

Deliverance from Bondage to the Law

Scripture: Galatians 3:23–29

Code: 48-18

The greatness of our salvation is what is on my mind, and should be on yours this morning, as we come to the Lord's Table. And I don't know if you think about the greatness of our salvation in the broadest possible terms, but occasionally I'm stimulated to do that. And upon having the opportunity to read some of Jonathan Edwards over the last month or so, I have begun to draw from some of his thoughts and insights, thoughts about the cross that help expand our grasp of what our Lord did there.

The greatness of the blessing, the greatness of the goodness procured by the Lord Jesus in His death is not anything temporal related to time, and not anything earthly related to this world. The greatness of the blessing and the goodness procured by the Lord Jesus Christ in His death is both eternal and heavenly. He did not give Himself on the cross in death to save us from sickness, to save us from sadness, to save us from loneliness, to save us from loss, to save us from lack of purpose, to save us from poverty, to save us from trouble, but to save us from everlasting hell. It is God's most wondrous and necessary work that He prepare a way for sinners to be rescued from eternal hell and brought into eternal heaven. Therein lies God's greatest work. In fact, He created the entire universe, the world in which we live, as a stage for that redemptive purpose.

He sent many prophets to announce and promise salvation. He designed many ceremonies to illustrate salvation. He established a priestly service to provide the sacrifices and offerings that depicted salvation. He worked many great acts of providence to prepare the way for the Redeemer, the Savior. He inspired Scripture that told of the Savior's coming and His purpose in coming. He designed every book of the Bible in some way to carry on the redemptive story to its culmination in the glory of Christ in the book of Revelation. He designed the gospel. He designed the incarnation, the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension of Christ.

He called the apostles and gifted them to preach the glories of the gospel. He empowered them and other preachers by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news across the world. God made all His works of creation, all His works of providence, all His miraculous works, and all His natural works subordinate to the work of redemption. He created heaven as a dwelling place for the redeemed. He created angels to serve the purpose of salvation, ministering both to the Savior and the saved. He designed and conducts the whole history of the world from the beginning to the end to serve the plan of saving sinners from hell and bringing them to heaven.

Jonathan Edwards said, "The greatness of the misery of hell and the greatness of the bliss of heaven is correspondent to the greatness of the things God has done to procure the one and save us from the other." You can only understand the greatness of our Lord's work if you only understand the greatness of hell and the greatness of heaven. Hell is such misery, heaven is such bliss, that God did all of redemption in the midst of His creation to provide escape and heaven, and for His own eternal

glory.

If the misery of hell is not very great, if hell is no great thing to be saved from, if the joy of heaven is not very great, a great thing to be saved to, then those ends would not correspond to the means that God ordained to bring them about. But since the work of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – to bring salvation is so immense, so inconceivable, so incomparable, an effort that has no equal in all of the universe, it demands that we consider the greatness of hell and the greatness of heaven. The end must be somehow correspondent to the means. God did astonishing things, including the incarnation and the death of the Son of God. He did astonishing things to provide an astonishing salvation to rescue us from the horrors of hell to the glories of heaven. Hell is misery forever, and heaven is joy forever.

The writer of Hebrews then asks in Hebrews 2:3, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” That leads to the most urgent question, doesn’t it?

How do sinners receive that great salvation? How has God designed for us to escape hell and to enter heaven? By what means do we do that? False religion, false gospels, say, “Well, it’s a matter of believing and doing good things, doing moral things: being a good person, being religious, going to church, attending the sacraments. It’s a matter of faith and works. And an illustration, the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent, says, “If anyone says salvation is by faith alone, let him be damned.” But that is what the Bible says, that we receive this gift by faith alone.

It was our Lord whose life is the subject of John’s gospel. And in the first chapter, John writes this: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” It’s about believing in His name.

In the third chapter, John wrote, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”

In Romans chapter 3, unmistakably consistent with the words of the gospel of John, we read the words of Paul in verse 21 of Romans 3: “Apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all those who believe.” Again in verse 25: “Christ is God’s propitiation, God’s satisfaction in His blood received through faith.” Verse 26: “God then becomes just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” It’s all faith. Verse 28: “A man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.”

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace are you saved through faith; not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” In Acts 16:31, the question is posed, “How can I be saved?” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” says Paul. That is the Christian gospel, and that is, of course, what was rediscovered in the Reformation: salvation by faith alone; sola fide as you will hear tonight. Not faith and works - faith alone.

Now, Paul wrote the book of Galatians to make this truth clear. So let’s turn back to Galatians. We’ve been having a wonderful time going through this book. And in the book of Galatians Paul’s entire intention is to clarify that salvation is by faith alone.

