



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 14: 12-21

Spring 2023

"No Orphans"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth. We are in the Gospel of John. We're in chapter 14 and we're to look this morning at verses 12 through 21,

<sup>12</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.

<sup>15</sup> "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

<sup>16</sup> I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; <sup>17</sup> *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

John 14: 12-21

This is a great passage full of great promises. May the LORD bless us as we consider them together. Let's ask Him to do just that.

Father, we do pray Your rich blessing upon us as we will study this great text in the Gospel of John and pray for Your rich blessing upon us. This is all that the Lord is promising those 11 men that were with Him; the rich promises He gave them—and that apply to us as well. And so LORD, build us up in the faith. This is how we grow strong, this is how we get wisdom, it's through the study of Your Word. And yet we need a teacher who can disclose it well: And that teacher is the Holy Spirit who is within us and who is “the Spirit of truth”, as Jesus describes Him here in this text. May the truth that is here be made known to us. May He teach it to us. May He unveil it to our minds and apply it to us; and guide us and direct us through that.

So we thank You, LORD, for this time. It's a great time of the week, when we can be with Your people, and we can worship You, and we can study together and be nourished through Your inerrant Word. It's our authority; it reveals reality to us. The world cannot understand it, (and Jesus speaks of that), but we do because You've given us new life. And we give You praise and thanks for that.

And LORD, we send Jeff off this week and we do thank You for the ministry that He's had with us. And we pray You would continue to bless him, that You would bless him in the new ministry that he will be taking on next week. And we pray that You would give him fruitfulness, skill, and cause him to continue to develop and be very useful for You in that ministry.

And now bless us, LORD, as we sing our next hymn, and pray that You'd use it to prepare our hearts for a time of study in this great Word of God that You've given us. Build us up in the faith, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) Tom Sawyer, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, and Tarzan all have something in common: They were all orphans and each one successfully rose above it in his story. They were also fictional characters. In reality, orphans have not fared so well. A parent-less child, without protector or provider is at a cruel disadvantage in this world.

That was especially true in antiquity. As you read through the Old Testament you've noticed the phrase, "widows and orphans". They were the weakest part of society, and the most vulnerable. But the LORD knew and cared. In Psalm 68, verse 5 He is called, 'A father to the fatherless, and a defender of widows.' That's the concern the LORD has for us, His people.

In John 14 He told His disciples, "I will not leave you as orphans..." (vs18), and it's a great promise. But not the only one in this passage. He promised to give them the Holy Spirit. He promised a glorious ministry with greater works than He did: And that's where our passage begins, with the promise in verse 12 of, 'Power to continue the Lord's work.'

They were feeling like orphans. They were feeling abandoned; Jesus had told them that He was leaving. But now He reassures them. It was because He was going to His Father that their relationship would continue, even better; and that the ministry would carry on and be even bigger.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father." (vs12). Now that's a stunning statement. And the question naturally arises, 'How can that be?' How can a believer do greater works than Jesus did? He fed the multitude; He gave sight to the blind, and He even raised the dead. Most of those miracles were repeated by the apostles; we find them all throughout the Book of Acts. So what's the meaning of the Lord's statement, "greater *works* than these he will do"?

The explanation is found in the next phrase that we read, where He told them they would do "greater works" because, 'He was going to the Father.' (vs12c). He would go to the Father through the cross and ascension. He was speaking of fulfilling His work

of salvation. And as a result, the Holy Spirit would be sent to them; and through their effective witness, Christ would be made known and souls saved.

In The Book of Acts, the great work that occurs is not healing, but preaching and the mighty work of conversion. Multitudes are brought to faith in the miraculous work of salvation.

Jesus' ministry was basically confined to Galilee and Judea. And when He died, He had a few dispirited disciples. And all of them were in hiding, except John who had stood with the few women there at the cross. It seemed like an ignominious ending to a great ministry.

But after His resurrection and departure, the Spirit was poured out and the church filled the earth. By the end of the second century, Tertullian could write of the church to the mighty Roman empire, "We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you; cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, Senate, Forum. We leave you your temples only."

