



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Ephesians 6: 1-9

Winter 2023-24

"The Christian Home"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are in a great text, one of those that's hard to preach because you think, 'Well, how do I measure up to this!, or, 'Did I when I had the opportunity?' But, this is about the family, the Christian family, and so we begin with verse 1 of Ephesians 6, through verse 9,

⁶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷ With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. *[Now what a great promise that is. We will come to the end of our lives, and if we've lived a very obedient life, (no one lives a completely obedient life), we'll be rewarded for doing what we should do anyway. There's nothing we do that is so spectacular that it deserves a reward. Everything we do is only what we should do. And yet, the Lord is gracious*

and merciful, and bountiful, and rewards us for the very things we're supposed to do. And that's the promise we have in verse 8. Verse 9],

⁹ And masters, do the same things to them, *(that is, 'to their slaves)*, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Ephesians 6: 1-9

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

Father, what a good thing it is to be here on this LORD's day, doing what we're doing—singing hymns of praise, reading the Scriptures, and then taking the time to consider the meaning of this text; a very important text, we recognize LORD. It brings out the responsibility of everyone in the Christian home, and if we are honest with ourselves, we recognize how far short we fall and how much we need to improve. And I pray that we'll do that. I pray that we'll be good fathers and mothers and grandparents and children, and You would bless us all and give us incentive to live to Your glory—and in obedience, (and that will be the best thing for us).

So LORD, teach us and build us up in the faith—and give us the incentive to do what we should do with the recognition that we could only do it in Your strength and that You supply, so we thank You for that. Give us direction, not only in what we're to be doing, but what we're to be thinking...and thinking about You and what a gracious God You are. We thank You for Your grace.

And it extends not just to us spiritually but to our material needs, and so we pray for that. We don't have any prayer requests listed, but we know surgeries are up coming this week and we pray that You would give success, complete success and speedy recovery for those.

LORD, You know our needs, and You know we have needs every moment of every day that You supply; and we pray that You would do that. The need we have in this hour is to have our minds focused on this text; to think clearly and to put the details of life out from our minds for an hour and consider the things the apostle wrote so long ago that are so appropriate for today. So we pray that the Spirit of God will teach us, build us up in the faith, and prepare us for the week to come.

Thank You for Your goodness and Your grace—and thank You most of all for the sacrifice You made for us at Calvary. Thank You for Christ, and it's in His name we pray. Amen.

(Message) The title of our study this morning is *The Christian Home*. What is a Christian home? It's an important question, especially since modern society is making a full-throated attack on what we could call, (and what often is called), 'the traditional family.' Last week I read a review of two books, both about a current trend among young adults, of avoiding marriage and also opting for pets over children.

The reviewer stated that in them, (in these books), readers will encounter journalists, academics, and influencers warning that, 'Marriage and children will trap them, stunt them, and rob them of time and money.' As a result, (as you can imagine), marriage is down in our country—and so is the national birth rate.

So to know what a Christian home is, we can't go to the pundits, we can't go to the academics and the professors. We can only go to our ultimate authority and that is the Word of God—His revelation, and specifically to Genesis chapters 1 and 2, and to Ephesians chapters 5 and 6.

There we are told the basic family is a man and a woman in a union sanctioned by God as husband and wife, both equal in essence with one another, the husband being the head, and the wife being the help meet. Together they support each other in a life of service and worship to God, exhibiting for the world what Paul wrote in chapter 5, (Eph), that the relationship of, "Christ and the church", (vs 6), is illustrated in marriage. So our marriage, our family is a witness to the world.

Well, God then blessed that union and told the man and the woman to, "Be fruitful and multiply." (Gen 1:28). And so, in God's providence, the Christian home expands with offspring. That's how Genesis 4 begins, with the children being born and the original family increasing.

That's not always God's will; sometimes the Christian home is without children. Perhaps that was the situation with Priscilla and Aquila, whom Paul met, and served with, in Corinth. Like Paul, they were freed up to minister as missionaries, and open up their home to the church as a weekly meeting place—which they did. But generally, the Christian home involves children.

