would help us to look more like Christ. As he is exalted, God I pray that he would draw us all to himself. I pray these things in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5 starting in verse 23, this is what it says. "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

So as Paul is concluding his letter to the Thessalonians, he's expressing his hopes for them. He's explaining what he's hoping that God will do for them. And if you're taking notes this morning, the first point is that people of the Kingdom look to the God of peace. People of the Kingdom look to the God of peace. He starts out by saying, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And we'll talk about what all that means in a second. But first, I want to just consider the direction of Paul's hope for the Church.

He doesn't say, I hope you guys can keep it together. I hope you all can make it to the end. I really hope you can pull this off and make it until he comes again. He is obviously looking to God for help. Well one of the fastest ways that you and I can begin to feel overwhelmed with the Christian life is to think that it's up to us to remain faithful to the end. When I think about all that I will go through between now and when I see him face to face, I begin to feel overwhelmed and fearful. When I think about myself or I think about my kids, how are we going to make it to the end? I've seen so many people fall in spectacular ways. I've seen pastors fall. I've seen faithful people fall. I've seen prominent Christians deconstruct their faith, which is just the new way of saying, they used to walk with the Lord and now they don't walk with them anymore.

So how are we supposed to remain faithful? How are we supposed to make it to the end? Well, look back at the verse, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you." That word, himself is emphasized in the Greek. It's put at the very beginning of the sentence to emphasize that idea that God, the God of peace himself is going to do this work. He's wanting to remind the people of God's work in their lives and that his work is most important. Remaining faithful is ultimately not up to you. It is up to him.

Paul has just been giving the Church all these instructions. Since the beginning of chapter four, he's been instructing them how they're supposed to live. It is they're supposed to abstain from sexual morality. They're supposed to abstain from these things and do these things. They're supposed to walk together and encourage one another. They're supposed to love their leaders, and they're supposed to walk together in these ways of pursuing faithfulness. And he's been giving them all of these instructions. But here he's reminding them that ultimately it's God's work in our lives that will bring this fruit about. It's God that has to stir these things up in us. Should we strive to do everything he's told us to do in the last two chapters? Yes, but we should strive to do these things, knowing that it's God who is at work within us.

Philippians 2 captures this idea in some really familiar verses. In Philippians 2:12, it says, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only is as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your salvation, your own salvation with fear and trembling." So Paul is writing to the Church in Philippi, and he's telling them, you obeyed these things in my presence. Now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. In other words, strive for faithfulness. Do these things that God has called you to do. Verse 13 says, "For," because, "It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." In other words, Paul is telling the Church in Philippi, go after these things, strive for faithfulness, but do it knowing that God is at work in you.

The God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead is the same God who is changing you, the same God who is at work within you. And it's that same power that is working in your heart. And so God must do it. And Paul describes God here as the God of peace. Now, this is interesting. When Paul uses this phrase, God of peace, he's not talking about a God of tranquility or a God's really calm. But when he says God of peace, it's a title that he uses to talk about God's actions towards us. He is a God of peace. In other words, he's the God of the Gospel, the God of good news, who moved toward us to reconcile us to himself. God made peace with us through the Gospel.

Through this work of Christ that he sent Christ to live the life that we could not live, die the death we deserve to die, raised him from the dead. And by so doing, made peace with anyone who will put their faith in Christ. Paul is talking about it here at the end of this letter, where he's encouraging us to strive towards faithfulness all the way to the end, because he wants it to be a motivator that this God who made peace with you, he's drawn you near and he will hold you fast. He is the God of peace. He is the one who keeps us, so we look to him.

This is backwards compared to most religions. Most religions say, "Be faithful and then God will be at peace with you." But in Christianity, we say, "God has made peace with us through his own actions, and so we will be faithful to him." God is the one who keeps us. Robert Robinson wrote a famous hymn called, Come thou F of every blessing. You've probably heard it before. It's hundreds of years old, but it's kind of surged in popularity over the last couple of decades. Then there's this one line in the hymn that strikes my heart, every time I sing it, where Robert Robinson is just confessing his own weakness. He says, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel

it. Prone to leave the God I love.” That line captures so well for me. Some of my own feelings that I feel this weakness. I feel my own inability to hold fast to the Lord.