We've heard that quote before; but it expresses well from an early date, the mighty work of the church. Not through force of arms, but through the proclamation of the Gospel of forgiveness and life. That is a powerful sword, "the sword of the Spirit". And that is the Lord's meaning here. The apostles and church would be equipped to do great miracles. Luther called conversion "The greatest of all miracles." That's true. It is the spiritually dead coming to life—eternally. It's God's *enemies* becoming His friends—and sons and daughters. And Luther said, "Every day witnesses miracle after miracle."

These are the '*greater works*' that the apostles and the church would do. And the reason is because, as Jesus said, "I go to the Father." Because He would defeat sin, triumph over the grave, ascend to the Father's right hand, (where He is seated and where He prays for us as our great high priest)—because of all of that, we have power to accomplish "great works". So their *works* and our *works* are really the Lord's work accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit through His disciples as they ask and pray in Jesus name.

"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*." (vs13&14). I think a good verse to bear in mind is one Mike (*Black*) referred to in class this morning and which fits perfectly with this verse. 1 John 5:14, "...if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." And that's what He's saying here.

And so because of those promising words, 'ask anything in My name', we conclude our prayers, "...in Jesus name, Amen", to attest that the only way to God's ear is through Jesus alone. But the Lord is not instructing us on how to conclude our prayers, and is certainly not giving a formula that guarantees an answer to our every request.

His meaning is that genuine prayer is only made by those who are in a true, vital, living relationship with Him—by those who are 'in Him', or 'in His *name*'. And the word, *name*, as you've been often told, represents the person. And so, people who ask 'in His name' are those who are identified with Him, who have believed in Him, who are joined to Him in a living relationship.

But there's more. In order for prayers to be answered, they must be consistent with Christ's name, with all that that name represents; with His person, His character, and will so that their answers will glorify God. And that's the goal that the Lord was giving for answered prayer; "...so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (vs13b). All through the Lord's ministry on earth that was His goal, to glorify His Father.

And that should be our goal as well: In the things that we do and the way that we think—the things that we seek for ourselves, ideally and rightly, they should be to glorify God; that should be our ambition.

I don't think there's a better example of that than Paul's prayer in 2 Corinthians 12, (vs7), for God to remove an affliction that he had. He called it "a thorn"; and it was from Satan 'to torment him.' Whatever it was, some physical infirmity, maybe fevers from malaria, or ophthalmia, (eye disease), whatever it was, was more than a nuisance. It was so debilitating that he felt it held back his ministry. So he prayed the Lord would make it leave, that He would take it from him.

He prayed three times without any change. Finally the Lord answers, and His answer was, 'No.' "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." (vs9). It was ultimately from the Lord that Paul had this *affliction* and it was to keep Paul from boasting because of the revelations he was given—and also to demonstrate from Paul's obvious weakness that it was God who was doing the 'great works'. Through Paul's lowliness, God was magnified.

And that satisfied Paul. That was his great ambition. In fact, he boasted in his weakness, because through that weakness, the power of Christ was more active within him, and more obvious with him. And his ministry, as a result, was effective and it glorified God.

Now to do that, to rise above the torment of suffering through the desire to glorify God, that is maturity. That takes maturity. It is selfless and God's grace—an example of the supernatural life that is the Christian life. But it's right and correct: In the words of *The Confession*, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

And that's the ultimate purpose of prayer; it is so that the Father may be glorified. Prayer is not the means of gratifying ourselves, of gratifying our pleasure, but of gaining our goal which is always to serve the Lord faithfully for His glory. And in that way we are blessed—and we're blessed best. That is one of those things that I often mention; that, 'It is easy to preach and hard to do.' To put oneself in Paul's place, (and to be able to recognize this painful *affliction* is good because it's to God's glory and will make me more dependent upon Him), is a hard thing to do.

