



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 1: 8-11

Winter 2025

"Deliverance"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. That's a very good text to introduce our passage this morning, which is 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 8 through 11. A brief passage, but a passage filled with reality and encouraging truth;

<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; <sup>9</sup>indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; <sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, <sup>11</sup>you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

2 Corinthians 1: 8-11

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it.  
Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, what a privilege it is to be with Your people to open a text like this, read it, and then consider the meaning of it: The importance that it gives us of prayer and

giving us the reality, stating the reality of life—that it's full of affliction. And so LORD, we pray that You would teach us the lessons that You would give us: What Paul experienced, and the blessing he experienced from Your hand—and that we can expect the same blessing in and through affliction. Seems like a strange thing to say, but it's true, and we need to learn that. So bless us LORD from this text, and the instruction that the apostle gave.

We know that there are members of our church who are dealing with serious health issues, the protracted kind of health issues—and we pray for them. We pray that You give healing, pray that You would bless the doctors as they attend to them, and pray that You would intervene to restore them to health. And through the trial that is being experienced, we pray that You would give blessing, maturity, and growth through it all.

And so LORD, we place all these things in Your hands. We're reminded by such things, such difficulties, that we really don't control our lives. We're to be responsible, of course, and we pray that You would give us wisdom to be responsible men and women with the days that You've given us—but ultimately, it's all in Your hands. And as we will consider this morning, that is one of the reasons affliction comes to us, (and it's what Paul, himself, says in this text), is so that we won't depend on ourselves, but depend on You. So LORD, we pray that You would teach us to do that, and bless us, and bless us in many ways, even bless us through the storms of life.

We thank You that we can come to You day and night at any moment, “to the throne of grace”, (*Heb 4:16*), to seek help in time of need. You've given us that great privilege in Christ. We do that now, but LORD we pray that You would bless us throughout the week in this way—coming to You, and seeking Your help. Seeking help physically, but seeking Your help spiritually, and we need that in this hour. We pray that You would teach us and build us up in the faith—and give us an understanding of Your grace and Your greatness, and that You genuinely do give help in time of need.

So we look to You Father to bless us, to give us hearts full of praise for You. Help us to understand further who You are, and what You've done, and what You are doing —

and will yet do. We thank You for that. We thank You for Your love for us; and it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

(Message) The Bible speaks a lot about affliction. In the first eight chapters of 2 Corinthians, *affliction* appears repeatedly. In the first eight verses of chapter 1, the words *affliction* and *suffering* occur eight times. That was the life of an apostle—but not just the apostles. It's not uncommon for any of God's people who are fighting the good fight, who are walking with the Spirit, who are making their faith known, to experience affliction.

Martin Luther knew the experience Paul had. On one occasion he wrote, "For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members: Christ was wholly lost, I felt forsaken by God."

He wasn't, of course. We never are. And actually, it is through his sufferings that Luther learned about God's faithfulness. He wanted to write a book about affliction, because he said, "Apart from afflictions, no man can understand Scripture, faith, the fear, or love, of God."

Paul believed that too. That is the lesson that he gives here in 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 8 through 11: 'Afflictions come. God sends them, not to destroy us, but to bless us, to teach us, and draw us close to Him. It is in drawing close to Him in prayer that we get deliverance.'

Paul called Him the, "God of all comfort" (vs3); and here he gives an example of how in a crisis, comfort came to him by prayer. He wrote of a terrible ordeal that he had recently suffered; "We do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life." (vs8). Evidently the Corinthians knew about the incident that Paul refers to here, but we don't.

Some, (Calvin among them), think it was the riot of the silversmiths in Ephesus when they occupied a city theater for two hours chanting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." —It's in Acts chapter 19, verse 28. Paul's preaching caused a great revival in the city; and not only in the city but through all of the province of Asia—so great that it affected the business of the silversmiths. In fact, when there is revival, when there is a spiritual awaking it will affect the culture we live in...and the businesses of that culture. So the people, as a result, were not buying their silver idols of Diana. So they, (*the silversmiths*), rioted, accused Paul of being the culprit with his preaching—and put him and his friends lives in danger. But Luke wrote, '...that Paul wanted to go into the assembly to speak and was only kept from doing it by his friends.' (*Acts 19:30-31*). They were more fearful than he was, (which doesn't really seem to fit the description of the "affliction" that Paul is speaking of here).

