

The Joy of Forgiveness and Restoration

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References: **Psalm 32**, 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:12-13; Psalm 32:1-5; Numbers 15:30; John 16:8-9; Acts 26:17-18

Introduction: Fellowship and Teaching

Young man up there, and he wants the lights on. I don't know who he is, but maybe Sebastian, maybe you could check on him.

Well, good evening. Good to see each one of you again, and good to see those who are gathering with us on Zoom from different places. It's really a pleasure to be here. Tomorrow we'll be leaving, where we've been here tomorrow or by the time we leave it'll be about two weeks. So it's been a real pleasure to renew fellowship and to be able to minister the Word, and to be here for the DVBS, to be up at Daybreak Point Bible Camp, and to be here earlier for the parenting Saturday that we had. And so it's been a real pleasure.

And we will be going back, and we've got a lot of things on our schedule as we go back. And so it's been a real pleasure to be here with you.

Now, let's take our Bibles and turn to a psalm, Psalm 32. Psalm 32 in our Scriptures. And this is a tremendous psalm, and it is a psalm of teaching. And it's a psalm of forgiveness and restoration. And it is also, in it, there are also great principles about how God works in our lives in the forgiveness of sin—great principles about how God works in salvation. And so we want to think about that tonight. We want to open in prayer, and then we'll get into the study of God's Word together.

Our God and Father, we thank You for this time tonight. We thank You for the Word of God. We thank You that

[2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV] - ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

And so, Father, tonight as we look into Your Word, we just pray for Your blessing. Father, we come tonight, each one of us has come from our homes, from a distance, to be here to pray together, to join in prayer, to join in learning from the Word of God. We pray, Father, You will give something to each person, some portion, some small portion, some blessing from the Word of God, some instruction from the Word of God to them. And so we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Encouragement from Daybreak Point Bible Camp

I want to share a little bit about the weekend that we had. I was at Daybreak Bible Camp about 20 years ago, the first time I was in Vancouver. Harold, I met Harold at a conference in Kansas; we were roommates together about 20 years ago. And we spent time talking. He was speaking and I was speaking, and it was a conference called Vessels of Honor, and it still goes on today.

And anyway, we got to know each other. He invited me out to a weekend, a Labor Day weekend. And I think I did some speaking in a few places, but one of the things I did, I went up there and Harold was leading that weekend. And that was my first introduction to Anvil Island Daybreak Bible Camp. And as I was there, I noticed it hadn't changed very much. There were some changes, some improvements, but it's a beautiful place, of course. It's naturally tremendously beautiful, and it overlooks the Pacific Ocean and just some great views, and deer walking and grazing all through the island, eating apples off the ground and all kinds of things—not afraid very much of those who are walking around.

But the Lord brought 60-plus young people plus parents, and some of those who are eight, nine, 10, and 12 years old who were children of some of the workers that were there. And I think some were unsaved, some were new believers, some were a little older, some were growing in their faith. And I was very encouraged by being there.

Now, I'm not going to go into too much detail about the history of the island. One of the things they told me when I went there, I had five messages, and they said, "We want you to talk for 30 minutes and then take 15 minutes of questions." And I thought to myself, I said to Faith, "We'll never get 15 minutes of questions." Usually that doesn't happen; you don't get very many questions. So I thought to myself, we won't get too many. But after each of the messages, I got so many questions we had to say, "Stop, you know, let's just pause for now. We'll take some questions at the next meeting," and so forth. And then after the meeting, and even after the meeting, people would come up to me and ask me questions about different types of things.

We had a baptism. We had a young lady who had come to faith a few months ago, and she was baptized. So it was a very encouraging time to see God work through it.

And then on Monday, they had a groundbreaking for a new dining room. And it'll be a little larger dining room, and it'll be a newer kitchen, and it'll be better facilities. And so they had a groundbreaking and some prayer and people gathering. Ron Edgecombe was there, and a lot of people just came up for lunch in the afternoon. And so that was a real, real pleasure to see some people. I think someone came up to me named David Jones. I think you might know him; he was commended by Heather some years ago. So anyway, it was a great time all in all. And so may the Lord bless the work of Anvil Island.

Background to Psalm 32: A Maskil of David

Well, we want to look at Psalm 32. And Psalm 32, in the very beginning of it, the title of Psalm 32, it says, "A Maskil," which means it's a Hebrew word which means teaching. I think there are 13 of these psalms that are teaching psalms. So these are psalms that will be instructional psalms, teaching about something about life, something about salvation, something about forgiveness. And so as we look at this psalm, you'll see as it develops that David is seeking to teach his generation and generations to follow the message of, I think, salvation, the message of the forgiveness of sins, the message of restoration from someone who falls away from the Lord.

