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Series: Exposition of Jonah
Message: A Great Fish, A Greater God

Transcribed Message
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There was a man who was sitting on a bridge and he had a fishing pole in his hand. He was fishing in the little creek that was below the bridge when a fellow came up to him and struck up a conversation with him. He asked him how he was doing and how the fishing was going. The guy said he was doing fine and the fishing wasn't nearly as good today as it had been yesterday. He said, "Yesterday I caught about 40 pretty nice sized bluegill and had some great eating. Today I am really not catching anything." The guy said, "Do you know who I am?" He said, "No, matter of fact, I don't know who you are." He said, "Well, I happen to be the sheriff of this county, and in addition to that, I happen to be the property owner of this land on which you're fishing." The guy said, "Would you happen to know who I am?" He said, "No, I don't." He said, "Well, I'm the biggest liar in Virginia." I thought of the fact that there's some connection for some reason between fishing and truth or fishing and the inability to quite tell the truth, right? Well, if there's ever a fish story that falls into that category, it's the one that we look at today. For most people, to think about Jonah and the whale is to think about the biggest fish tale and the biggest fish story that has ever been told.

It is not just modern man who pulls back and smirks about the very possibility of a story like this being true or told. It's been that way for ages. Lucian, a Greek writer of the 2nd century, mocked this story and said it was unbelievable and silly. Augustine, one of the great theologians of church history in the 5th century, said that every time he talked about Jonah and the whale and the audience realized that he actually believed it, he said there was always merriment in the audience. G Campbell Morgan said people have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have missed the great God. We're going to work hard at not doing that this morning. We're going to work hard at seeing the great God who is behind the story and not get too caught up in the story itself of the great fish.

Here's what we want to see. Salvation is a work of God. When you see that word "salvation", I want you to be reminded that I'm using it this morning in this context in its broadest sense. Salvation, as I'm using it here, is deliverance. It's to be rescued. It may be at the beginning of a spiritual journey. It may be at the middle of it somewhere in your walk with God. We all need to benefit from that. Salvation is a work of God. It's not God in me, or me in the church, or me in the best I can do, or any other number of ways we can phrase that. It really is the fact that salvation is of the Lord. We are changed by grace. That's the bottom line.

Let's do a quick review. What I'd like to do is bring three words before you that really summarize everything that we have studied to this point. You probably can help me with this. You hopefully will already know these three words. I'm just going to coach you a little bit and then you shout out what you think the word is all. So Jonah starts off and God says to Jonah... go. This is a sharp group. God says go, doesn't He? He is, of course, to go, and if that sounds familiar, it should because that's what God has told us to do.. Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the gospel. So we are in effect to begin every day thinking in our mind, how is it, Father, that I can go today? How is it that You want me to take the gospel today? Really, that is a wonderful discipline as you begin your day. I'm to go. What does that look like today? How do You want to use me today? So it's something that God has told us as well.

God said go, Jonah said... no. these are not on the screen, are they? Are they on the screen ahead of time? Okay, I was hoping not. Sometimes the tech people help you out and I don't even know it and you come off incredibly brilliant. I know you are anyway. Jonah says no, I'm not going. It's too far. I can't get there to go to Nineveh. It's not too far geographically. It's too far spiritually. He didn't want to go to the Ninevites. He didn't want to go to the Assyrians. Not only were they the sworn enemy of his own people Israel, they were an evil people. They were people who bragged and were arrogant about the things that they did to the people that they conquered. He wanted no part of it. In addition to that, maybe even more importantly, he knew the character of the God Who called him, and he knew that God was of such that he might very well extend mercy. He might very well extend forgiveness and Jonah did not want the Ninevites to be recipients of the grace of God. So God says go. Jonah says no.

