

The Preeminence of Christ and the Hope of Salvation

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References: **Colossians 1**, Colossians 1:1-2; Colossians 1:9; Colossians 1:10; Colossians 1:11; Colossians 1:12; Colossians 1:13-14; Colossians 1:15-22; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; John 14:8-9; Revelation 20:11; Revelation 20:12-15; 2 Peter 3:10-12; John 3:16

Introduction

Okay, well it's really good to be able to be with you this morning. My wife and I are just on a little bit of a break, and we thought we would come out to BC, and we didn't want to miss fellowship at 16th, and so we came this morning. And when we came in, Harold approached —Harold approached and said, "Would you speak?"

And we said yes, and I go back to a gentleman that we knew long ago, and he always said, "You've got to be ready to preach, pray, or die as a Christian." And so I guess we'll take up the preaching one this morning. We enjoy joining together in prayer, and Lord willing, we will die naturally, and not from persecution like many of our brothers and sisters of Christ across the world.

And so this morning, as we come to the Word of God, I'd like to have a little look at the book of Colossians. Colossians, so if you follow along in your Bible, we'll be in Colossians chapter 1. Give you a moment to look that up, and then we'll read a little more of it.

So in Colossians chapter 1, and we're going to read from verse 15. And there it talks about the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says that:

[Colossians 1:15-22 NKJV] ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness

should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--

And we'll stop there, and the Lord will add His own blessing to the reading of His Word.

Paul's Prayer for the Church

Now when we come to the book of Colossians, we come to people that Paul wrote to who were being infiltrated by false teachers. And so Paul is writing to them, and what he writes, he is going to counteract the teaching of those false teachers. And so he begins, obviously, as he usually does, by addressing them. This is a letter, and so he gives his usual heading in the first couple of verses of chapter 1.

[Colossians 1:1-2 NKJV] ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then he does, as he often does, he tells the Colossian people, those believers, that he was praying for them, and he gives thanks to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for them, praying always for them. You know, it's a wonderful thing to have people praying for you. We have a number of friends, and each time we see them—we don't see them all the time—but each time we see them, they tell us, "We pray for you every day."

And I am so thankful for that, to have believers who will pray for us and uphold us before the Lord in prayer. And as people are praying for you, you know the Lord is going to do something in your life. He'll encourage you. He'll help you. If you don't know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, He will, by the Holy Spirit, convict you that you need the Savior. And so He comes along graciously and gently, and those impulses that you might have in your heart, in your mind, where you are considering what the Lord says, this is the Holy Spirit at work in you, as He is seeking to convict you of sin and the need of the Savior.

And so Paul continues, and then we get down to verse 9, we find out that Paul is now going to pray. You know, Paul is steeped in prayer in his own practice, in his own life. He's constantly communing with the Lord. And so as he writes to these Colossians, he's going to

pray and to praise and to worship. And he continues that right down into about verse 23. And so we see Paul's prayer. And in this prayer, in verse 9, he talks about their minds. He says in that verse:

[Colossians 1:9 NKJV] For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

That's a very intimate knowledge of the will of the Lord Jesus. And in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that's understanding things—things as God understands them. In other words, to have the mind of Christ so that we can think those things that God would be approving of. And so he starts with the mind. You know, there's a great offense against the mind in these days. The evil one, Satan, would want us to be messed up in our minds, to be thinking things that are not in accord with truth. He would want us to imbibe philosophies and ideas that are from the world and from him, and not be thinking the things that God would have us think. And of course, the things that God would have us think are the things in the scriptures themselves.

And so first of all, he prays for their mind, that they'll have a right mind. And then he prays also on the basis of that, in verse 10:

[Colossians 1:10 NKJV] that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

And you can only do that as you are understanding things from God's point of view. And then in your life, you begin to live a life that is ordered by the Lord Himself. And then in verse 11, he prays that they would be strengthened with all might. You see, in the Christian life, it is a life that you cannot live. Well, that seems a little odd, doesn't it? Because we're asked to live that life. But the point is that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength, by our own goodness, by anything that comes from us. We need the power of God working in us to enable us to live the life that He wants us to live. And so Paul prays:

[Colossians 1:11 NKJV] strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

And so he's addressed the mind, he's addressed walking worthy of the Lord, and he's addressed being strengthened with the strength that we need from God to be able to walk in that life. And then in verse 12, we find the atmosphere in which we're to do that, and that is giving thanks:

[Colossians 1:12 NKJV] giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

And so God is at work in us, and as we walk along each day, the response of our hearts and the response of our minds is to be thankful to our God for all that He is and for all that He has done.