And often in the ancient world, it involved servants. This 'expanded home' is what Paul describes in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1-9. It begins with children. There were probably many of them sitting in the congregation, listening to Paul's letter being read. They had heard now how their parents were to behave toward one another and their responsibilities as Christian husband and wife.

Then next they hear how they are to behave toward their parents. Paul had two things to say to them: *First*, they were to obey their parents, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (vs1). A child's obedience is "*right*"—and that word, '*right*' means something like '*well-pleasing*'. That's Paul's first justification for this command; it is "*right*"; it is the proper behavior for a child. And that was recognized in all societies—both Greek and Roman philosophers taught it.

But Paul was not writing to just all children in general, but to Christian children. It is obedience "in the Lord" that he commends—and that means this is a spiritual duty. A child might obey a parent from fear, or affection, but the highest reason for obedience is the conviction that, 'obedience is the will of God'. And that conviction brings the best response. So obedience is to be done from a desire to do what is pleasing, 'Well-pleasing to the Lord.' And that makes obedience "*right*". It is God's will—and so it is wise.

God's arrangement of the family, with parents having authority over children is not an arbitrary structure, for parents have wisdom—the wisdom of experience, if not

the wisdom of the Word of God, hopefully both, but wisdom of experience, certainly. Sometimes they've made the mistakes that children are desperately trying to repeat. They've been down that road, and they know the allure of it and the allure of the things of this world...and the consequences, if not from their own experience, then from that of others. So, it is right and wise for Christian children to obey their parents.

And that applies to all children, even those who have non-Christian parents. No one picks the family that he or she is born into. We don't pick our parents; Providence does that. And Providence is all-wise and perfect—it's God's will, and Paul's instruction applies to that situation. Non-Christian parents lack spiritual knowledge, but they can have natural wisdom, and they can have natural affection, and can give good counsel to their children. God will use them in a child's life.

Timothy was in such a situation. His mother was a Jewess, and a believer, but his father was a Greek and pagan. But he was a respected son. His good character was praised in the churches in Acts chapter 16, verse 2. It was the same for Augustine. His mother, Monica, was a devout Christian. His father, Patricius, wasn't, but he provided for his son and he insured that Augustine had a good education.

That's providence and God uses such parents in the life of the believing son or daughter. He has a purpose for everything; 'He works all things according to the counsel of His will.' (Eph 1:11). So regardless of the situation, (with Godly parents or even unbelieving parents), 'obedience is right.'

And Paul reinforced that with a quote from the Old Testament from The Ten Commandments. And here he makes his *second* point...and that is that, 'children are to respect their parents'; "Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise)," (vs 2).

This is the fifth of The Ten Commandments. As you know, there were two tablets on which the Law was written. The first four commandments are about man's duty to God; and the next six are about man's duty to man, (or so that is understood). So the first four are on the first tablet, and Commandments 5-10 on the second tablet—but not always. The Jews often taught that each of the two tablets of the Law had five

Commandments; and so this would have been the last Commandment on the first tablet and indicating that it was seen by them as, 'their duty to God.' And that then puts the burden on parents, especially fathers, to reflect well the character of God, to teach it well, and to exhibit it well. It's often been pointed out that a child's perception of the character of God is picked up from the character of his or her father. God's represented in the Bible as our heavenly Father.

But this is instruction that is directly to children. I mentioned the Father, because it does bear responsibility, and indicates to us the importance of reflecting well an obedient character, because it does reflect on who God is with some.

But the responsibility here is directed specifically to children. They are to honor their parents, for it is an obligation to God. And Paul reinforces that by stating it is, "...the first commandment with a promise." The promise is given in verse 3 as *prosperity* and *long life*; "so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." Now that's certainly incentive to do what is right; 'God blesses the obedient child.'

And yet, we know that some good kids die young. That's the mystery of providence, (which God will clarify someday). But as a rule, God's plan, His general purpose for obedient sons and daughters, is a long life and a prosperous life.