This is where it gets a little trickier. God says...oh? You guys have looked this up online on the outline, haven't you? It's always online. I forget that. Maybe not. Maybe you're just thinking with me. God says oh? You really aren't going to go? That's where the story picks up. The final word always belongs to God. I'm grateful for that and I hope you are too. Thankful that the final word belongs to God and praise God that He does not give up on us. When he says to us go and we say no, thankfully God comes back and says oh? And He does that because He does not give up on us. He does not give up on us because He loves us too much. He loves us too much. That's what we have looked at over the last few weeks. How it is that God always pursues a child who wanders away from Him? Sin has a tendency, as we've seen in this short few lessons that we've already done, to take us down. That was the spiritual lesson as Jonah is running away from God, and in that spiritual lesson even the geography is described to us as taking him down and taking him away from God.

Someone rightly said that sin always takes us farther than we ever intended to go. It always keeps us longer than we ever intended to stay. And it costs us more than we ever thought we would have to pay. That's what sin does in our life. It takes us away from God and it takes us into a downward spiral. Thankfully, God doesn't just give up, but God pursues us, doesn't He? God pursues us. He pursued Jonah and He pursued Jonah in the midst of the storm. It's the storm that really becomes the grace of God in this man's life. It's the storm that we need to see as a part of all of our experiences as well. Jesus said in this world you're going to have trouble.

Storms are a part of life. As you read your Bible, it seems to me that storms come for a variety of reasons. I think there are probably two broad categories, and maybe there are subcategories, but there are two broad categories in which storms come into our life. Sometimes storms come into our life to grow us up in Christ. It's a matter of growth. James 1: consider it all joy when you fall into life's storms, if you will. He was talking about what happens as God works in our life in the midst of hard things. Paul in Romans 5 talks about the storms of life, suffering in life. It builds up endurance and it builds character. It fills us with a sense of hope of God actually being at work. That's what we're saying here. We're seeing that God sends a storm into Jonah's life

and in this case, of course, it's to correct. Storms grow us up. Sometimes storms have to come our way because God needs to do a work of correction in our life.

Let's look at our lesson this morning. It starts off with you can pray anytime and anywhere, an easily overlooked part of the book of Jonah. As we started off and said everybody focuses on the big fish and all of the details involved with that, one of the easy things to overlook in this little book is one of the great prayers of the Old Testament. That's what we get to look at this morning in the second chapter. It reminds us that if you can pray from the belly of the fish, you can pray anywhere and anytime. You can pray anywhere. Your theology of prayer can be expanded this morning to realize that you can pray anytime and anywhere. You can pray in any position and any posture. You can pray sitting down. You can pray standing up. You can pray laying down. You can pray prostrate before God. Whatever that position looks like, you can pray. You can pray publicly. You can pray privately. You can pray out loud. You can pray to yourself.

I learned this last week that you can even pray with your eyes open. We are, as many of you know, taking care of Wyatt and Josie while Andy and Kristin are doing Army assignment. We were gathered Monday and were getting ready to eat. Bonnie brought the plates over for the kids and we're all sitting down. It was Mother's Day Out on Monday and they had been to Mother's Day Out. I said to Wyatt, why don't you pray for us tonight and you can pray the Mother's Day out prayer? They always pray a prayer before lunch at Mother's Day Out. I said you could just pray the Mother's Day Out prayer, knowing he had just already prayed it earlier that day. He said okay, he would do that. I started to bow my head and close my eyes. Then I hear this little voice: "Papa, you don't have to close your eyes." I said, "You don't?" He said, no, you can keep your eyes open and pray. So we kept our eyes open and we prayed that time. I had permission not to be caught looking, which is what sometimes we do. It's a neat little prayer. It goes: God our Father, and you say it twice. We thank Thee for our many blessings. Amen, amen. When he was done, I went ahead and said it back. I said, "God our Father, God our Father. We thank You." Wyatt says, "No. It's not you. It's thee. We thank Thee." I continue: for our many blessings, for our many blessings. For whatever reason, I said amen, amen (pronounced Ah-men). It does seem to go better.