But it's true of everything in our life. And so often the test of our faith comes in those moments. When we find that we're not having the kind of pleasant experiences of life that we all desire and life is difficult—that challenges our faith. It challenges our faith in the sense that we have to confirm within us, 'Is God good or not? He's sovereign over all things, but is He good?' And even in those difficulties, we say, 'Yes', because there's something good that's going to come out of this since, "...all things...work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." (Rom 8:28). But it's a mature faith that can accept the 'thorn in the flesh' for example,

and rejoice in it as being good, from a good God, for a good purpose, and still do all things to His glory.

But to get there, to have His glory as our desire, requires faith. It requires firm faith which only comes through a long disciplined pursuit of godliness. And that requires grace upon grace.

But this is life's goal. Not personal achievement or recreation, (not that those are bad things—they're not; they have their place), but the best thing is seeking God's glory. That's the best, and that's the goal. But that's not natural for us. And it's impossible for us, especially when life is crushing us. But the Lord said, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*." (vs14). He didn't say that He'd do it instantly on our request, but that 'He will do it, in His time, in His way.'

So, we must ask for the desire that we're to have here, that He sets before us here; and that is that we have God's glory as our great end. And His promise is, He will supply that; but that's what we're to seek, and that's what we're to desire.

And that happens through the next promise the Lord gives: The enabling power of the Holy Spirit. But He introduces that in verse 15 with the instruction that we obey Him—that we obey Christ and obey Him from love. The promise of the Holy Spirit is for those who love the Lord; and those who love Him obey Him. He says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (vs15).

J. I. Packer wrote, "Love is not essentially a feeling of affection, but a way of behaving." I think that's true. Love involves emotion. It involves affection, warm feelings, all that we normally associate with love; but feelings can lead us astray. Love must do hard things. It must put the Lord first.

J. Gresham Machen was a New Testament scholar and defender of the faith in the early 20th century. (I've mentioned Dr. Machen on many occasions, I think.) He established Westminster Seminary. And he wrote a number of books: One of his best

known books was published in 1923, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (and it is as valuable and relevant today as the day it was published). He was a great man of God.

He died a bachelor though he did have romance in his life. She was described as intelligent and beautiful. He was devoted to her and she to him—but she was a Unitarian. She made every effort to understand and believe in Christ's deity, but couldn't. And so Machen, who would not and could not unite his life with hers in marriage, ended the relationship. He loved her—but he loved Christ more.

Behaving begins with love. Devotion to Christ and the desire to please Him, that is the great motivation of the Christian life. Thomas Chalmers described it as, "The expulsive power of a new affection." Nothing displaces rival affections, (what become in our heart, idols), nothing displaces that like love for the Lord.

One of the 12 labors of Hercules was that of cleaning the Augean stables in a day. Augeas had thousands of cattle, and their stalls hadn't been cleaned out in years. It was an impossible task so Hercules diverted the course of two rivers, making them flow through the stables in a great flood that washed out all the filth.

Well, the heart is like that. It's like those stables, filled with selfish desires and goals, wrong and unworthy thoughts, unclean things. —That's the human heart. But love for Christ from the Holy Spirit, washes that out. It's the motivation for good conduct. Conduct that then is not legalistic or mechanical or done simply from a sense of duty. I do think we have *duty*, but the best way to perform our duty is not with 'a sense of duty', but out of love; and from that pure motive of wanting to please the Savior.

But that love for Him must be cultivated. And we do that by learning of Him through the study of God's Word. There is no growth and there is no apprehension of reality in life apart from the study of God's Word and an understanding of it. It imparts wisdom; it imparts the right affections that we should have for the Lord. So it's through the study of God's Word; it's through prayer as well, it's through fellowship with the saints, encouraging them and being encouraged by them. It's vitally important.



And it's vitally important that we have that kind of a congregation. I pray for that, almost nightly, 'LORD, give us all a love for You.' And we'll have that through a love of Your Word. And as we love Your Word, and as we study Your Word, we'll love You more. And if we love You more, we'll love one another. That comes through the study of God's Word; and the fellowship with the saints, being encouraged by them, and encouraging them.