It’s interesting, the story behind this hymn. Robert Robinson had come to faith in his early 20s. And he had come to faith at a revival meeting with George Whitefield, where George Whitefield was preaching from Matthew 3:7 which says, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” That’s an encouraging text. And he writes about how he just remembers George Whitefield repeating to his listeners, “O my hearers, the wrath to come. The wrath to come.” Robert Robinson went home and contemplated those words and gave his life to Jesus Christ. He was radically saved. But over the course of the next couple years, he began to drift away, because he had friends and friendships that he had developed with people who were not close to the Lord. And he felt himself being pulled away.

Until one day he was reading Psalm 116:7 which says, “Return O my soul to your rest, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” And his heart was struck again and he remembered the joy of his salvation, and he wrote this hymn. The rest of the stanza that line is in says, “Oh, to grace how great a debtor, daily I’m constrained to be. Let that grace Lord, like a fetter.” Like a chain, “Bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Take my heart, O take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above.” Early in his Christian experience, he had already learned this important lesson, that he didn’t have the strength to hold fast to the Lord. And so he offers this prayer to God, “God you hold me fast. Take my heart or take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above.” In other words, hold me fast.

I’m convinced that if we attempt to finish the race of this life on our own, we will fail. There are too many dangers and too many potential snares, and we are too weak. So the first point of application this morning is, let’s look to the God of peace for help. Let’s look to the God of peace for help. And we can pray with Robert Robinson, “Take my heart, O take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above.” Paul shares his prayer for the people of Thessalonica. Then he shares his hope in God and reminds them that he’s looking to God for help, and that they should be doing the same. But Paul isn’t hoping that they just barely make it. He not hoping that they limp across the finish line. He’s looking to God to sanctify them completely, it says.

The second point this morning, if you’re taking notes is, people of the Kingdom are sanctified by the God of peace. People of the Kingdom are sanctified by the God of peace. Look back at verse 23, “Now may that God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it.” What would it mean for God to sanctify them completely? He’s talking about the work of God in our lives. To be sanctified is to be made holy. And in one sense, a Christian has already been made holy. We’re justified before God by faith. We are declared righteous. But in another sense, we are progressing towards greater and greater holiness.

As we grow in faith and walk in the spirit, our outward behavior should look more and more like Jesus. So we grow to love what Jesus loves. We learn to love righteousness and goodness and justice. And we’re moved

to value things that are eternal, rather than things that are temporary. And at the same time, we grow to hate sin. So we're more and more putting sin to death in our lives. Paul is asking God to continue to work in Thessalonians' lives, to sanctify them and help them to look more and more like Christ. The sanctifying work of God in our lives is going to be complete. He says, "May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, God has the power to keep you fully and completely. Paul is talking about this comprehensive work in the life of a believer.

Paul's asking God to completely transform them. He's asking that God would do a comprehensive work that would capture their hearts, their will, their desires, and which would lead to holiness both inside and out. Their actions and what they do with their bodies would mirror what's happening in their hearts. They'd be growing in holiness, loving what God loves, hating what God hates. Then, he encourages the people of the Church with this reminder about the God that they're calling to for this help, because as you read that, it should strike us as a little intimidating that our whole spirit and soul and body would be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it should cause us to pause and say, "Well, how in the world is that going to happen? My whole body, my whole spirit, my whole soul, that I would be completely transformed, that I would be kept blameless until the day of his coming. How could that ever be?"

Verse 24, "He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it." Paul is reminding us that our hope for this sort of blamelessness, our hope for this sort of entire transformation is not in our own efforts and in our own abilities, but it is in God. He is saying, "Thessalonian Church, you can trust God to do this. He is faithful. He will do it." It's encouraging for us as we think about how weak we can sometimes feel and how we can feel defeated by sin. And we feel like we're taking two steps forward and one step back. He is faithful. He will do it. Providence, remember that he will do it and we can look to him for sanctification. And what does that mean to look to God for our sanctification and what would the alternative be?