So other suggestions have been made: A physical sickness that was so severe that it endangered his life; or an imprisonment and beatings; maybe a lynch mob outside of town. All of these are suggested, all of these are possibilities, for they fit Paul's experience. Later in chapter 11, he lists many of the terrible trials that he had gone through: Dangers from robbers, dangers from beatings, stonings, floggings, shipwreck...he goes on with a long list of the trials that he passed through.

However, here in our text, Paul doesn't tell us what his affliction was, (vs8), just as he didn't tell us what that 'thorn in the flesh' was that he had. (*2Cor 12:7*). (And that has led to great deal of speculation).

So like 'the thorn', 'the affliction' could be any number of things—which means that we can assert our own afflictions into this because the instruction Paul gives applies to all of those afflictions—and applies to all of us. But what Paul does reveal here is the intensity of it; "...burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that *he* despaired even of life; (vs8b)...meaning, 'he saw no way of escape'. Paul stared death in the face; he says in verse 9, "...indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves...". Whatever this

was, Paul was like a man on death row about to be marched down to the gallows. He expected to die.

Most of us don't have experiences that extreme and that dire—but it can happen. Christians go through great tragedies that test their courage and their faith to where they may wish to die. If we're walking by the Spirit, if we're living a life of obedience and living a life of service, we will meet opposition. It may not be violence, it may be ostracism. People may shut you out so that you feel isolated, alone. That's a hard place to be; to be rejected. The sick bed is also a hard place to be. Sometimes Christians suffer chronic illness where there doesn't seem to be an end to it, and it is discouraging. It wears a person down.

Any of these could have been Paul's affliction—but there is a purpose in them, and Paul gives that in verse 9b. "...so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead."

Now you wouldn't think that Paul needed to learn that lesson, would you? After all, he's the great apostle, a man of humility who understood his dependence on the LORD. But he says that this incident occurred to teach him an important lesson: "...not to trust in ourselves..." (vs9). Paul knew better, but he evidently was doing that. Apostles were not perfect, and Paul makes that very clear about himself in the second half of Romans chapter 7.

So, to teach him to renounce all self-confidence, God brought him into difficult straits where he was convinced that no human wisdom, or effort on his part, could deliver him. Believing he would die, he did the only thing that he could do—he looked to the LORD. He cast himself completely on Him as the only One who could deliver him from danger and death. Now if an apostle needed to learn this lesson to have any sense of self-sufficiency crushed, how much more do you and I need that?

Now I distinguish between self-sufficiency and self-reliance. I think we need to be self-reliant. We need to be diligent in our affairs of life, our work. We need to be conscientious individuals so that we're not dependent on others—and we are, in fact,

able to help others...but we do that with complete dependence on the LORD. That is a primary reason affliction comes into our lives, because we neglect that, or we forget that, or we drift away from it—and so it is to teach us to look to the LORD. It is one of God's *means* of sanctifying us—He's the sufficient One, we are not.

There's an Arab proverb that says, "All sunshine makes a desert." —And so sometimes we need the rain; we need a storm; we need difficulties. When life is easy we don't grow. We like comfort, (I love comfort), but it's not good for us...at least not all the time; it makes soft Christians. We need affliction.—Now that's not me speaking, that's the psalmist, in Psalm 119, verse 71. He wrote, "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes." It brings us to the end of ourselves. It brings us face to face with the LORD, and trusting in Him and Him alone. It makes us strong spiritually.

Nature teaches that. I have a friend who has a mathematical and scientific mind, and when he was a boy, a young teenager, he caught a caterpillar in a field. And knowing that it would turn into a Monarch butterfly, he took it home and he fed it milkweed, (which is what the caterpillars eat). He watched it close itself up in its chrysalis—and he waited for it to develop over a period of days. Then he watched the butterfly struggle to emerge—and so feeling sorry for it he decided to help it by making a small cut on the chrysalis, (not knowing that, it would doom the butterfly).