But he was quick to correct me. “Papa, it’s amen, amen (pronounced ay-men). So out of the mouth of babes. We can learn new prayer ideas, right? You can pray in the belly of the fish, and you can pray with your eyes open. God’s going to hear you because that’s the kind of God that we worship and serve.

Let’s look first of all at what really is the pre-prayer predicament that Jonah finds himself in and it takes us back to verse 17: “And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish.” We’re going to stop right there. Last time we saw Jonah he was headed overboard. We had that visual in our mind of the guys on their hands and feet giving him the heave ho. He’s thrown overboard and he’s into the water. For sure, Jonah expected to die as he was thrown overboard. I think he fully expected that was what was going to happen to him. I think he willingly said throw me overboard because he did not want to repent. He did not want to go to Nineveh. He did not want to do what God called him to do. He was willing to be thrown overboard in the midst of the storm that nobody could survive rather than do what God had called him to do. That’s what he had intended. He’s in the water the last time we saw him, but God had other plans.

That is the second thing that we note. He’s in the fish. He’s in the fish and it says that “the LORD appointed”, that is, the Lord prepared, the Lord ordained. The Lord is the one who sent the fish to swallow Jonah. We note in our text that it says that it was a great fish. It was the belly of the fish. It doesn’t say it was a whale. It may have been a whale. You read all kinds of things that have tried to bring some scientific or other explanation to help people believe that this account is possible. I am really not going to spend any time reviewing the scientific capabilities of a whale to swallow a man or whatever that may look like. For all we know, God created a fish that was designed for one thing: to swallow Jonah. I don’t know. We’ll maybe be able to ask Him when we get there as to what exactly that looked like and what happened. But at the end of the day, you either believe it’s a miracle or it’s not. As we said, this book is filled with miracles. You can’t just discount one miracle and say it’s not really a miracle.

In fact, that’s what many people have done. They have said Jonah was thrown overboard. A carcass of a whale came along and he landed on top of it, then he stayed

there three days where he floated finally to shore. Or, a ship came along and it had a symbol of the fish on it, or it was called the ship *Great Fish* and he was taken onto the ship and he was saved that way. Or he just dreamed the whole thing. Anything that people can do to discount a miracle. At the end of the day, it's a great God who was behind the story. A miracle of a fish swallowing a man then having him be there for three days and three nights is not that big a deal. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus Himself references the historical event that we're reading right here. We're not going to do it this morning but in one of our lessons, I want to make some of the connections between what Jesus was doing, and referencing that and the significance of that to His own life and ministry and to the book of Jonah. We'll save that for another time. Jesus clearly believed that a great fish came along and swallowed Jonah.

Here's what I want you to see next. The third thing about his pre-fish predicament. It's very important that we see this. He is in touch again with his God. He's in touch with his God. look at chapter 2 verse 1: "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish." Do you know what jumps out at me from that phrase? That little word "his". "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God." There's a big, big difference talking about God in some way that there's some moral being that is a higher power than anything else and therefore we reference that being as God whether it's a big G or a little G. this isn't the sailors of chapter 1 calling out to their gods. This is Jonah reconnecting with the God who had called him to go to Nineveh, the God to whom he had said no, and the God who said, oh? Oh, Jonah? I will not let you go. I will pursue you. When we read in that opening statement of verse 2, he is praying to his God, to my God. It's a personal connection that he is making again. It's to the idea that he has this personal relationship with God and he is acknowledging again his relationship with him. Sometimes God's children have to hit rock bottom. don't they? They have to get to the very bottom before they begin to understand that it is God who is not letting go of them. It is God who is pursuing them. It is God to whom they need to turn again. That's what I think is happening here. The good news is Jonah is beginning to be changed by the pursuing grace of God.