The Lord didn't give a list of commandments to keep here, He didn't elaborate them. But no doubt one that He had in mind would have been the 'New Commandment' that He gave just recently in chapter 13, verse 34, "...that you love one another, even as I have loved you." So we keep His commandments by following His example as well as obeying His instruction. His commands are also the later instruction given by the apostles found throughout the New Testament. But essentially they involved seeking the welfare of others, especially the Lord's people, and seeking God's glory. That's what love does.

*Love* is the fruit of the Spirit. That is the first virtue that's listed in Galatians chapter 5, verse 22. The Holy Spirit produces it in the life of the believer. And so the Lord's instruction on love and obedience leads to the next promise He gives, the promise of the Holy Spirit in verse 16; "I will ask the Father," Jesus said, "and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever."

The word *helper* is a translation of the Greek word, *paraklétos*, which means 'one who is called alongside', with the idea of 'giving help'. So the Holy Spirit is often called '*the Paraclete*'. In secular Greek, a paraclete, (not a parakeet, but a *paraclete*), was mainly a legal assistant or lawyer, either a defense attorney or a prosecuting attorney. The Lord ascribed both these ideas to the Holy Spirit in this upper room discourse: Later in chapter 16, He is described as 'the world's prosecutor', 'the one who convicts or convinces the world of its sin.'

But here He is, 'the one who comes to our defense.' He is our Helper—which indicates that the Spirit is not an influence, the Spirit is not a mere power. The Spirit is a person; He helps. And more, the Lord calls Him, "*another* Helper", which means,

'another of the same kind'. In other words, 'Another Helper' like Christ, a Helper the same as Christ.

Now the Spirit is not Christ. They are not identical. They are distinct from one another in person, but equal—both possessing the same divine nature. And He is like Christ in His role, His function, His ministry to us. In 1 John chapter 2, verse 1, John calls Christ our *paraclete*, our "*Advocate*", who pleads our case before the Father. Christ's advocacy or defense of us occurs in the heavenly court. The Holy Spirit's advocacy occurs on earth in the believer's heart, to do what the Lord had done for His disciples.

And what had the Lord done for them? Well, Christ had given them guidance while He was here on earth with them. He was always there to help and defend them against their adversaries, (and they're constantly being harassed by the Pharisees and challenged by the religious leaders). He defended them ably, very effectively—couldn't have defended them more effectively.

Now He was leaving them and they thought He was leaving them as orphans. But the Holy Spirit would carry on that ministry. He is a real person, the third Person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and Son in power and glory—and He is now the believer's defender who ministers and prays in our heart. He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. He gives assurance of salvation and guidance as the Lord did when He ministered on earth. That's Romans 8, verse 16, that, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

And He will never leave us. The Lord promised that the Spirit will be with us permanently. As He said, He asked the Father, "...that He may be with you forever." (vs16b). He will never cease to be with us—which strongly suggests the eternal security of the believer. If He is with us forever, then we cannot be lost or cast off.

Now that's a great encouragement. It's very important that we have that understanding—that we have the assurance of our salvation and know we can never lose it or be lost to God. You cannot progress in the Christian faith without that assurance—it's vital. And we have that as we reflect on what we believe. We believe the

things that are said here, and we have the witness of the Spirit within us to confirm that within us. He is the Paraclete, the Helper, the Comforter, the Advocate. He is our defender.

And next, in verse 17, John described Him as "the Spirit of truth". He is the One who communicates truth, the One who would complete the revelation of Christ with the completion of the New Testament. He would inspire the apostles with revelation and teach the truth. And He teaches us within our hearts. He unveils the Word of God to us so that we understand what it means. We have that within us. And we have Him as our teacher, permanently.

The world does not have that. The world does not have this promise. Its mind is in darkness and its will is bent against truth. So the Lord said, 'It cannot receive Him.' So apart from grace, the world will remain in unbelief, "cannot receive." (vs17).