Deliverance from Darkness

And then we find out in verses 13 and 14 that it is God through the Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered us from the power of darkness. You know, when you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are—whether you realize it or not—you are in a prison. It is Satan's prison; it is the authority of darkness. And who wields that authority? That authority is wielded by Satan himself. And so when we don't know Christ, we are bond slaves—it tells us in scripture we are bond slaves to him, to Satan and to sin. And so it tells us here that when we come to know Christ as our Savior, God has delivered us from the power of darkness:

[Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV] ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

And so when we come to know Christ, if you can picture it, that in one moment we're in a prison that it calls the power of darkness. And then when we come to know Christ and we have freedom and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are taken out of that kingdom of darkness and we're put into the kingdom of light because the Lord Jesus said, "I am the light." And so we become part of His kingdom. And we are capable then in the power of God to be able to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

And then it tells us how we are put into that kingdom, into the kingdom of light. It says in verse 14, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And

so it is all to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, God made it that way. Everything that is of interest to Him is in His Son. Everything that He does is through His Son in relation to you and to me. It's through His Son that He has provided salvation as the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross to die for us. It is through His Son and the blood that His Son shed that we are cleansed from our sins. It is through His Son that we walk in life.

Now we have newness of life, it tells us in the book of Romans in chapter 6, that we have new life.

[Romans 6:4 NKJV] Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

What is that life? Well, it is the very life of God Himself. It is the Lord Jesus. It's eternal life. And what is eternal? Well, God is eternal, and it is through God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that we come in to share in eternal life. Now, it's not quite the same. It's God's life, because He never had anything else. He was always eternal, but we're not eternal. Our bodies are not eternal. I wish they were because I wouldn't have needed a couple of knee replacements this past year. Our bodies are temporal and they die and they go into the ground. And so we have this eternal life that is from God Himself.

And one day if we know the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be changed. These old bodies that break down, they will be changed. It tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, when the Lord comes to take home those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, our bodies will be changed:

[1 Corinthians 15:51-52 NKJV] ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

And they will be eternal. They will be fitted for heaven. They'll be fitted for the presence of God. And they will never die. And so these bodies that we have, they will die. They will disintegrate. But one day there's that wonderful hope of seeing the Lord Jesus Christ. And in that day we'll be like Him. And we'll see Him as He is.

The Image of the Invisible God

Now this passage continues talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us that He is the image of the invisible God. And the language here indicates that it's an equality. That He is the same. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal. He is God. And He is the image of the invisible God. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on the earth, there was a gentleman who came along, Philip. And Philip says:

[John 14:8-9 NKJV] ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father'?"

Why? Because He's the exact image of the invisible God. God the Father is spirit and no man has seen Him at any time. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the image of God. And so if we have seen Christ, we have seen the Father.

And so this morning, it is as we look to Christ. Now, we don't live in the day when we can see Him physically, but we live in the day when by faith, we can believe what God has recorded for us and believe the importance of His Son and believe in the importance of believing in His Son, so that our sins can be dealt with, and so that we can one day have that wonderful privilege of being with the Lord Jesus for eternity.

And so, He's the image of the invisible God. He's the firstborn of every creature. Now, what does that mean, that word firstborn? It's talking about priority. He is first in everything. And this little passage is going to re-emphasize that, because in verse 18, we're going to find out that God the Father wants the Lord Jesus Christ to be preeminent.

Now, that's a word that doesn't just mean first, but it means first above everything. It's kind of like a step up, even, from first. It's **first above all**. And so, God the Father wants the Lord Jesus Christ to be first above of all in all things.

[Colossians 1:18 NKJV] And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

And why is that? Well, we go back up to verse 16, and we find out that the Lord Jesus Christ was the one who spoke everything into existence. On behalf of the Godhead, on behalf of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator.