Why does he do that? There were many churches that he had planted in the region of Galatia, and

the gospel was preached, and people had come to faith, and these churches were moving on in the truth. And some Jews came from Jerusalem who claimed to be believers in Christ, who claimed to represent James the leader of the Jerusalem church, and they came into the Galatian churches, and they told the believers that their salvation was not valid because it required more than faith, it required works, and namely circumcision according to the Mosaic law, and adherence to the Mosaic law, so that salvation was by faith and works. Both were necessary.

Paul identified this as a false gospel, as a distorted gospel. He says, "If you believe this" – in chapter 1, verse 6 – "you are deserting Him who called you, for a different gospel; which is not really another gospel." There is no other gospel, but it is a distortion of the gospel. "And if anybody does that, whether it is we or an angel from heaven, he is to be accursed!" Cursed are those who distort the gospel. And what the Judaizers had done was add works to the gospel.

In chapter 3 the apostle Paul gives you a short statement, verse 11: "No one is justified by the Law. That is evident, because the Scripture says," – and he quotes Habakkuk 2:4 – "The righteous man shall live by faith."

In a much longer statement, chapter 2, verse 16, Paul writes, "A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." That sounds essentially like Romans chapter 3. Anybody who believes in a gospel that includes works, Paul says in chapter 3, verse 1, is foolishly bewitched. "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"

The true gospel, salvation by faith, that's how you receive this immense gift that God has provided through Christ. It is by faith and faith alone. The question then comes up, "Then why the law? Why did God give the law if we're not saved by the law?" That's the question in chapter 3, verse 19, after Paul has been giving an explanation of salvation by faith alone and not by the law, not by works. In fact, all that the law does, chapter 3, verse 10, is curse everyone. Everyone is cursed. "All are cursed because they do not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." All the law does is curse us.

"Why was law then given?" verse 19 asks. And the answer is, "It was added because of transgressions." In other words, I told you last time that the law does several things.

Number one, it defines sin in its broadest sense. Everybody knows what is right and wrong; it's built into human thinking by God. It's called the law of God written in the heart. But people don't have a full understanding of sin. So the law of God given to Moses, summed up in the Ten Commandments, defines sin in its widest sense.

Secondly, the law also describes sin as not just something wrong with us, but as an open violation of God: opposition to God, rebellion to God. It makes it a high crime, not just some kind of personal defect, not just some disorder that we have to bear as humans, but open rebellion against God. It is a crime against Holy God.

Thirdly, the law is given to declare to us that when it is broken and when God is dishonored by disobedience, the result is death. The law kills. "The wages of sin is death."

And then there's a fourth purpose for the law, and that's historical. The law came, a period of time from Moses to Christ, and the law was a living example to the whole world that the law can't save. It was given to the people with the best opportunity to keep it, the people with the best history, God's people. They had all the blessings of God.

If any human beings could be saved by the law they had the best shot at it. And as we follow Israel from the time the law is given until the time of Christ, it is nothing but violation, violation, violation, and divine punishment, divine punishment, divine punishment. And the proof is that throughout the era of the law from Moses to Christ, all that the law did was demonstrate its inability to save. And by the time Christ comes you have a completely apostate nation of Israel who have totally corrupted the law and convinced themselves that even though they incessantly violated it, God somehow will accept them, because they kept some of it superficially.

So when Jesus first arrives, the first thing He does in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 is attack the Jews for their false righteousness. He assaults them and smashes their self-righteous, religious confidence. The law was to manifest sin, personally, and even historically.

Paul is saying that, "You don't want to be under the covenant of law, you want to be under the covenant of promise. You don't want to try to come to God through works; that's impossible, that's impossible; because if you have broken the law at one point, you've broken it all. You want to come by faith. The covenant of promise originally given to Abraham is the covenant that saves. The covenant of law originally given to Moses is a covenant that damns.

So we have been seeing that contrast; and this is the third message in looking at that contrast, and we're down to verse 23. Galatians 3:23. Let me read it to you.

"But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

You can recognize in just reading those verses the dominate term there is Christ, Christ, repeated over, and over, and over again. We are no longer under the law, we are in Christ. The contrast is in verses 23-24, what the law did to us. And then verses 25 and following, what faith did for us. What the law did to us; what faith does for us.

In the language of the apostle Paul, which we've already looked at in previous parts of the chapter, "We were once under the law, but now we are in Christ." That's the contrast: once under the law; now in Christ. When we were under the law, as we read in Romans 8, we were in the flesh, hostile toward God, couldn't obey God, and could not please God. Now that we are in Christ, we can obey, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and we long to obey; and that is the pattern of our lives. What the law does is devastate us with guilt and helplessness and hopelessness, and show us that we need a Savior, because we can't please God by keeping the law.