Well the alternative would be to look to something else, which would most commonly be ourselves. When we're trying to grow in holiness, we most naturally look to ourselves. For some reason, we get confused on this. We do a really good job of looking to God for our salvation. We know that we have nothing to bring. It's totally up to God. He must save us. But then when it comes to growing and holiness, we often get confused. And we begin to feel like, "Okay, God, thank you for getting me this far. I'll take it from here. I needed the Gospel. I needed Jesus and his righteousness to get in the door, and now I'll kind of run from this point on my own." We think like this all the time. We endeavor to grow in holiness on our own, but attempting to do this on our own is like traveling on a road with a deep ditch on either side.

If you happen to be really good at following the rules, you fall into the ditch of self-righteousness. You begin to look down on everyone else around you. You begin to wonder why they can't just do what you're doing. You start to look like the Pharisees in the New Testament, that are puffed up with spiritual pride and they have no mercy for those who are struggling. But if you're not good at following the rules, you fall into the other ditch, the ditch of self-loathing and despair, where you fail over and over again. And despite how hard

you try, you just keep trying and keep failing. And you begin to convince yourself that, “Surely God is running out of patience with me.” Because you keep promising him every time you fail, “I’m never going to do that again.” And with increasing passion and increasing resolve, you say, “I can do this. I won’t fail in this area again.” Only to fail again.

Then we begin to distance ourselves from God, because you convince yourself that he must be frustrated with you. There’s no more patience for you. The solution to this is not to look to yourself and your own ability, but instead, look to God. He is faithful. He will surely do it. He started a work in you and he will complete it. Then, when you’re successful, when you begin to make progress and you begin to put sin to death and you have increasing victory and increasing faithfulness, you’ll just be filled with gratitude instead of pride. You’ll look back on all that God has done and think, “I can’t believe what he has done in my life.” You’ll be filled with gratitude and mercy for those who are behind you. You’ll turn around and try to help them. And when you fail, instead of shrinking in shame, you will run to him for more help. You will plead with him based on the Gospel that you’ve been believing the whole time, ask for his forgiveness and trust that you are righteous in Christ alone.

So the second point of application, let’s depend completely on God for our sanctification. Let’s depend completely on God for our sanctification. Well, how do you do that? How can we look to God for sanctification? Well, it starts with a daily confession that you can’t do it on your own. You confess to God that you need as help and you can’t do it on your own. Any progress that you’ve made up to this point has been because of his grace. And any progress that you will make from this point forward is because of God’s continuing work in your life. And then instead of trying harder in your own strength, you put your efforts into depending on him with greater and greater urgency.

So your effort isn’t in trying harder. Your effort is in greater dependence. So that you get to a point where you realize, “I am weak. I can’t do it. God is able, he is faithful. He will do it. And so what I need to do is, instead of focusing on my efforts, I need to focus on drawing near to him and asking for his help. God, help me. Give me this day my daily bread. Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil. Help me to grow in these things. Help the love that is within me to abound more and more.” Pray, read the word, surround yourself with godly people who will point you to him, and remind yourself daily that your only hope is found in the Gospel, which is what Paul is going to get into in these last few verses.

In verses 25 to 28, Paul is going to remind Thessalonians of God’s partnership. God has made provisions for them, as they strive to walk with him in this life. He’s given us access to his grace, his help, and Paul reminds them where they can find it. Where do we get this help that we desperately need? The last point, if you’re taking notes, is people of the Kingdom partner with the God of peace. People of the Kingdom partner with the God of peace. We aren’t left to ourselves as we strive for faithfulness. And as we wait for his return, God partners with us in several ways.

First he partners with us in prayer. In verse 25, Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him and his companions. He says, “Brothers, pray for us.” Now Paul has been sharing his prayer for them, and now he’s asked them to pray for him. And even that is instructive to the young Church in Thessalonica. It’s instructive to us that Paul, the Apostle, the one who is inspired by the Spirit to write half the New Testament is still calling on his brothers and sisters in Thessalonica to please pray for us.

Paul knows his own weakness. Paul knows his need for God’s grace, and so he’s enlisting Thessalonians to join him in asking God for help. He is still in need of God’s grace, and he wants them to join him and asking for it. And this is a good reminder to us that we never grow beyond our need for prayer. We won’t grow beyond our need to have other people praying for us. You’re not going to get so good at whatever it is that you’re doing in the Church, that you don’t need people to pray for you. You need God’s grace. You’re never going to get so strong and so sanctified, that you’re not in danger anymore. You need people to pray for you. God has promised to hear our prayers and we need him to hear them. We can’t do any of this on our own. We can’t grow in holiness. We can’t be kept blameless. We can’t use our gifts. We can’t live as Kingdom people without God’s help. And so God offers us his help through prayer.