It emerged easily without a struggle—but not fully developed and soon died. The struggle to come out of the chrysalis was necessary for it to develop, for its wings to develop to have the strength to live and fly. That's the same with us spiritually; this is how God has designed things. —It is hard, but it's necessary.

And the LORD is trustworthy. Think of how Paul describes God in this chapter: In verse 3, He is the "God of all comfort"; in verse 9, He is, "the God who raises the dead." The all loving God, the all caring God, the Father of compassion is the Almighty, all powerful God. And that is a God that we can trust in; that is a God we can rely on.

But coming to that place of absolute trust is hard. We're always in the process of growing, and we need help in that growth. That's the battle that we fight daily, living by faith—rather than living by our wits. But that's God's goal for each of us. That, as I say, is maturity. So to bring that about, to cause us to, 'renounce self', and 'trust God', providence puts us in hard places, places we would avoid. That's where we see His hand ...and our faith is strengthened through it.

God did that to Israel at the Red Sea. As the children of Israel were leaving Egypt Pharaoh changed his mind; he pursued them, and he caught them as they were camped by the sea. The people were terrified. They were hemmed in: The sea before them, the Egyptians behind them. They knew it was the end...and they despaired of life.

"Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" they asked Moses. (Exo 14:11). After all the wonders that they saw in Egypt, (the great miracles, the great power of God), they still had no faith. Moses said, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD...The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent." (Exo 14:13-14). And He did.

You know what happened; He miraculously divided the sea so Israel could pass over on dry ground—and He drowned the Egyptians when they followed after them. Nothing is too difficult for God. He led Israel to the place by the sea for the purpose of defeating their enemies and showing them His complete sufficiency for all their needs...and their complete dependence upon Him.

He is the, "God who raises the dead." (9b). That is supreme power. It's not that He can prevent death ... (He certainly can and does) ... but it's that He overturns death; He defeats death. The God who raises the dead is able to do anything. The grammar in the tenses of the verbs here is important. Paul puts his description of God in the *present* tense: It is God who raises the dead **presently**.

Now, that doesn't mean that God is now raising the dead bodily from their graves, but that His resurrection power, the irresistible power that raised Christ from the

dead, (and that will raise us some day from the dead), is **presently** working among us and in us.

The God we serve, the God who lives within us is, 'the God of the resurrection'. The implication then is that, this is the way God works every day with this power. So, we can follow God with confidence knowing that no enemy is an obstacle for Him. He is the Almighty!

This is the faith that Abraham had when God told him to take his son Isaac up to the land of Moriah and offer him up as a whole burnt offering; 'Sacrifice your son.' Now Moses wrote at the beginning of that incident in Genesis chapter 22, verse 1, that it was a "test". God would not require Abraham to kill his son—but Abraham didn't know that. It was a command to him...and he obeyed. In fact we read that he got up "early"; he was diligent in this great task.

Now how can that be?... That he didn't care much about his son? No!...He loved Isaac, and that's stated in the text. He loved him as any normal father would. Isaac was his son...but in fact he was more than that; he is described as, "...your son, your only son, whom you love..." (Gen 1:2). And yet Abraham willingly followed through with this command of God's. The author of Hebrews gives us some insight into Abraham's actions. He said that Abraham, "...considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead...", Hebrews 11, verse 19. How did he know that? How did Abraham have that conviction?

Well, he knew God; he knew how great God is...but he also *knew* Him, *knew* Him personally. And in his long walk with the LORD, Abraham had experienced God's power in his life. The many disappointing, childless years that he and Sarah had were designed to prepare them for the miracle of Isaac's birth, when God, in effect, (when, as Paul puts it, (Rom 4:18-21), 'Abraham was as good as dead, at 100 years of age, unable to produce a child at that moment, in that condition'), God enabled him to sire a son with Sarah who was barren. He had learned a great deal from that. He learned that this God can give life where there is no life.