Now keep your finger there for a moment, just to give you some background. Turn with me to Psalm 51. Psalm 51.

Now the background to the psalm is that David, David had committed moral sin with Bathsheba, with the wife of Uriah the Hittite. And we're told about this incident in 2 Samuel chapter 12. In 2 Samuel chapter 12, Nathan the prophet comes to David, and he tells David a story. He says there was a man who had flocks and herds; he was very rich. There was a man who was poor, and he spent some of his money and he bought a ewe lamb. And he tells a story: he said his children loved this ewe lamb, and they grew up together with them, and they played with it. And at night, they would bring it into the beds and they would sleep with it. But this rich man had some guests that were visiting, and so the rich man somehow took from the poor man, and they slaughtered and prepared this ewe lamb as food for these guests.

And David got very angry, it says, in 2 Samuel chapter 12. He says he got very angry, and he said, "Who is this man?" And Nathan the prophet said, "**You** are that man. You did this."

Immediate Forgiveness

But so beautiful. Let's turn there just for a moment; I want you to look at one particular verse. 2 Samuel chapter 12, verse 13. Something very special about salvation.

You know, in our generation, I didn't realize this until I read some history: you know, 100 years ago, the gospel wasn't very clear. One hundred and 150 years ago, they felt that the gospel was something you had to keep on working at. It was over a period of time: you were seeking the Lord and seeking the Lord, and praying and doing certain works of penance, certain works of sacrifice. You had to keep on doing things. And then if you kept on doing things, maybe you could have your sins forgiven. You couldn't ever be really sure if your sins were forgiven because you had to keep on doing these kind of works.

About 100 years ago or more, D.L. Moody was a preacher, and there may have been others who helped, but he began to talk about the new birth, and he began to talk about this: when you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the moment you place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, **immediately** you have your sins forgiven. Immediately! You don't have to work at it; you don't have to. It's all in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. It's all in what Christ has done. It's not in what we have done; it's in what **He** has done. It's not the works that follow; it's not the works that are beforehand. It's not praying, it's not laboring, it's not fasting, it's not agonizing—it's trusting and having faith in what Christ has done for us.

And this is something similar in 2 Samuel chapter 12. It says this in verse 13. And so Nathan the prophet told him this, told him this parable, and then said, "You are the man who's committed this grievous sin, this very, very grievous thing in the sight of the Lord." In fact, if you look at the last part of verse 13, if he had not, if he had not come to confession, it says he would die. But it says in verse 13—I love what verse 13 says:

[2 Samuel 12:13 NKJV] - So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

And immediately, what does Nathan say? "No, I have a whole list of things you've got to do before you can have forgiveness. You've got to fast and you've got to offer sacrifice. You've got to do all these things"? Verse 13: David says, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, right at that moment, "The Lord has put away thy sin from you." That's a beautiful thing, isn't it?

So you can share the gospel with someone, and you share the gospel and say, when you place your faith in the gospel of the Lord Jesus and trust in what He has done for you on the cross of Calvary—right? When He died, He made provision for your salvation. And when you place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He will forgive you. At that moment, He will forgive you of that sin. Your sins will be as far as the east from the west, so far as God removed that sin from you. The moment you place faith in the Lord Jesus, just like Nathan says, the Lord has forgiven your sin. And it says in verse 13, "And thou shalt not die." You won't receive the punishment that you would have received, because you have just said, "I have sinned." You have confessed it, and you come by faith for restoration in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, go with me back to chapter 51. This is all by means of background. Look at Psalm 51. Psalm 51 is a penitential psalm; it's a psalm of confession. And look at verse 13. All through this Psalm 51, David is confessing his sin, and he is recounting this, and he's beginning to say certain things about that. But when he comes to verse 13—we'll start at verse 12. He says:

[Psalm 51:12-13 NKJV]

¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.

David says, "And then, I make a vow," and then he said, "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto You." Now, I'm not sure what David is going to do when he says, "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will be converted unto You." But I think part of it, at least, is what he writes in Psalm 32.

The Extent of Forgiveness (Psalm 32:1-5)

So let's look—we want to look at just the first five verses of Psalm 32. So we know it's a teaching psalm; it's an instructional psalm. It's a maskil, which means instruction. Now let's read; follow with me. We're just going to read the first five verses, then we'll get into some of the teaching from it.

[Psalm 32:1-5 NKJV]

¹ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,

Whose sin is covered.

² Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.

⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.Selah

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.Selah

Those are almost the exact words of what happened in 2 Samuel 12 and verse 13.