He speaks here, obviously, of *human inability*. That is how dire the world's spiritual condition is. It's so dire it cannot receive the truth and receive the Spirit—and it doesn't even know how dire its situation is. That's how blind it is to the reality of its own condition, and the condition of the world. This is a theme that we find throughout John's Gospel. We've touched on it before; the Lord has made a point of it; and He's making a point of it here in verse 17.

But we had it before; we had it earlier: "No one can come to me," He said, "unless the Father who sent Me draws him." John 6:44.

'No one can come...unless the Father draws.' Now that is a hopeful statement that the Lord was making—without it there is no hope. But what He's saying is, 'While it's hopeless in man's natural condition, it's not hopeless because the Father does draw people'. And He draws souls daily—and multitudes of them.

Paul wrote, in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 6, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness', is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." And no one knew that better than

Paul himself, who was knocked down by the Light of heaven shining in the face of Christ which he saw on the Damascus road—and the persecutor of the saints became an apostle to the saints. God spoke Light into his dark heart. That's grace. And it changes people.

And He has done it for multitudes. He has done it for you, personally, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ it's because of God's sovereign grace; He did it all. Left to yourself, you wouldn't know you were in need; left to yourself, you'd never have the truth, you would continue living in darkness. You don't because of Him—He did it all.

We are all naturally part of the rebellious world. But God chose us out of it, bought us at the cross of Christ, brought us to faith by the Holy Spirit who equips us to live well. He does that as the Helper and “Spirit of truth”.

Well, the disciples were already familiar with the Holy Spirit; the Lord said that. He said, "...you know Him because He abides with you...". He had always been *with*, and *influencing* God's people. But here the Lord was promising something more: "...He *abides* with you...", He said, "...and *will be* in you.", (that's *future* tense), "...and will be in you." (vs17c).

The Spirit in us is a privilege that distinguishes the Christian from the Old Testament believer. The promise was indicated back in chapter 7 when Jesus was in the Temple and He invited all the thirsty, the spiritually thirsty, to come to Him and drink, and “rivers of living water” would flow from their innermost being. (vs37&38).

John then explained that He was speaking of, ‘Those who would receive the Holy Spirit’, who, he said, “was not yet *given*”, (vs39), (since Christ had not yet been glorified: Crucified, resurrected, and ascended). And when He, (the Spirit), was received, He would never leave them.—And never leave us, as Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 1 and Ephesians chapter 4; ‘The believer is sealed with the Spirit for the day of redemption.’ (Eph 1:13, 4:30).

So He is with us—and He's with us permanently. His life is a transforming power within us, like "rivers of living water"; He cleanses us, washes out the Augean stables of our hearts. The Lord was leaving but He was not leaving them unequipped.

Yet at this point in the evening, you wonder how much they understood. I suspect that they were still feeling alone, feeling uncertain about the future—and bewildered about everything.

And maybe the Lord sensed that. It seems He did because in verse 18 He consoles them with the promise, "I will not leave you as orphans..." He chose His words carefully. He could have said, 'I will not leave you as sheep without a shepherd', but He chose "*orphans*", which brings out the poignancy and the desperation of their situation; at least as they sensed it, as they felt it. Orphans, street urchins, alone and adrift in a loveless world—that's kind of what they were contemplating.

So He reassured them, in the strongest terms, that He would never let that happen. He will be their parent, their protector, and provider, with all of the concern of a mother and father. Their fear was unfounded, as so many of our worries in life are. The Lord is infinitely bigger than our most dire circumstance and His concern for us covers all of our worries.

We should never think of the Lord as having forgotten us or abandoned us at any time. I think we're challenged by that concern, for sometimes life gets very difficult. Some of our members have been going through that very thing. They might wonder, 'Have I been abandoned?' No. Never! He has not—He cannot abandon us. And here the Lord promises the 11, (and us), that He will never do that. There are no orphans in the church.