Paul said the law is two things: it is prison and it is a tutor, in the language here. It is prison and it is a tutor. It is bondage. It is a severe kind of discipline – and we'll see those in those two pictures.

Look at verse 23: "Before faith came" – and by "faith came" Paul means not only historically when Christ came, faith being synonymous with Christ, he sort of personifies faith in the person of Christ and the gospel of Christ. "Before Christ, before the gospel, before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."

Looking back from the vantage point of faith in Christ, notice the pronoun "we." Now we go from third person to first person. He's been contrasting the promise to Abraham and the law, and he's been talking objectively about them in the third person. Now he's talking personally about himself and the other believers, and he says, "Before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed." This is the "we" of believers.

It does also, perhaps, extend to the Jews, because the Jews, of course, were imprisoned by the law; and for the most of them they were never freed from that. But I think it's better to see Paul talking to believers, both Jew and Gentile, who are part of the churches to whom he writes the letter.

"We were all in bondage to God's law." What does that mean? "We broke it, we were condemned by it and sentenced to death."

Now notice the phrase in verse 23, "We were kept in custody under the law." This is exactly what it means: "We were in bondage to the law. We were incarcerated by the law." And he doubles up on that by a second verb, "being shut up, being shut up," cooped up, under restraint, hemmed in. The law for us was a prison. It was a prison. By the way, to say, "We were under the law," is the same as saying, "We were under the rule or the dominion of sin."

In Romans 6:14 they're used as parallels. "Under the law" means "under the dominion of sin," because to be under the law and unable to keep the law is to be under the dominion of sin. We are literally prisoners captive to the law, sentenced by the law, and headed for execution.

Both verbs, by the way, emphasize that God's law and God's commandment hold people in prison with no escape. There is no way to escape, because we cannot keep the law perfectly. We are spiritually on death row, confined and waiting to be sent to our eternal punishment in hell. We are in that condition until faith came, until the faith, which was later to be revealed, arrived.

The Jews were locked up under the law until Messiah came. Paul and even Jewish believers prior to their faith were locked up under the law until personal faith came to them by the Holy Spirit through the gospel. All Gentile believers were locked up under the law of God. They might not have had the written law of God, but they had the law of God written in their conscience, Romans 2 says. Every human being is a prisoner to the law, in bondage to the law of God, waiting on death row for an execution, is a law-breaker; and the only escape is a pardon offered by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Jews thought they were righteous; they were not. This must have been stunning to hear in the ear of the Judaizers, who may well have heard this letter read. They thought they were righteous; they were not. They were prisoners. Jesus even described them as poor prisoners, blind and

oppressed, in the gospel of Luke; poor prisoners, blind and oppressed. That is the condition of all men before faith comes - bound to the law.

As I mentioned in Romans chapter 2, “those without the law” – I’ll just read verses 14-15 – “still have a law to themselves; and that’s demonstrated, because they do instinctively the things of the law.” Every country, every nation, every ethnic group in the history of the world has had similar moral laws. It’s written in the heart.

Verse 15: “They show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.” Even the people without the written law of God have the law of God in some measure in their hearts. And the law is to bring them to guilt and fear and anxiety and dread over what is likely to happen. The Jews and all other religious legalists try to cover over that reality by inventing superficial, external behaviors, rites and rituals that somehow convince them in a massive kind of deception that they are okay as they are. But the truth is, the whole human race is cursed, as we saw in chapter 3, verse 10, and in bondage to the law, on death row, headed for hell.

So Paul says that the law, first of all, is a prison, a prison. Secondly, he says it’s a *paidaggos*. Look at verse 24: “Therefore the Law has become our *paidaggos*” – is the Greek word here, translated “tutor” in the NAS – “to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

Now what is this “tutor”? We think of the word *tutor*, we think of somebody who’s a teacher, somebody who comes in and does some instruction. That is not really the word *paidaggos*. *Teacher* is *didaskalos*, different word. This is a guardian, and particularly was describing a guardian of young boys. This would be usually in the Roman world a slave, a slave who had the responsibility to be the chaperone, you might say, to be the personal guardian, to be the mentor. He would be assigned to the child, not to be the child’s teacher, there were others who were teachers; but to be the guardian of that child, to keep the child from trouble, to keep the child from danger, and to make sure that the child was under control so that he didn’t do harmful things.

Typically a *paidaggos* would be a severe disciplinarian, someone who would discipline the child if he got out of line. The discipline was often very severe, so boys in the Roman world would long for the day when they were old enough to step out from under the *paidaggos*.