God partners with us through prayer. And second, God partners with us by giving us one another. He reminds the Thessalonians that the community that they have been given when he says in verse 26, “Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.” He’s reminding them of the community that God has given them. And thankfully, God does not call us to engage in any of this on our own. He calls us to engage with him in this pursuit of holiness and Kingdom life together. And this is just another example of how Paul has been calling them to live in community throughout the letter. He’s been doing this the whole time. In chapter three, verses 12 and 13, he says, “And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless and holiness, before our God and father at the coming of our Lord Jesus, with all his saints.”

He connects these two ideas there, love for one another and they’re being established with hearts blameless in holiness. There’s a reason that those things go together. It’s because God has created us to be a people who are moving together, bearing with one another, encouraging one another, pointing one another to him and reminding one another of the grace that he has given us. In chapter four verse nine, he says, “Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you, yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.”

In chapter five, which we studied just a few weeks ago, verse 13, he’s talking about how we should be at peace among ourselves, “And we urge you brothers, admonish the idol, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” God has given his people a community to belong to. He’s given us people who will admonish us, encourage us and help us when we need it. God’s given us prayer. He’s given us one another. And finally God has given us his word. He says in verse 27, “I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with you.”

So Paul begins his letters with this phrase often where he says, "Grace to you." And then he often ends his letters with the phrase, "Grace be with you." And I've heard several people talk about how, what he's really referring to there is the grace of the truth that's in the letter. So grace to you, I'm about to explain it. Grace is coming your way. And then grace be with you, hold fast to these things I've told you. Hold fast to the grace that is in this truth. Paul wanted them to remind one another of God's truth. He wanted them to gather around God's word. He says, "I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers." He wanted them to receive the grace of God that he offers through his word.

He's been talking about the power of this word throughout the letter. In chapter one verse four, he says, "For we know brothers, loved by God that he has chosen you, because our Gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." And then chapter two, verse 13, he says, "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers." The word of God was at work in them. It was changing them. They had all seen it. Paul showed up, preaching the Gospel and they saw that the word came with power. This wasn't some normal word. This was a word that had power. And they had seen it and Paul had seen it in them and they're rejoicing in it in this letter. The word of God has power.

Providence, you know that the word of God has power. You've seen it. There are Churches all over this city that are dying, because they're not preaching this word. You need to know that as your pastors, we're not deceived into thinking that this Church is growing and thriving, because we're so clever. This Church is growing and thriving, because we're centered around God's word. His grace is spilling from it. You have experienced it and so have we. And we must renew our commitment to gather around this word together, to submit to it, to learn from it and to receive God's grace from it.

Last point of application, let's partner with God in prayer through community and by looking to his word for grace. Let's partner with God in prayer, through community and by looking to his word for grace. We can commit to prayer by committing to pray for one another, and praying on our own and praying corporately. I want to ask you, encourage you to take one step forward in prayer. God has offered us his help through prayer. He's offered us his grace. Would you take one step forward? I say one step, because whenever someone is up front and talking about prayer, I have a tendency to all of a sudden feel overwhelmed with shame, because I'm not praying the way that I know I need to. I'm never praying as much as I wish I was praying, but I encourage you to take one step forward because God will hear our prayer.

So if you're not praying, start praying. If you pray five minutes a day, then pray 10. If you're praying for your friends and family, then begin to pray for the Church also. Take one step forward, whatever that looks like. Use the prayer calendar that the Church puts out or join the Upper Room Prayer Ministry. There's a room across the hall in a prayer suite, where people come for an hour at a time throughout the week to pray for you. They devote themselves for one hour to pray for the mission of God, our missionaries around the world and

you as a people. They pray for our city and they pray for us. Take a step forward in prayer. We can commit to community by committing to be here and be engaged with one another.