Now I think there's something else in that, that needs to be said, (and that I think is as important as what I just said), and that is, he knew God's *promise*: God had told him, 'It's not through Ishmael that I'm going to bless you. It is through Isaac. Through Isaac your people will be named', He said. (Gen 21:22).

That's repeated throughout. Abraham knew that promise, and he knew God—and he knew that God is always faithful to His promises. At God's command to sacrifice, Abraham knew Isaac had no descendant; Isaac had no wife, (didn't have Rebecca yet). Isaac was childless and he, himself, was something of a child. So Abraham knew for God to keep that promise, (which He will do), when I sacrifice him, then God will raise him from the dead.

The promises of God directed his life; the Word of God directed his life. —And that's how we live—we live by faith. We do not walk by sight, “we walk by faith”—Paul makes that very clear in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 7.—And Abraham did that.

Abraham experienced ‘life from the dead’. So a combination of his knowledge of God, and the experiences he had with God, and his understanding of the promises of God, and knowing who God was, prepared him for the greatest *test* that God gave to him—and as a result, He proved faithful in it. Abraham learned what Paul learned, that we are not to trust in ourselves, but in, “God who raises the dead.” (vs9b).

To do that though, we have to have truth; we have to have knowledge; we have to have the Word of God. We need to know and believe in the God that is revealed in the Bible, the God of omnipotence, of power. That is the ground of confidence for us—one of the many layers of ground of confidence that we have. And oftentimes, (as this passage points out), we learn that, and learn about God, and learn of His sufficiency when trials come. And so to teach us and develop our faith, God puts us in situations where we can do nothing but trust in Him—rely on God's power alone.

How do we do that? What do we do when we're boxed in and we can't move? Well, we obey and we wait. Pray and wait. As Moses told Israel, "The LORD will fight for

you while you keep silent." (Exo 14:14). Paul did that, and his trust in God was not disappointed—God delivered him. That is the great lesson of this affliction Paul had: Don't trust in self; trust in "God who raises the dead", and you will never be disappointed. That, in fact, is a theme that gives what Phillip Hughes, in his commentary, described as, "A key to the whole epistle."

Well, as I said, that is a theme that we find running through this book, best illustrated in Paul's 'thorn in the flesh', that I mentioned earlier, that we find in, (2Cor), chapter 12, (vs7), when God assured him that, 'His grace was sufficient'. (vs9). He wasn't going to remove that thorn, but 'His grace would be sufficient'. And Paul testified, "...when I am weak, then I am strong." (vs10).

When we are cut off from self-trust, when we are compelled instead to trust God, then we are strong with God's strength—His resurrection life and power. Remember, we live a supernatural life; we don't live a natural life. We have the Spirit of God within us who gives us that life and who gives us strength, and faith, and power. That's the lesson that Paul learned, a lesson he knew—but he had to be retaught, as we all do.

And so now having been 'rescued', as it were, from the very jaws of death in Asia, he could not doubt that God would deliver him from all future dangers. And that's what he says in verse 10, "...who delivered us from so great a *peril of* death, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us...". He will also join, "...in helping us through your prayers..." (vs11).

I think Paul's speaking here of deliverance in three ways: In the *past*, in the *present*, in the *future*. 'In the past, He delivered us', that's what he's talking about. That happened. And he says *thirdly*, "He will yet deliver us." (vs10). There will be more deliverances that come.

But the great deliverance is that *second* one: "...He on whom we have set our hope...will deliver us..." (vs10), meaning, 'in the resurrection', that's the ultimate

deliverance. In the meantime we experience deliverances; and we experience release, and deliverance from afflictions.

So *affliction* is a great instructor. It teaches us a lot about ourselves. It teaches us a lot about God, as we trust in Him. 'He is the One on whom we have set our hope', Paul said. (vs10). Our *hope* for this life and future is only as sure as He is. The promises for the future are only as good as the Lord God is. But as we are tested, and made in affliction to look to Him, He shows Himself faithful and reliable—more than sufficient...and our faith and hope are strengthened all the more.