Let's look at the prayer itself. The prayer from the depths. I'm just going to make a very brief comment about how it is that people sometimes have understood and

interpreted this prayer because it's not just simply taken in the same way by everybody. There's some people who when they read the prayer of Jonah believe that Jonah is still stuck in the "no" mode. They look at this prayer as being a prayer of insincerity. I'm not exactly sure at times how they get there. They look at this prayer as Jonah still being self-centered, still being stuck in the "no" mode, and they take a totally different way than I'm going to present it this morning. Others, as I'm going to present it to you, look at this and say Jonah's heart is being changed. He's not there yet. It doesn't happen just all that quickly all the time, does it? But he's in the process of being changed. That's what I want to come to you with this understanding this morning. If elements of this prayer sound at all familiar, they should because this little prayer tucked away in the book of Jonah chapter 2 has about eight or ten direct references or connections with the Psalms. We're going to just see one of those in a moment, but there are many instances where Jonah is basically rehearsing before God what he knew the psalmist had written hundreds of years before. That's a beautiful way to pray, to remind God of His promises and of the Scriptures that He has given to us. It's a beautiful thing just to sit down and pray. The Psalms work well for that, just to pray the Psalms back to God. That is what Jonah is doing here as he makes these references back to God.

I want you to see three things in this prayer, three elements of this prayer. The first one as I read it is that it was a prayer of openness and honesty. It was a prayer of openness and honesty. "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and He answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all Your waves and Your billows passed over me." It's possible even in prayer to be less than honest with God. We've all been there. We've all done it. We've all pretended that there is something in our life that isn't there. It's really a futile exercise. God knows our heart. He knows our mind. He knows our life circumstances better than we know ourselves. Yet sometimes, because of the deceptiveness of sin and where we are, we come to God and we pretend the obvious thing is not there. It may be sin. It may be some specific sin that we're just ignoring. Psalm 66:18 says if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Sometimes we do that, don't we? We come in prayer but we're ignoring what the Spirit has already said to us about something else that we need to be dealing with in

our life. Some circumstance, some person that we maybe need to be reconciled with. Whatever that might be. As I read these opening statements, Jonah is not doing that. He's praying, it seems to me, with an openness and with an honesty before God.

I want to lift up two things. First, he acknowledged his misery. That is what we just read in these first two verses. He talks about his distress. He talks about being cast into the deep, into the heart of the seas. The flood surrounded me; Your waves, Your billows passed over me. All of these things are happening to him. Just listen to Psalm 18 and verses 4 through 6: "The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From His Temple He heard my voice, and my cry to Him reached His ears." That's Psalm 18 that we see in these first two verses of this prayer when he is acknowledging his misery. Jonah has just gone to where David was in Psalm 18 and said Lord, I'm in distress. It's as if death is beginning to entangle me. I find myself falling and sinking before you. Very descriptive language, especially so for Jonah as he begins to sink in the water and the seaweed as he describes it. It entangles him as he falls. he is fully expecting at this point to die and not to survive. God reveals in this setting the ugliness of his heart. In the ugliness of his heart, for sure there was a spirit of pride. His absolute dislike, I suppose you could even characterize it as hatred, for the Ninevites, the Assyrians. He wanted them to hear nothing of the message that God has entrusted to him. Some of the most miserable people in the world are believers who are walking away from God. Thankfully, Jonah has been on that path but I see him turning because he acknowledges his misery.

Then, would you notice secondly, he acknowledges the source of that misery. When you look at verse 3: "For You cast into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all Your waves and Your billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I am driven away from Your sight; yet I shall look again upon your holy temple.' The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds wrapped about my head." Jonah was awakened by what Luther referenced as the merciful wrath of God. The merciful wrath of God. what is the merciful wrath of God? It's the loving discipline of God. He won't let us go. He will pursue us. Job says in the 36th chapter and

verse 15: "He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity." What is that? It's the storms of life to grow us and to correct us. That's what Jonah is acknowledging here. He was able to see beyond the terrifying circumstance. It had to be that. It had to be a terrifying circumstance. He could see in this physical storm and in his physical circumstance the hand of God.