There are obvious reasons for this. The obedient child heeds warnings and stays out of trouble and harm's way; while the disobedient son does not. And that is going to be the natural consequence of a child without guidance, without direction and discipline. Because, as Proverbs 22, verse 15, tells us, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;"; and so it's natural to go 'off the rails'.

Through obedience to the yoke of discipline, character is built. Healthy patterns of behavior are formed, and a safe and prosperous life follows from that. And so it is incumbent upon a parent to teach a child, to deal with a child so that that natural tendency of foolishness will be curbed and controlled, and wisdom will be implanted.

There's no better example, I think, anywhere in the Bible of what we're talking about here than the Lord's life. Luke records a unique incident, (he's the only one that

records the early events of the Lord's life, other than His birth by Matthew), but Luke goes beyond that to tell us about the early years of the Lord's life in Luke chapter 2, when at the age of 12, He went up to Jerusalem with His parents.

But you'll remember, He didn't return with them. And when they realized that He wasn't in the caravan, they panicked. They rushed back to the city and they searched for Him for a couple of days, frantically. Finally they found Him in the Temple speaking with the teachers. They scolded Him, but He responded respectfully, "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" (Luk 2:49).

Well, they should have known that. He was being obedient to His heavenly Father. But He returned to Nazareth with His parents, His earthly parents, and Luke wrote, "He continued in subjection to them...increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (ibid. vs51-52). He developed in a natural way through the instruction of His parents—and the discipline of His parents in His human nature.

Jesus was a perfect person. His human nature was flawless and impeccable, without sin—without the ability to sin. (I probably should say, 'It was impossible for Him to sin.') And yet we read, "He continued in subjection" to His parents, and 'He grew and prospered'. That was the means of His development in His human nature. He is our Savior, but He is also our example and that spiritual duty is required of every child in the Lord—to know the Lord's example and follow His example; and in so doing, follow the instruction and the admonition of his or her parents.

But parents have their duty as well; and that is to provide a "father's instruction" and a "mother's teaching". That's Proverbs chapter 1, verse 8; that's the way a child grows into an obedient, respectful son or daughter. That's not, (again), natural for a child; and so it takes time, and it takes effort on the part of parents. It's an investment—and it is the instruction that Paul gives.

And again, Paul makes two points, one negative and one positive. He wrote, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger..." (vs4). The problem here is not strictness. Rules need to be laid down and boundaries need to be set.

But also, that needs to be done with love, with explanation, with wisdom and consistency. And at times, (and this is my own addition to that), with some leniency—'with mercy.'

And what is worse than being overly strict is being overly indulgent. There are notorious examples of that in the Bible. Eli the high priest was a weak father who took no action against his profane sons, Hophni and Phinehas...and so God did. He used the Philistines to strike them down.

David, too. As great a man as he was, 'a man after God's own heart', he failed as a father. I don't know that he failed with every son, but he failed miserably in certain areas. His eldest son, Amnon, violated his own sister, David's daughter, Tamar. David became angry, but he did nothing. And his inaction sowed the seeds of Absalom's rebellion.

There are many ways to provoke a child "to anger." Paul warns against it with little to no explanation because the danger applies very widely. I'm sure a child can be provoked from one kind of action, or attitude, and another child by something completely different. So Paul leaves it in a very general way, but he's specific enough that fathers need to be conscious of doing that.

Bad parenting has consequences. And this was, and maybe, a greater danger in Paul's day than ours. And I say that because of the circumstance of Paul's time, which may have made this instruction surprising to some of those fathers in Ephesus who heard this read on a Sunday morning or Sunday evening, whenever they met as a church.

Leon Morris called Paul's instruction, "Revolutionary." The reason for that is Roman fathers had absolute authority over their children. William Barklay wrote that, "He could sell them as slaves and even inflict the death penalty on them. He was the law." So Paul urged fathers to temper that; he urged fathers to execute restraint and reason, so that they, 'not provoke their children to anger.'

Then he states his second point with positive instruction, "...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (vs4b). That applies to both parents, as I've suggested earlier—it's Proverbs chapter 1, verse 8. A mother has a place in that, as well as a father. But it's addressed here to fathers, really because, as 'the head of the home', the father is chiefly responsible for disciplining and instructing the children.