I said at the beginning of our study that Martin Luther knew suffering; he knew affliction. All of the reformers did, for that matter. I think all of the great men of faith have known suffering and affliction. But Luther had a lot to say about it, and how his theology was formed through suffering. He believed that we learn by experience, and said, "One who has never suffered cannot understand what hope is."

I think Paul would have agreed. His hope was strong to the very end because when death did come, he faced it with courage, with hope, and, I imagine, with joy, because he had experienced deliverance from God in life. One of the last things Paul wrote was to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 18, where he said, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom..."

Now, this isn't saying, 'God is going to rescue me from this death, and I'm going to live on for a while.' That could have happened, I suppose he thought, but what he was saying is, 'He's going to rescue me from this evil deed that's about to be brought on me in this execution. He'll rescue me from that by bringing me into His eternal kingdom, His heavenly kingdom.' That's the *hope* of life to come. The resurrection of the body, final deliverance from sickness, sorrow, and suffering of all kinds. This is all temporary...and the glory is yet to come. That's the *hope* we have—and we ought to lean upon that and understand it.

But in the meantime, in the interim, we have the *hope* of knowing that God will rescue us from danger. Paul experienced that miraculously in Asia, and he encourages the Corinthians, in verse 11, by telling them that they were not idle spectators in all of this; they played an important part in his deliverance with their prayers. 'Through their prayers' they helped him, (and those with him), "...so that...", he said, "...thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers* of many." (vs11).

Prayer and deliverance go together. Prayer has great power; otherwise Paul would not have asked so often for prayer, and stressed the duty that we have to be praying. He wasn't confident about his future solely because of his past experience; he was confident because he knew that he had faithful friends praying for him. So he said, 'God will deliver me', "...you also joining in helping me through your prayers." (vs11). Prayer is a *means* of grace. It's a *means* that God has given for laying hold of His blessings and obtaining His comfort.

Now, He's absolutely sovereign; we don't change God's mind or bend His will to our favor by our prayers. God knows the end from the beginning because He's planned it all from eternity...and nothing is going to change that. He cannot be frustrated in His will and in His plan.

But, (and this is an important principle to remember ), the God who has ordained the end has also ordained the *means* to the end. And one of the *means* for securing blessing, is prayer. It is 'effective'; and the New Testament is clear about that. James wrote, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (Jas 5:15). The reason is, because in prayer, a person is acknowledging his or her helplessness, their impotence, and looking to God's omnipotence—His all-powerfulness.

And that may be reflected in the word that Paul uses here translated, "many persons". (vs11). Literally it is, "many faces." The picture seems to be, 'faces turned up to heaven in prayer, looking away from the world, from self, and looking to God alone for

help'. It's an act of worship that honors God—and He blesses it: 'Faces...', as it were, '...looking up!'

But also ... (I'm going to suggest this; and I'm not dogmatic on this point), but it's curious that Paul uses the word '*face*' or '*faces*'...how do we know a person? How do we identify a person? It's by the *face*. So, it's as though he's saying, 'As we look up to Him, God sees our face.' It may be millions of people in prayer at the same time, but God sees them all. He sees us individually, He sees our face, He knows us personally.

You may seem to feel like prayer is like a one way transaction. We pray to Him and you wonder, 'Does He hear this? He's not answering back.' Yes He does! As we look to Him, 'He sees your face', as it were; He sees you *personally*. He has personal concern for you—and everyone else that's praying. But it's as though you're the only one that exists because, 'He sees your face.' He *knows* you, and He is *pleased* that you're coming to Him.

Well, we have examples of the greatness of prayer and the importance of it, praying to the all-powerful God. We have an example of that in Acts 12, of weak saints on their knees. (There's a quote that I like, but I don't know who said it.) I read where Spurgeon quoted it, but I don't know the source of it. It's a good quote: "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." And we have examples of that, as I say, in Acts chapter 12, of weak saints on their knees, and the miracle that occurred as a result.