If you're watching online, we want you to know that we want you to be here. There's value in coming and gathering with the people of God. You need us and we need you. In 1 Corinthians 12, talks about how God arranges the parts of the body, that he builds the body of Christ, each individual Church, with every gift that's necessary. Ephesians 4 says something similar, that the body is held together by every ligament and every part, that when we're all functioning together, when every gift is being used, we grow up together in love. We need you and you need us. And Providence, we all need to think about how we can arrange our lives around this priority of the community of God that he's given us. As we think about this next semester, all of us need to be thinking about how we can make engaging the body of Christ our top priority. Not in some legalistic way, but in a way that rightly prioritizes the community that God has given us.

We can commit to look into God's word for grace, by striving to read it every day and striving to come here together to study it as a people. There are Bible reading journals, reading plans in the back, and they're designed for people who, "Hey, if you haven't been reading the Bible, it's simple enough that you could pick it up and begin to read God's word for yourself." Make a commitment to be here, to study the word together. Be in a life group and talk about his word. Memorize it, read it. Look to it for grace. The bad news this morning is that you can't do any of this on your own. You feel prone to wander and weak in temptation and easily discouraged, because you are. But the good news is that God is able to help us.

Our hope is not in our own effort or our own ability to hang on. Our hope is in his faithfulness. Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." You have failed before and you will fail again. God's instructions throughout this book are more than you and I can do. We need God's help. And the good news is that he is faithful to help us when we ask.

I want to close by thinking about a parable that Jesus told in Luke 18:1. It says, "He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart." He said, 'In a certain city, there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while, he refused. But afterward, he said to himself, 'Though, I neither fear God nor respect man. Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'"

Jesus is doing something that he does regularly, where he argues from the lesser to the greater. He's saying, consider this unrighteous judge. He doesn't fear God. He doesn't respect man. And yet he grants this woman justice just because he wants her to stop bothering him. Then he says, "If the unrighteous judge will grant

justice, just to get this woman out of his hair.” What will your Heavenly Father do? Will he not answer your prayers? He says, “I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.” In other words, God’s ear is inclined and he is waiting for us to cry out to him, to ask him for help, and he is eager to move. But then Jesus asked that pointed question at the end, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” What does he mean by that?

What he’s saying is nevertheless, in other words, this is true. What I’ve told you about God and his character is true. His ear is inclined and he is eager to help you. He stands ready, waiting. “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” In other words, this is true about God. This is who he is, but will anyone take him up on his offer? His character will not change. He is a God who has his ear inclined. He has a God who is ready to help, but will you go to him for help? That’s what he’s saying. Will you depend on him? What about us as a Church, Providence? When the son of man returns, what will he find us doing? I hope he finds us calling out for help, pleading with him in prayer, engaging in the community that he has given us and looking to his word for grace.

God’s character as a faithful helper as seen in this text, but it’s seen most clearly in the Gospel itself. God has proven his character when he sent his Son to come and live among us, to live the life that we could not live in our helpless state, to die the death that we deserve to die. And then he raised him from the dead and he invites us to put our faith in him. And when he did that, he revealed to us who he was. He was a God of peace, a God who longs to help us. A God who is for us.

If you’re not a Christian here this morning, this good news is for you. You cannot earn your way back to God. You can’t do enough good things to earn his favor, but you can put your trust in Jesus Christ and you can be forgiven of all your sins. The Bible says in Psalm 103, that your sin is removed from you as far as the east is from the west. You’ll be made completely righteous before God, when you put your faith in Jesus. If you’re a Christian here this morning, then remember this good news each day, and let it remind you that God is for you. He is an ever present, all sacrificing, loving God who is there to help you. Confess your need for his help, with greater and greater urgency and ask for his grace and he will give it.

Let’s pray and let’s thank God for his word. Heavenly Father, thank you for this good news that we enjoy together. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your mercy. Thank you that you didn’t cut us off, but instead drew us to you to make peace that we don’t deserve it. And even now, we come to you, not because we deserve to be here, but because of what Christ has done for us. God, you started a work in us and we asked that you would be faithful to complete it. God would you continue to sanctify us and change us. Help us to love what is good and righteous and help us to hate sin. Give us faith to believe that the pleasures at your right hand are far greater than anything the world has to offer us. God would you give us grace. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.



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