There are three aspects to this command. The *first* is, 'Bring them up.' And that's the same word that's used over in chapter 5, verse 29, of 'nourishing' our own bodies. So it refers to, 'providing for a child's physical and spiritual needs with great care'. Calvin translated this, "Let them be kindly cherished."

It's not hard for an adult to crush a child—to crush his or her spirit: Say the wrong thing, say something in anger, or belittle the child—that can have a crushing effect on one's spirit. Parents are to use their power and authority with gentleness—and *nourish*, not crush.

But this is done, this nourishing of the child, through discipline and instruction. Discipline involves action, instruction involves words; both are to be carefully applied. Instruction has the idea of admonition—a verbal correction of a person. But that correction must be based on instruction, instruction in the Word of God; that's the basis for all of our behavior; that's the authority for it; that's what gives us direction: Instruction in the Word of God in the great ideas of Scripture.

And words of correction are necessary for a child's good and growth and blessing; it builds character. That's how we do it, through the instruction of the Word of God and, as I say, the great ideas of Scripture—the doctrines of the Word of God.

I like a story that B. B. Warfield told—and I've told it more than once, (but I don't think I've told it in the past ten years, so I think shelf life has ended, and I can tell it again). I love the story. Warfield was a great believer in training children in the doctrines of the faith; certainly memorizing Scripture, but the doctrines of the Christian faith, especially training them from *The Shorter Catechism*, which is the short, children's version of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

He was a good Presbyterian. So was Robert Louis Stevenson. I don't know how good a Presbyterian he was, but he was raised on that, and Robert Louis Stevenson said of *The Shorter Catechism*, "It begins by striking at the very roots of life with, 'What is the chief end of man?', and answering nobly, if obscurely, 'To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' "

Warfield told the story of an officer in the United States Army who was in a great city in the West during a time of violent rioting. (This would have been in the late 1800s, I think.) "The streets," he wrote, "were overrun, daily, by a dangerous crowd."

One day the officer saw a man walking down the street in the midst of the riots, in the midst of all the chaos; and as he approached, he saw in him, a certain bearing, a calmness that set him apart. As he passed, the officer couldn't help but turn and look at him...only to find that the man had stopped and was looking back at him.

When he saw that the officer was looking at him, the man walked back to him and, touching the officer's chest with his finger, demanded, "What is the chief end of man?" And the officer answered, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." "Ah," the stranger said, "I knew you were a *Shorter Catechism* boy by your looks." "Why, that was just what I was thinking of you," the officer replied. Warfield wrote, "It is worthwhile to be a *Shorter Catechism* boy...they grow to be men. And better than that, they are exceedingly apt to grow to be men of God."

Fathers are charged with the responsibility of training their children in the Word of God, in the truth of God, in the great ideas of the Bible. And that means they need to be home and attentive to their children. We have difficult schedules, and that has to be accounted for, but really, the reality is, we have very little time to train up our children. They grow up, and then they're gone.

Now, the last half of the passage has to do with "slaves" and "masters". That was Paul's world, the world of the Greeks and Romans. Rome's economy was largely built on slavery. It seems to us like a strange topic for instruction on the Christian home but slaves occupied positions as domestic servants, as well as laborers, doctors, teachers,

and administrators. They occupied all levels of society, but many of them were in the home.

Slaves were regarded as little more than a living tool. God saw them as much more than that, and the Gospel was proclaimed as equally to slaves as it was to freemen. As a result, slaves made up a large part of the church. And because many of them were household slaves they are included in this section of the chapter, which is known by some of the commentaries as, "the household codes." So they fit within the home.

And just as Paul instructed children to 'obey their parents', he here instructed servants to 'obey their masters'. He didn't urge them to escape; he didn't protest slavery—the New Testament didn't. But that doesn't mean Paul and the apostles endorsed slavery. I don't think they did; I think though, they tolerated it.