But notice something about this psalm. Notice the first two verses. In the first two verses, there are three words for sin. In verse 1, there's two words for sin: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." And "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." So there's three words for sin in the first two verses, and there's three words for forgiveness.

He says in verse 1, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," and he has experienced that himself. And he says, "whose sin is covered." And then he says, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." And some translations translate it as doesn't keep a record anymore of your sin. One of those beautiful, beautiful words for forgiveness: doesn't keep a record anymore of your sins. They're wiped away. They're put behind the back, it says, of God, cast into the depths of the sea, removed from us as far as the east is from the west. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

When we place our faith, when we say to the Lord, "I have sinned, forgive me of my sins," and the Lord forgives us of those sins, at that moment, they're removed from us as far as the east is from the west. No more record of sins! What a beautiful thought: no more record of sins. When we stand before God—and in the truth, we say, you know, Christians say that, and the unbelieving world says about Christians, "when we stand before God." But, you know, we will never stand before God in judgment. We will never stand before the Great White Throne in judgment for our sins, because we are forgiven. We will be in heaven already as believers, as those who are enjoying heaven because our sins are forgiven. We'll come before the Lord in the Judgment Seat of Christ; we receive crowns.

Remedy for Intentional Sin

I want to look at the first verse again with you for a moment. There's something a little special. The first verse says, "Blessed is he whose transgression..." Now, this word for transgression is a strong word, a strong Hebrew word for transgression, and it means willful rebellion. He says, "Blessed is the man whose willful rebellion is forgiven."

Now, there is an Old Testament—two Old Testament verses, and it says this. It's in Numbers 15 and verse 30:

[Numbers 15:30 NKJV] - "But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people.

And it says, if someone sins intentionally, a stranger in your land, or you, a Hebrew person, you sin intentionally, there is no remedy in the law. You can't go to a priest. You can't bring a sacrifice. You can't bring a lamb, you can't bring a bullock, you can't bring anything, any sacrifice, if you sin intentionally. But if you sin not willfully, then you can bring a trespass or a sin offering. But if you sin intentionally, there's no sacrifice. The law has no remedy for you; you cannot go to a priest.

Now, if I actually said, "Raise your hand," to any audience I had, "has anyone here never sinned intentionally?" there are no hands that would go up. We all have done that. And you can see the weakness of the Old Testament law: there was no remedy for intentional sin.

So David here with Bathsheba, that was intentional sin. He saw her, he desired to have her as his wife, he sent Uriah the Hittite to the hottest part of the battlefield, and Joab sends back to him word; it says Uriah has died. Uriah, one of the best soldiers he had, one of the 30 great mighty men! And Nathan says, "You killed him. Uriah the Hittite, you killed him by sending him to the most difficult part of the battle against the Ammonites." He says, "You killed him." He intentionally did this.

But notice here, it's intentional sin. The Old Testament law says there's no remedy for intentional sin. But notice David says, so beautifully, "Blessed is he who has his intentional sin forgiven." He doesn't go to the law. He doesn't go to a priest. He doesn't go to the altar. What he does is what we do today. You could almost take this psalm and pull it right out and put it in the New Testament, because what David did, he cast himself on the mercy and the grace and the finished work of Christ.

The Convicting Work of the Spirit

Notice what he says. God begins to do a work of convicting him of sin. Before he said to Nathan, "I have sinned," God had been working on his life already. And when we think of those who are at Anvil Island camp or many other types of camps or meetings or youth meetings or church services, before someone says, "I want to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," God has been already convicting that person of sin.

Look at the convicting work, I think, by the Holy Spirit in David's life. Look at verses 3 and 4: "When I kept silent, when I kept silence, my bones became old through my roaring all the day long." You can see that graphic picture. David committed this sin. He knew his heart condemned him for the sin that he committed, but he kept silence. He didn't go to the Lord. He didn't ask for confession. He didn't ask for forgiveness. He didn't ask for mercy. He didn't ask for grace. He says he kept silence. And that began to have an effect on his life.

You know, guilt, guilt and the conviction of sin can have a physical effect on someone. I wonder if David actually had a physical effect of the guilt and the inward stress of what he had done in sin and killing a man. He says, "My bones became old through my roaring all the day long."

But then it says, verse 4: and night and day, the hand of God, the hand of God was heavy upon me, and my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. You can see the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. And that happens today; that happens every summer. That happens through meetings all the time. Before a person gets saved, before he truly gets saved, this has to happen: this convicting type of work has to happen in his life.