[Colossians 1:16 NKJV] For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Everything that's in heaven that we don't see. Now, we see some of the heavens, that is, the atmosphere that we can look at. We can look up and we can see the planes taking off from Richmond and all of those things. We see those heavens. But beyond that, there is an unseen heaven, unseen to us. And the Lord Jesus created all things in the heavens and that are on earth, visible and invisible.

Isn't that interesting that we are told here that there are things on the earth that are visible and things that are invisible? There are those things that we don't see. We usually tend to emphasize the things you can see and hear and touch, etc. But God's telling us there's things going on around us that are invisible, things that we don't see. And then it tells us also that these invisible things can be called thrones and dominions and powers or authorities.

You see, there's an unseen world that is the evil world in which Satan rules. And in that world, then, there are dominions and principalities and powers. These are words that relate to the powers of unseen dominions—demonic beings. And so as well as that, with regard to the Lord, there is that which we do not see, and that is the angels that serve God Himself. And the Lord Jesus created all. **All things** were created by Him and for Him.

And then as well as that, we find out that He was before all things, and by Him all things consist.

[Colossians 1:17 NKJV] And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

What does that mean? Well, first of all, He was before everything. That's why, as far as the world is concerned, it has a beginning, but there's no beginning for the Lord Jesus Christ. He was there before the world was created, because He was the Creator. You can't be there before what you have created. If you're the Creator, what you have created comes into being at a particular point in time.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ existed before everything that we see around us today. And it tells us also that these things—you and I—were created for Him. Do you realize that? You might sit and think, "Well, not too sure about this Christian message. Not too sure about what we're being told from this book," which is, we claim, the Word of God. And as you look around, you may have that sort of skeptical or scientific mind that says, "You know, these things just are kind of outside my understanding." And they are things that I just don't know about. I'd rather be able to think and believe in the things that I can see and touch and hear.

But you know, the Lord Jesus Christ tells us here that everything that was created was for Him. Not only created by Him, but for Him. And so if the scriptures are correct—and I believe they are—that we were created for Him. Human beings were created for Him. Human beings who during their lives might come to know Him personally as their Savior and have their sins forgiven because of His work that He did on the cross at Calvary and His blood that was shed that washes us from all sin.

But also those that have not taken the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior—it doesn't make a distinction here. It says that everything that was created is for Him. And so this morning, if you're here and you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and have been forgiven of sin and have been cleansed by His blood and have been made a new creation and been given eternal life, you're still His. Now, you're not His in the sense that you're part of His family. Because when we come to know Christ, we become part of the family of God. But you're still His in the sense that He still has things to do with you, whether you realize it or not.

The Reality of Judgment

You see, when we die, or if the Lord should come before we die, there will be a division. Harold talked about division this morning in another context. But there will be a division because there's a day coming when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come in the clouds to the air. And everyone who knows Him as their personal Savior will be caught up to meet Him in the air. That means that everybody who does not know Him as their personal Savior will remain on the earth.

And so there's a division. There's a division between those who know Christ and those who don't. And as we walk around in our everyday lives, there's a division between those who know Christ and those who don't. And those who know Christ are walking in the joy of the salvation that has been provided by Him. They're walking in a walk that means they can walk with the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives. That He can bless them in every part of their lives as they're obedient to Him and as they walk with Him.

But at the same time, there's that division again. That when you don't know Christ, then you walk in your own will, or in the will of the one that the Bible says is your captor. We talked about being caught in the kingdom of darkness. And if you're caught in the kingdom of darkness, if you're a prisoner there, then there's a prison keeper, and that prison keeper is Satan himself. And so the Bible tells us that we either belong to Christ in this life, or we belong to Satan in this life. And we serve the one that we belong to.

Now, I said that we are for Christ. And we are, because Christ, at the end of time, will pull together every person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. And they will appear before Him at what the Bible calls the Great White Throne Judgment. And we find that in chapter 20 of Revelation. Those who know the Lord have already gone to be with him. But at the very end of time, in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 11, we find a judgment. Now there's several judgments as you go through the Bible. But this is a very serious one.