That is what the law did. The law was a disciplinarian. The law was a severe disciplinarian. The law was a threatening reality, creating guilt and fear and dread. The law hemmed us in, cut our freedoms off, controlled us, kept watch over us in our childishness.

So the law does have a distinct place, but its place is as a prison and as a severe guardian. Every young boy would want to be freed from this. Every young boy would be happy when the day came when he was at the point of *toga virilis*, when he reached an age somewhat like a bar mitzvah where they would give him his own robe and he would be freed from this *paidaggos*.

By the way, the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:15 says, “You may have ten thousand *paidaggos*, you only have one Father in Christ.” He distinguishes between him as the spiritual father of the Corinthians and the ten thousand people that might have been in their lives caring for them in one

way or another – caretakers. Boys would want the day when they were adults and they were freed from that severe discipline.

But that was what the law did. The law holds us in prison and disciplines us severely. The purpose of all of that, verse 24, is to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. The law doesn't make any contribution to that, it drives us to the point where we say, "Then how can I be delivered from death and hell? How can I be rescued from sin? How? Where is my salvation?" And the answer is the gospel. It is in Christ Jesus. It is by faith in Him, by believing in Him that you are justified, declared righteous.

The Judaizers and the Galatians needed to understand the function of the law. The law is not to save us, the law is the prison that makes us aware of our captivity and the death sentence that looms over our heads. The law is a severe disciplinarian that troubles our conscience, that cuts our freedoms down, that locks us in; because to set us free in our hostility and fleshiness would be to do more damage. The law functions that way corporately. We have laws in our nation to keep people from doing what they would otherwise do.

So before, we were under the law, and all the law did was imprison us and discipline us. Now we come to Christ. Now that faith has come, now that we have heard the gospel to be justified by faith means we are no longer under a tutor, and we are out of prison, we are out of prison. "We're only shut up until the faith," verse 23, "is revealed." We're only under the discipline until we've come to Christ, and then we're no longer under the tutor. You can see the sequence is the same.

So what does it mean to be in Christ? What is the benefit of this salvation? What do we receive? Well, first of all, we're out of prison, and the death sentence is reversed, and we now have the promise of eternal life in heaven.

Secondly, we're free from external bondage, fear, and dread, which is the dominion of the law; and we now have in our hearts a loving eagerness to obey God out of love and gratitude. So we are now free. We have reached adulthood, we have reached maturity, and we can be trusted now to live, because the wellspring of righteousness in the new nature that has been given to us, the fruit of conversion, draws us into loving God and obeying God from the heart.

Let's look at verses 26-29. Here are the blessings that are in Christ. Under the law: prison, discipline, sentence, and death. But if you put your faith in Christ, this is what you receive: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Doesn't take any more than that.

It's through faith in Christ Jesus that you become a son of God. That's the first. The first result is you become a son of God; not just a son of Abraham, but a son of God; not just a son of Abraham, because Abraham believed God, and anyone who believes God, in a sense, has a connection to Abraham; but a real, true son of God. And the "we" here becomes "you."

And so he moves from talking about all of them, including himself, all of them being shut up under the law to now talking to the Galatians and saying, "Look, you don't need to add the law, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. What more do you want? You used to be sons of Satan; your father the devil dominated you. So you were dominated by the devil, imprisoned by the law, and disciplined by your own conscience. Now you have been set free and you have become sons of God,

mature children, no longer prisoners, and it came by faith; no longer children who obey out of fear and threat, but sons, mature sons who obey out of love and desire.”

Verse 26: “You are all sons of God.” What does it mean to be a son of God? Well, we read John 1:12. Remember that if we put our trust in Christ and believe in Him, we have the authority to become sons of God. With that sonship comes authority, with that sonship.

“What authority? What are you talking about, authority? What authority do we have?” We have the authority, we have the right, we have the privilege – that’s what that means – to go to God, to go to God and speak to Him in very personal, intimate terms.

“How do you know that?” Drop down to chapter 4, verse 6: “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” What an incredibly wonderful reality.

What are the benefits of being a son? You have the authority to go to God. You possess the Holy Spirit who’s taken up residence in you. You have promise of an inheritance. You are not a slave, you are a son; you are then an heir, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We have the Holy Spirit living in us, and the Holy Spirit is witnessing to us that we are the children of God.

So we have an internal witness of the Spirit. We have an external witness of the Spirit in Scripture. We have authority and confidence and boldness to go to God and say, “Abba.” That means “papa.” That’s an Aramaic diminutive, a term of endearment.