It says in John's Gospel, chapter 16, it says:

[John 16:8-9 NKJV] - ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin. He's doing that all the time; He's convicting the world of sin. The Spirit of God is speaking to the hearts of people and saying, "You have come short, you have sinned, and you're on your way to a lost eternity." He begins to speak powerfully to the heart of someone and showing them that they have sinned. And He does that because He says, "They do not believe on Me." That's what's happening here: a graphic picture of that convicting work of the Holy Spirit. So David feels that heavy hand of God on his life. He says, "Night and day was Thy hand heavy upon me."

Personal Responsibility and Confession

And then we have verse 5: the result of that convicting work of the Holy Spirit, that result of God pointing out, "David, you have sinned this grievous sin in killing a man, in taking another man's wife." It was grievously wrong, and God is convicting him more and more. He kept silent more and more.

Look at verse 5. Verse 5 says this. Notice the personal responsibility that David takes. David was hiding his sin. David says, "I did not confess it. I was hiding it. I wasn't coming out and confessing my sin to God. I wasn't saying, 'I am responsible. God, I did this.'" Remember back in 2 Samuel 12, verse 13, David says, "I have sinned against the Lord. I have sinned against the Lord." That's what true confession is. That's what true repentance is: "Lord, I have sinned against You."

But notice verse 5. Notice five times in this one verse, David uses the word my or mine, taking full responsibility: "Lord, I am guilty. I am responsible. It is **my** actions that did this thing, and I lay it at Your feet. I acknowledge it to You."

Verse 5: "I acknowledge **my** sin unto Thee, and **mine** iniquity have I not hidden." Well, he did hide it for a while, but then he comes out, and he says, "Lord, this is what I have done. This is what I have done. I am responsible. It's **my** iniquity. I acknowledge **my** sin. I said I will confess **my** transgressions unto the Lord." And that's something we have to do, don't we? We have to confess our sins. We have to repent of our sins. That is acknowledging our sin before God—not a whole bunch of works, but acknowledging our sin, laying it before God and saying, "I am responsible."

Do you notice all those references? My and mine: "I acknowledge **my** sin, **mine** iniquity have I not hidden. I will confess **my** transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgave the iniquity of **my** sin." Those are actually beautiful; it's a beautiful verse. David coming in confession.

You see, he came bowing his heart, bowing himself and saying, "I have done wrong. I have sinned. I repent of these actions in my life. I want You to take this sin from me. I want You to put it on the shoulders, as it were, of the Lord Jesus Christ," looking future. Only the Lord Jesus Christ's future can take away this sin. And the moment he does that, the moment he does it, the Lord says, "And the Lord forgave the iniquity of my sin." You don't have to carry it anymore. You don't have to bear it anymore. You don't have to have that guilt anymore.

And I think He takes the memories of that away. In time, God takes the memories of those things. You know, one of the questions we had at camp—I mean, all these questions that came sometimes after meetings—one man said, "Does God always take the memories of our sins away, the guilt of our sins away?" So He takes all the guilt of our sins away, and He

takes the memory of those things away as well, and He gives us joy in the place of that. Almost every person I've ever met who's come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he's got joy in his life. There's been a joy experience. It may be quieter, it may be more exuberant, it may be you can see it outwardly, but God also takes the memories away. Sometimes it's very difficult, sometimes it's very hard, but He takes away the iniquity of our sins.

The Power of the Word Preached

I'm going to turn to another verse as we close our time. Turn with me over to Acts, Acts chapter 26. Acts chapter 26, verse 18.

How did David get to this point? He was hiding his sin. He said, "I hid my sin when I was silent." It wasn't until Nathan the prophet came. We don't know what the timeframe was; I don't know if it was weeks, was it months? I'm not really sure exactly, but all this time he hid it. All this time he didn't say anything. All this time he covered it up; he tried to make it look like it was Uriah the Hittite's child. Tried to hide it, tried to cover it.

But how does God work in the life of a person to bring him to salvation? Here in chapter 26 of the book of Acts, I think one of the real keys, you know, we can't do anything to bring it past someone to be saved. There's only one thing, a few things we can do: we can pray for that person, and as we pray for that person, God uses that prayer in the saving work of someone. But I think the other thing, there's a convicting work of the Holy Spirit. But the part that we might have is this part in verse 18.

Notice something in verse 18. Paul is speaking to Agrippa, and in verse 17, he's explaining his commission that he's received from the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 9. He says, "I'll send you before kings and rulers; I'm going to send you to the Gentiles." And Paul's one responsibility, one primary responsibility, was to preach the gospel, preach the Word of the Lord. And so he says to King Agrippa, he says:

[Acts 26:17-18 NKJV] - ¹⁷ I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

And he says, "I'm going to send you there to preach."