In fact, we can press this a little further. God has adopted us into His family by His free grace, giving us all of the rights and privileges of the Sons of God. It's not natural; this isn't what we naturally have been born into. Yet it's legal; that is, it's based on the work of Christ in our forgiveness and justification. But as a result of what the LORD has

done, and bringing us in connection to the Son through faith, the result is, God almighty is now our Father, who loves us as much as He loves His own Son.

I think we can see the blessing of this in light of the callous cruelty of the world—especially in the days of the disciples when children were often unwanted by their parents, and cast off. The inhuman practice of exposing children was common among the Greeks and Romans. If parents didn't want a child, (and often it was a daughter), they would leave it on a windswept hillside to die from exposure to the elements. Christianity ended that. People want to dismiss Christianity, but Christianity has brought great blessing to the world in general—and that practice was ended because of the faithful, because of Christianity. According to Edward Gibbon, in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the early Christians would collect these abandoned babies and raise them as their own.

Now that's the Lord; that's the work of the Lord in His saints. But that's what the Lord Himself does; it's what He has done for us. There are no orphans in the church, only sons, male and female, because a son represents an *heir*. And men and women, saints, are "...heirs of God...", Paul wrote that in Romans 8, verse 17, "...and fellow heirs with Christ...", with a glorious future. John wrote in Revelation 5, verse 10, that we, "will reign upon the earth."

That is our glorious future. But right now, in this world, God cares for us—daily. Christ and the Spirit pray for us. We are secure, and we have no reason to fear the world. "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (vs18). Which He did, three days later; after the resurrection.

Which reminds us, we have a living Savior; the glorified Son of God who keeps His promises, and more. Because He was raised from the dead, we will be also. He reminds them of that in verse 19, "...because I live, you will live also." The grave is not the end. I say that at most every graveside service that I do, 'This is not the end, not for the believer in Jesus Christ. We will be raised, glorious. That's our hope.' And that's what He's speaking of here; we have that great hope.

So, to that I say, 'Hallelujah!' We have a glorious future. But that is only because, He went away a little while, suffered successfully for our sins, and God raised Him up in confirmation that His sacrifice for us was accepted and effective. What they thought was a tragedy, what they thought was being abandoned, was really a blessing.

And the blessing is *present*, as well as *future*. "In that day," He said, "you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (vs20). Soon everything would become clear to these disciples, (who I'm certain were very confused during all of this). They became very clear because the Day of Pentecost would happen not very long after this: The Holy Spirit would be given and they would understand that the Lord actually indwells them.

They weren't orphans. In fact, they would have even closer fellowship with Christ than before. That's the promise of verse 21b, "...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father...", He said, "...and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

That's our relationship with the Lord: It is personal, *very* personal. And He reveals Himself to us. As we live earnestly, as we live obediently, we know the Lord better and He reveals more and more of Himself to us—and we grow spiritually in purity and wisdom. And there's no greater blessing, no richer life than that.

Spurgeon once told his audience that if they didn't love Christ, go home and write down in black and white: "I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Then," (he said), "think it over."

Do you love Him? If not, none of this applies. You are orphans, in this world and without hope—and without help.

But that can change. Come to Christ. Believe in Him. Every believer receives from Him the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting—and His eternal companionship. May God help you to do that, and help you to live a life of obedience that demonstrates your love for Him.

Father, that is true, what we have sung; "Our hope is only Jesus." It's only in Him and what He's done. And He is in us. And because He is, through the Spirit of God who has sealed our hearts, He dwells in us through the Spirit, we are secure and we will be given growth and maturity by You, supernaturally. And someday, we will be brought home. He will lead us through this world and bring us into Your presence. That is a glorious and great truth and future for us. We thank You for it. It's all of grace, Father.

But may we live lives that honor You. Give us a sense of the need of doing that, the desire to do it, a desire to do it because we love You. So LORD, love is the first virtue of the fruit of the Spirit, give us that love.; increase our love; increase our desire to know You and study Your Word; and grow and advance and live for You.

Now to Him who's able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Jude 1: 24-25

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