The Jew would never think of saying that. No Jew would ever say, “Father,” even, let alone, “Abba.” “But you as sons of God not only can say, ‘Father,’ but, ‘Abba.’” Those are the words that our Lord Jesus used to speak to His Father.

And we have an inheritance. What more do we need? We don’t need the law. We are sons of God with all the rights, all the authority, all the privileges. We possess the Holy Spirit; we have an inheritance; we will one day be glorified. What do we need the law to do that hasn’t been done? Circumcision adds nothing to that or any other element of the law. We have everything as joint heirs. We are true sons.

And there’s even more than that. We are sons of God, and then verse 27 says we are “clothed . . . with Christ.” “All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

What does it mean to be baptized? It’s not talking about water baptism, just the word *immersion*. It’s used here in a dry sense. “You were immersed into Christ,” like Romans chapter 6 – and I know you’re probably familiar with that.

Romans chapter 6, verse 3 says, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we’ve been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. If we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection. Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away, that we would no longer be slaves to sin. If we have died with Christ, we

believe that we shall also live with Him.”

So Paul the apostle is saying, “Look, by faith you became sons of God with all the rights and privileges.” By faith you have been clothed with Christ, His robes for mine. “Jesus Thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress.”

Like that young Roman boy who came to the age where he became an adult and was given the robe, *toga virilis*. We have been given the robe of righteousness, righteousness of Christ. We are clothed with Him. We are covered with Him. That’s the imputation of His righteousness to us, and it’s by faith. We are sons through faith, and we are clothed with Christ through faith. This isn’t talking about baptism. And if Paul was ever going to talk about circumcision and its connection to baptism, this would have been the place to do it.

Sonship doesn’t demand circumcision. The Jews were saying, “You have to be circumcised. You have to be circumcised.” Paul says, “The sonship does not demand circumcision.” In fact, over in chapter 5, he says, “If you are circumcised, then Christ is made of no effect.”

Sonship does not demand circumcision. And that implies clearly that infant baptism, which some people believe is the New Testament form of circumcision, is completely alien to the intention of God and Scripture. Paul does not imply that baptism is in any sense connected to circumcision. No one needs circumcision. And those who say that infant baptism is simply the New Testament version of circumcision fail to understand that there is no circumcision necessary. We are literally *united* with Jesus Christ and then *clothed* with Jesus Christ. The great truth of our salvation: “I’m crucified with Him. And yet I live; but not I, Christ lives in me. His righteousness clothes me; I’m in Him, and He is in me.” That’s what it means to be a Christian.

There’s another benefit: we are one with each other. Verse 28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there’s neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; you’re all one in Christ Jesus.”

Now let me say this: this is talking spiritually. Obviously there are Jews and there are Gentiles, there are slaves and there are free men, there are men and there are women, and God does not intend to erase the distinction. But what it’s saying here is: in Christ, those distinctions are meaningless, because in Christ we are one, whether we be Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, we are all one in Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”

This is not saying we need to get rid of all the distinctions. This is not saying that, not saying that slaves ought to be all set free, and women ought to be equal to men in all their functions and roles. Not at all. The Bible is crystal clear: “Slaves, obey your masters. Masters, be good to your slaves. Wives, submit to your husbands. Husbands, love your wives.”

God has set the boundaries of nations, we understand that. But in Christ, we make no distinctions of gender with regard to our mutual love; we make no distinctions of social strata; we make no distinctions of ethnicity. That’s all alien to the fellowship of Christ.

Any kind of racism, any kind of white supremacy, any kind of anger and hostility toward other people, is part of the world, but not part of the church. We are known by our love, and it knows no ethnic limitations, and it knows no gender limitations, and it knows no social limitations. We’re all one in

Christ. When you come to me, whoever you are, Christ comes to me. You are in Christ, Christ is in you. I'm in Christ, Christ is in me. We are one in Christ.

Finally, we are heirs of the promise, verse 29: "If you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's descendants." You're the true sons of Abraham. You are the descendants of Abraham. Abraham's seed is Christ, you're in Christ who is the one true seed, and therefore you receive the promises that belong to Christ. Again, you are a joint heir.

This is the greatness of salvation, folks, the greatness of salvation, that God would go to this extent to provide rescue from hell and entrance to heaven. Do not remain in the prison and the discipline of the law when you can come to freedom and joy and heaven in Christ.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. As we come now to this Table. We acknowledge again that this salvation is a great salvation, really beyond our grasp. And as great as it is, as complicated as it is, as divine as it is, it's so simple for us to just reach out and receive the gift of forgiveness, the gift of heaven. I pray, Lord, that that would be the desire and the movement of every heart here.

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