Now, the Gentiles had no knowledge of the Word of God. The Jewish people had a knowledge of the Old Testament; they had knowledge of the great figures of the Old Testament. But the Gentiles, they never heard of God, had no background to God at all. Had no knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, no knowledge of the fundamental doctrines that we have in the Old Testament, no knowledge of forgiveness, no knowledge of sacrifice, no knowledge of a blood sacrifice—none of that. But he says, "I've been sent to the Gentiles, and primarily to bring the Word of God."

Now, notice what it says in verse 18. In his preaching, a number of things would happen, and some of these things happened in David's life. I think Nathan's ministry in David's life caused David—the convicting work of Nathan's probing through the Word of God. But notice what it says here: when the preaching to the Gentiles would take place, a number of things would happen.

The first thing is, it says, "to open their eyes." When Paul would preach the Scriptures and the gospel and the Word of God to the Gentiles who had no knowledge of Scripture, their eyes would be opened—maybe not open completely, but before they're even saved, their eyes would be opened. You know, when you speak to someone and you share the gospel with them, their eyes are opened. They are hearing things and they come to know things they never knew before. They might not know about judgment; they might not know about forgiveness. They might not know their sins could be forgiven immediately. They might not know the most grievous of their sins can be removed from them as far as the east is from the west. And their eyes begin to be opened. He says their eyes are opened even before they're saved, even before the Spirit of God comes into their life. The gospel causes their eyes to be opened about spiritual truth.

He says also in verse 18, "and to turn them from darkness to light." They're beginning to see the light of Scripture. They're beginning to see the truth of Scripture—not all of it, but light is beginning to stream into their lives.

There's a story about Billy Graham. There was a pro-am, pro-amateur golf tournament, and there was a particular man in town who was a golfer. He wasn't known to be too religious, and they teamed up the golfer with Billy Graham on this professional and amateur tournament. And so afterwards, they asked this man, "What was it like? What was it like playing golf with Billy Graham?"

He said, "It was horrible. It was horrible." He said, "I had to spend all this time with Billy Graham."

He said, "Did he preach to you the whole time?"

He said, "No, he didn't say anything. He didn't say anything about the gospel. It was just his presence there. This light came into him, this conviction came into his life without hardly him saying anything."

See, we shine a light, light into darkness, and even the more we say, the light is shining into the life of an unsaved person.

And then it also says in verse 18, "to turn them from the power of Satan to God." Not that they're completely turned to God and saved, because we'll find out these people that he's speaking about aren't saved yet, but this is the power of the Word of God preached, much like Nathan ministering to David, and David feeling that conviction of the Holy Spirit and the conviction of the sin that he's committed.

But notice verse 18: "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, turn them from the power of Satan unto God." Notice this last phrase: "that they might receive the forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified in heaven." Why? The first three things, they weren't saved yet. "That they may receive all these things through faith that is in the Lord Jesus Christ." That's at the very end.

Begin to see the power of the gospel, the power of the preaching of the Scriptures. That's part of our job, whether it be Vacation Bible School, whether it be on a Sunday morning, whether it be with youth group, whether it be at camp, whether it be in other opportunities that we have. I talked to someone this past week; they love to do street ministry, go into streets and talk to people right on the street. However it is, it's the Word of God that we bring into the lives of people.

And one of the great messages is, he says, when you believe this message of the gospel, your sins are forgiven **immediately**. What a great truth: your sins are forgiven. Nathan said to David, "You're the man. You've committed these things." And David says, "I have sinned." And Nathan says, "God has forgiven you." Right at that moment, when he says, "I have sinned," right at that moment he says, "And the Lord has forgiven you your sins."

So what a great truth about Scripture, great truth about the gospel. David takes personal responsibility. He says, "I have sinned. It's **my** sin; it's **my** iniquity." And then the Lord says, "And the Lord forgave the iniquity of your sin."

Well, may we be more involved in that kind of thing. May we, whenever opportunities we have, may we share this great message, the message of what the Lord Jesus Christ can do in our lives—how He forgives sins, and He gives the forgiveness of sins immediately.

Closing Prayer

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Our God and Father, we thank You for this time tonight. We thank You, Father, for the forgiveness of sins. We thank You for that provision of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when a soul confesses his sins, when a soul says, "I have sinned," when it comes to the Lord, a place where he says, "I have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord my Savior," Him, as far as the east is from the west, so far as I remove your sins, and all of your sins are forgiven.

And so, Father, we thank You for all of these things. We pray again for Harold. We pray for a complete restoration, we pray for complete healing, and we pray, Father, You might raise him up to full health and strength. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.