It was late one night. Peter was in Jerusalem, in jail, he was in chains—and he literally had the sentence of death on him. He was waiting to be executed the next morning; and when we see him here in jail he is sleeping. Imagine that: The ax is going to fall, the sword is going to be swung at him in a matter of hours, and what's he doing?...Sleeping! Getting a good night's sleep so he'll be fresh and ready for it. Now that's the stability that comes from the knowledge of God—a life, a mind, grounded in God's truth.

Well, that's where he was, in Jerusalem—but somewhere else in the city, in the house of Mark's mother, Mary, the church had gathered...and they were praying for him. As they prayed, an angel entered Peter's cell. His chains fell off; he was led past the guards into the street and to freedom. He went to the house where the saints had gathered to pray and he knocked on the door. But they wouldn't open...even when he identified himself.

Now, I don't know if the Spirit of God saw some humor in this, but nobody believed it was really Peter; 'No, he's going to be executed!' That's how weak their faith was—their prayers were answered, and they didn't believe it. When they finally opened the door and saw him, Luke wrote, "They...were amazed", (Acts 12:16)—amazed that God had done the very thing that they prayed for...amazed that He had answered their prayers. He does. We need to trust Him. Prayer is effective.

William Still was a leading light among the young preachers of Scotland a generation ago; and one night, after a church meeting, he met with someone to answer questions about the faith. They were very difficult questions—but he did remarkably well answering them. Afterward he was closing the church and he noticed a light in one of the rooms. He went in to turn it off and found the room was filled with people who had gathered to pray for him.

So it's true: Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees, because God answers even their prayers, the prayers of weak saints—and all prayer that is made according to His will. Through it He gives help to preachers and gives deliverance to His saints.

The Corinthians also learned that lesson, weak as they were. They had joined together in praying for Paul, and frustrated the devil's attack on him. They were hundreds of miles away when this group of them, (separated from Asia by the Aegean sea), prayed—and their prayers came to his aid. Now this was a church that had divisions; some of its members were somewhat alienated from Paul; and yet a remnant, a faithful group prayed for him with miraculous results.

Think of what the church could do if it were united and ministering fully together in prayer. Think of what we at Believers Chapel could do if we took the matter of prayer and ministry seriously. You don't have to attend a prayer meeting to do that, (though that's good if you can, we do have those), so pray at home, but pray regularly, daily, fervently for the saints, for this church, for God's work elsewhere throughout the world.

The lessons here are simple: Affliction will come to the Christian; God sends afflictions, not to destroy us, but to bless us—to teach us about ourselves, to crush our pride and draw us close to Him.

The psalmist said, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." (Psa 119:71). It makes us strong spiritually, when we respond properly to it. We draw close to God through prayer, and through prayer we gain deliverance—deliverance and prayer go together. We have the hope of deliverance now, from present difficulties. God promises to feed us, clothe us, provide for us with all of our daily material needs. He will rescue us from every danger. All of this is what Christ encouraged His disciples with, in Matthew chapter 6, verses 25 and following: 'He takes care of the birds...He will take care of you.'

Well, that's our hope—but not our ultimate hope. Again, our ultimate hope is the resurrection to come. Ultimately we all must die and we need to be prepared for that, and understand it. But death is not the end; God will even rescue us from the grave. That is our sure *hope*—and it should give us great confidence in life to live obediently and effectively for Him.

Is that your hope? Do you know Christ; have you believed in Him? If not, look to Him. Don't think you're sufficient in and of yourself. Don't trust in your good deeds; don't trust in your good character, your hard work; reject all self-confidence—and trust in Christ. His blood alone atones for sin. He alone is Savior. He alone is who you need. He alone delivers from hell to heaven.—Look to Him!

*(Closing prayer)* Father, what a blessing it is to know that we've been purchased by the blood of Your Son...and that has settled everything; past, present, and future. We are Your children; and we are bound for glory, for the resurrection to come.

In the meantime we suffer difficulties, we suffer affliction. It is common to the saint to suffer difficulties—but You've given us prayer, and You've given us the ability to reach You and to communicate with You directly at the throne of grace. Help us to do that; help us to trust in You as the great God and Savior and look to You in prayer—and then live for You, knowing we have the hope of the glory to come.

Thank You for that—for it's all of Your grace.

And now, the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

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