We get an idea of Paul's opinion on slavery in 1 Corinthians 7, (vs20), where he wrote, "Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called." 'Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it.' In other words, 'Continue in it, don't rebel.' There were slave rebellions in that day, and none of them succeeded; the Roman army could put them down very quickly. So he says, 'don't rebel', but he added, "...if you are able also to become free, rather, do that." (vs21b).

And slaves could do that. Some slaves were able to accumulate some money. They were sometimes paid, and they could save up and they could buy their freedom, (and there were many cases of that in the Roman empire). And others could be purchased by someone else. So, when freedom was a possibility Paul said, 'Take it! That's better.' (And that indicates that Paul was not favorable toward slavery, but he evidently did not feel it was his duty to attack it.)

Paul didn't see his mission, or the mission of the church, as one of overturning civil institutions—the institutions of society. But his 'calling' was to call men and women, slave and free, to faith in Christ—and in doing that, building a 'new' society within this old society... the 'new society' in which slaves and freemen were equals. It's what Paul

taught in Galatians 3, verse 28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Now of course, there are male and females in the church, and there were slaves and freemen then, but in the church itself, "in Christ" we are equals with one another. We have different responsibilities, but we are equal; equally believer priests with equal access to God—and all were to live righteously. So, if a slave could be free, 'Do that!', Paul said. But if not, 'Don't rebel. Live righteously. Glorify God in that hard situation. Glorify God and enjoy Him.'

Providence often puts people in hard circumstances that are difficult to explain. But it's an opportunity to be a witness in that situation, to be a minister of Christ in that difficult place. Paul was in prison when he wrote this, and it was a kind of slavery. But he wasn't rebelling, he wasn't plotting an escape. He was there, writing letters to the churches, writing a letter to this church and giving them instruction on how to be a witness, a minister for Christ in that situation. And he was being that minister in Rome. In fact, we know he gave the Gospel to those soldiers that guarded him...and the Gospel had reached into 'the household of Caesar.' (Phl 4:22).

Well, that was Paul's counsel here in verse 5 where he wrote, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh." Now that's a 'now' perspective, "according to the flesh". (vs5). They are not masters forever; they are temporarily their masters in a temporal sense. Not *forever*, and not *spiritually*—only in this brief life. But in that current situation, they were to, 'Take care to do what is right.'

But it was a challenge, especially in cases where the master was not a Christian. The challenge was, not to be bitter, or disrespectful, or indolent, or apathetic. Rather, 'Be eager, be diligent!' You could imagine how difficult that is to work diligently when there was no profit in it for you—but that was the situation. And there were probably cases like that in which the witness of the church was tarnished by a person not following this instruction. And it could happen with a Christian master as well, when the

slave knew that they were equals in Christ; ...'You know, the Book of Galatians was read here not too long ago...we are equals.'

So Paul urged them to serve "with fear and trembling", and added to that, "in sincerity" (vs5b). In other words, 'Give genuine service and not just 'lip service', or a 'show of service.' '

Joseph in Egypt is the great example of that. First he was a slave in Potiphar's house; and then he was a prisoner in an Egyptian jail. And in each situation he was diligent and God blessed him. God had untold ways of blessing Christian slaves back then. Their real master and Lord is Christ, and that was the real motivation for serving well. It's what Paul told them at the end of the verse; they were to, 'serve in sincerity as to Christ.' And that applies broadly.

This instruction (for us), is largely historical; we're not living in that situation today. But we all labor; we all work—and our work is not always pleasant. Still, we are to work 'as unto the Lord', as to Christ. He is the One we're serving and that should motivate us to serve well: To glorify Him, the Savior, the One who gave His life for us. We're to give our lives for Him; and that giving of our lives to Him takes place in the workplace.

Well, Paul develops that a little further in verses 6 and 7 where he explains his meaning of serving with "sincerity of your heart" —or, 'sincere obedience.' Obedience is, "not to be way of eyeservice". (vs6). In other words, 'Not working hard only when the master is watching'—that's being a man pleaser, not living as 'a servant of Christ' or 'doing God's will'. "With good will..." Paul wrote in verse 7, "...render service, as to the Lord, and not to men..." (vs7). Leon Morris translated this, "Slaving with goodwill." It has the idea of working in a hard situation, but working cheerfully and diligently. This is 1 Corinthians 6, verses 19 and 20, where Paul wrote, "Do you not know...that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." We are slaves of Christ, first and foremost.