Because this one, the people who appear before the judge will be those from the very beginning of time who have not placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the thing that keeps you out of heaven is not sins. It is not committing adultery. It's not swearing, it's not doing all sorts of things that people regard as bad things. That's not the thing that keeps you out of heaven. Those are only the symptoms of what keeps you out of heaven. And the thing that keeps you out of heaven is one thing: it is not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. That's the one thing. And that's the only thing that can get you to heaven. It's the only thing that can obtain for you forgiveness of your sins—believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. To be saved, to be pulled out, to be rescued.

And so if you do not, then there is a day when God will roll up this whole earth and there will be a final judgment. And that judgment will be every person from the beginning of creation right until the very end of time and the end of this creation. And every person who has not accepted the Lord as their Savior will appear before this judgment throne. So let's read it. It says in chapter 20 of Revelation and verse 11:

[Revelation 20:11 NKJV] Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

This is talking about the dissolution of this earth. This is what's going to happen at the end of time.

The Dissolution of the Elements

We'll just take a little aside here to Second Peter because Peter talks about this time in some more detail. He says in Second Peter chapter 3 and verse 10:

[2 Peter 3:10-12 NKJV] ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Doesn't sound like a very good day on earth, does it? You know, the scientists, they want to tell you that the earth started with a Big Bang. And as usual, because they're thinking with Satan's thoughts and earthly thoughts and fleshly thoughts, they're not thinking as God thinks. And God's telling us here that it didn't start with a Big Bang. It started with the Lord Jesus Christ speaking the world into existence, but it will end with a "big bang." That's what's being pictured here. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. The heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. And then in verse 11, Peter says:

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

And so it's quite clear there's an end coming for this earth. God created it, and God will dispose of it. Why? Because it is infected by sin. We were talking earlier about creation. Our brother, as he led us, he had us thinking about the Garden of Eden. And this Garden of Eden was instituted by God and those that He created, Adam and Eve, they lived in that garden. But in that garden, there was sin that entered because of Adam's disobedience. Eve was deceived, Adam willfully sinned. And because of Adam's willful sin, you and I are born as sinners. It's like an infection that was brought into the world. And there's no vaccine for it except the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only vaccine for sin is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have our sins forgiven, our hearts cleansed, and to have new life in Him.

The Books of Judgment

And so there's a beginning, there's going to be an end. And back in Revelation 20 in verse 12, it says:

[Revelation 20:12-15 NKJV] ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Can we picture this? Can we picture a Great White Throne? Because the earth has gone, dissolved. That's what it meant in verse 11 when it said that John saw the one that sat on the throne from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. That's what Peter was talking about when he talked about the earth burning up and ending and dissolving. And at that time, then, we have this judgment of all those who have refused the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior during their lives.

And so what's the picture here? The picture is of a judge on a throne and of all these people who have come before the judge to be judged. In fact, they really don't even need to be judged because they're already guilty, because they didn't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. And it tells us that God is a bookkeeper. Now, this isn't the only place where it talks about God's books when you read through the Bible. There are other places where it talks about the books that God keeps.

God keeps meticulous records. And so we have two sets of books here. One is a book all by itself, and it's called the Book of Life. And the other is a whole bunch of books. And they're ranging out. Now, what's the picture here? The picture here is this is the time when it is found out whether those who appear before the judge are in the Book of Life. So the Book of Life is consulted, and your name might be Sally. And they look down in the Book of Life, and they look for Sally. And they find out that Sally isn't there. Why? Why? Because she did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the eternal life that He had provided.

And so then there is the books that determine the fairness of the penalty. Don't we think in terms of fairness? Some things that happen in life and you go, "Well, that's not fair." Why?

Because you're comparing it to something else that is fair and you realize whatever happened here, well, that's not fair. Well, God has these books to show how fair He is. First of all, it is because you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ that you end up before this judgment in the first place. And then it's going to be determined how extensive the punishment is going to be. And that's where it comes down to the life that's lived without the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the life that's lived without the Lord Jesus Christ, God keeps meticulous records. And so you might say, "Well, that guy is a murderer. And I've been a good person." Well, the fact that you were there at this throne indicates that there was something in you that wasn't good. And that was the sin that hadn't been dealt with. That was the fact that you had not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. And so God deals with things fairly. And He comes along and He looks in the books—not the individual book, but the books. And the books will tell what Sally's life was like on the earth. And while punishment is eternal and horrible for all of eternity, yet on the basis of how you lived in the kingdom of darkness for Satan and not in the kingdom of light, there will be a determination of fair punishment. That is, if you like, the over and above the basic being in the lake of fire forever.

And so the murderer—we'll call him John—and John is looked up, and we find out that John lived a life that was, in our view, terrible, and he was involved in all sorts of sinful things, and he murdered people, etc. And so there will be appropriate, proportional punishment for John because of how he lived in this life. And so we need to be very careful that we avoid that, and how can we avoid that? We avoid that by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

The Way of Escape

You see, all of this isn't what God wants for you. This judgment is not what God wants for you. That's why it tells us in John 3:16 that He loved the world and He gave His Son to be our Savior.

[John 3:16 NKJV] For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

That's what God wants for you. And so as we come to think of this, we find out also that it is after everyone is judged according to the works, that Death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Do you know what we're told in the Gospels? We're told that this lake of fire was not created for human beings. It's a creation of God for punishment of

Satan and his demons. But by refusing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, we choose to go there along with Satan and his demonic followers. That's what the Bible teaches. And the Lord would much rather that you never see that place, but that you come to faith in His Son for salvation. That's why it's called salvation. Do you realize that? That's why it's called being saved. It's because by believing in Him, you're saved from this end. You're saved, rescued from what's coming, which is the execution of the wrath of God.

You see, the wrath of God falls on those who choose to have it fall on them. What do I mean by that? There's a way of escape. And the way of escape is the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because on the cross, the wrath of God fell on Him. The wrath that would fall on us if we did not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. And so for anybody who doesn't take the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, they're actually choosing to experience the wrath of God against sin for themselves. And that brings you to the Great White Throne Judgment. But for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, then what He has done on Calvary needs no other person on whom the wrath of God must fall. And so we escape the wrath of God.

Now, Jesus bore the wrath of God for the sins of the whole world. That means that if you don't know Christ, He's already borne wrath for you. But it's like a gift. To experience the good of that, you have to accept it by yourself. Nobody else can do that for you. And you know God is a gentleman, and He will never pressure you to accept His Son. He'll hold out the offer all the time, constantly, saying, "Here's my Son, believe in Him, and you can be saved." But He'll never pressure you.

And so, as we come to the end this morning of what we're looking at—we're just looking at things in a very cursory way—we just want to think about the fact that God is a good God. Some people picture Him as somebody who's just waiting to slap you down all the time. No, God's not like that. God is a loving and a kind God. But God is also a God of justice. And He must exercise wrath against sin. And the question is, will He exercise it against you because you haven't accepted the way of escape that He has provided? Or will you accept what He has done for you in allowing the wrath of God for sin to fall on His very own Son?

A number of years ago, probably about thirty now, we lost our eldest son very suddenly. He had a bleed in his brain stem that bled into his brain. And he survived about ten months, and then he went to be with the Lord. It was sudden, just like that. One day in school, they found him on the floor. He had asked to go to the washroom, and he was on the floor. And it happened like that. You know, we are not guaranteed another moment. Not another moment. And so can I urge you, if you don't know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, that you run to Him today. That you accept the salvation that He has provided. That you guarantee that one day you'll be with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because God sent His Son.

Thank you. I know what it was like to lose our son. I can't imagine what it was like for the Lord Jesus Christ to be given by the Father because of my sin and your sin and everyone's sin. And for three hours, from 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock on the day that He hung on the cross, when there was darkness over the whole world and God poured out His wrath on His Son, His beloved Son, and He did it for you and for me.

Closing Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You again for the great gift of Thy Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We wish we could make people believe in Him. We would because we want to see them rescued from the wrath to come. But, Father, we can't. All we can do is tell the message, give the good news that there is a way of escape, and it is through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, Father, we just ask again that as You work among us—Lord, perhaps some needed encouragement this morning, perhaps some needed rebuke. Perhaps, Father, there was all sorts of needs in the hearts and minds of all of us here this morning that You have been addressing. Father, most particularly, we would just ask that those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, that today might be that day when they're translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Thy dear Son.

So, Father, part us with Your blessing now. We pray that You would continue with us through the rest of this day and the other meetings that there will be in this day. And we pray, Father, that You would be glorified in everything and that the Lord Jesus Christ would be exalted. We ask it all in His wonderful name, the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.