And that's what we're to be doing, whether in slavery or in freedom...and it has its reward, even if not in this life. We don't always get the rewards that we might hope for in this life, but we certainly get them in the next, verse 8, "...knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free." And we can know this: What we receive back is far greater than anything we gave up.

As I said, often the reward comes in this life, but not always. But in that sense of 'coming in this life' ...you never know what's going on, you never know who's watching you and how things are unfolding—and how, by God's providence, a person's careful, diligent work that he or she doesn't think anybody is noticing, but that he's doing 'for the Lord', that is brought to the attention of a boss or a manager. God has His ways of doing that.

So we're not to be anxious about our position. We're just to work diligently at what we have been given to do. Serve the Lord daily and leave the results to Him. Whatever occurs, as I said earlier a moment ago: The eternal reward is certain—and it will be far greater than any blessing we may have missed in this life...and far greater than anything we ever gave up in this world.

Paul was not finished; his instruction was not all on one side. He had a word for masters as well; verse 9, "And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him." The instruction here is briefer, but still, everything Paul told the slaves applied to the masters.

Basically his point is, 'The good that was expected of slaves is to be shown to slaves. Fair management.' The temptation for the slave owner was to rule by threats, (and they had the authority to inflict severe punishment). But as parents were not to provoke our children, owners were not to provoke their slaves—they were not to be cruel. And Paul enforced that with the reminder that both their Master and his, the

slave's Master and the owner's Master is in heaven—and He is not partial; He cares as much about the slaves. John Eadie, an older Scottish commentator wrote, "The gold ring of the master does not attract His eye, and it's not averted from the iron fetter of the slave."

After all, the Lord was a laborer. He labored in His early years at the side of his stepfather, Joseph, in his stepfather's shop. And then, labored as a carpenter on His own. In fact, the people of Nazareth called Jesus, "the carpenter." (Mar 6:3).

So, His sympathy as our high priest, who prays for us every moment of our existence, His sympathy is with those who labor hard. He knows what is required. He knows the difficulties. He knows the situation better than any of us knows it. He requires fairness from masters and employers, just as He requires honest work from laborers.

Someday, both slaves and masters, employee and employer will stand before the Lord, the judge, and give an account. That's 1 Corinthians, chapter 5. Position, status, is not going to be important there; only the faithfulness here. God's great plan of salvation includes both rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, slave and free alike. He loves them equally; and we are to love each other equally—it's an important witness to this world.

And the world is watching. It will see how those, who because of providence have a privileged position in this world, treat those in a humble position, a less fortunate position, a less lucrative position. They see, and they notice how we treat one another.

And to the subject of the passage, the greater subject of the passage, in an age when 'family' is being redefined by modern society, it will be watching how Christian homes function. We need to both 'speak' the Gospel and 'live it'.

The Gospel is free grace, sovereign grace. It's for adults and children alike, for rich and poor alike, because all are fallen, all are guilty sinners who need a Savior—and that Savior is Christ alone. He died as a sacrifice to bear the sins of sinners, pay for them in full, and grant forgiveness and life eternal to all who recognize their guilt and believe in Him, who trust in Him as their Savior. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." That's salvation.

And if you don't have it, if you've never put your faith in Christ, come to Him, trust in Him, become a child of God—and then, by His grace and power, live to His honor and glory, and enjoy Him, enjoy Him forever.

(Closing prayer) Father, what a great truth we've just sung, "At the cross sin's wage is paid, propitiation won." The price has been paid, Your justice is satisfied, Your wrath has been turned away in Your Son—and that's for all who put their faith in Him.

Well, we thank You for that. And as we think about that, that should really galvanize within our hearts a desire to live to Your glory and not to our own satisfaction and pleasure—to be selfless and to serve You by serving one another. May that be the case.

We thank You for Your grace and mercy.

And now Father, we pray that great prayer of Aaron, the prayer You gave him: "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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