Remember when we went through Colossians just a few weeks ago and then in Philemon? In both of those cases, remember what Paul does when he talks about being a prisoner? He never talked about being a prisoner of Nero. He never talked about being a prisoner of Rome. He was a prisoner of whom? Of Jesus Christ. He looked at his life circumstance, which was very much a storm, and he saw the hand of God on that, shaping his life, growing him and bringing needed correction where that was necessary. That's what I see here in Jonah's experience. He understands his misery which you have to in order to get back on the path. He understands more importantly the source of that, that it was this merciful wrath of God. It was the disciplining love of God that was pursuing him.

The second thing I want you to see is it was a prayer of repentance. It was a prayer of repentance. In verse 7 and 8: "When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to You, into your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love." One of the indicators of true repentance is when you're not bringing any qualifiers to God. You're not bringing any excuses to God. You're not pointing to so-and-so over there and say they really did mistreat me, God. He doesn't do any of that. He is not pointing at anybody else. He's not looking to excuse anything. He is not looking to make some kind of deal with God. What I see in verse 8 is he acknowledged his disobedience. He acknowledged his disobedience. "Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love." What does that mean? Those who pay regard to vain idols. The Authorized Version actually says lying vanities. What are idols? Idols are lying vanities. It was Calvin who said, "The inventions with which men deceive themselves are idols." Anything in our life that brings deception. Anything in our life that takes us off-center from God's truth and in being focused on Christ and in His will and His purpose. That's what Jonah is doing here. He is acknowledging his own disobedience. I think he could look in his heart and his life

and he could see a spirit of pride. He clearly thought he was way better than the Ninevites, than the Assyrians. It was a self-righteousness about him that had put himself way above those that God had sent him to bring this message to. I think you could see in his life a patriotism and a nationalism that elevated his people Israel above anybody else. Idols come in all forms. Lying vanities. Anything in our life that would cause us to turn away from the truth that God has revealed to us. That's what we're to do. Whatever it is, we're to turn away from it. We're to repent. We are to forsake it. In fact, he speaks of that, doesn't he? This forsaking their hope of steadfast love. God's steadfast love never leaves us. It's always there. It's we who walk away from it. It's we who abandon that and move away.

The other indicator to me that this is truly a prayer of repentance is he doesn't ask for anything. Isn't that interesting? In this prayer, in this circumstance he doesn't ask for anything. There's nothing in this prayer that can be understood as a petition on the part of Jonah. His prayer isn't "God, get me out of here right now" which it easily could've been. I suppose we would be justified in thinking of it that way, but he doesn't ask God for anything, so I don't see any hidden motivation here. I don't see him trying to get God to do something for him. There's no bargaining. He just casts himself on the mercy of God. That's what repentance is. That's what a broken spirit is before God. It is taking responsibility for our choices and our actions.

Then look at the last characteristic. The third characteristic of Jonah's prayer is that of thanksgiving. Verse 9: "But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!" What did Jonah have to be thankful for? He didn't have anything immediately in the physical realm. I guess in one sense we will have to concede that he did, but in the immediate physical realm I don't see him lifting up thanks here necessarily for what's going on. Physically, he's in the midst of the terrifying storm. He's been thrown overboard at his own request and he is sinking to the bottom of the sea. Certain death awaits him. Seaweed is wrapping itself around him. Amazingly, whether he saw it coming or not, the big fish comes and swallows him. Would you rather see the big fish coming, or would you rather just wake up in the belly of the fish? I don't know. That would be a pretty terrifying thing as well. So, you look at all the physical things and you don't point to those and say that this is

what he's giving thanks for. It's not that so much. I see in this man a spirit of thankfulness for what's going on spiritually in his life. This is one of the high points of the little book of Jonah and certainly of this prayer that Jonah is acknowledging what God has been doing in his life. "But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!" He is in a very unwelcome place. The belly of the fish, whatever fish this was, could have not been a very pleasant place to be. All the sea water and the food that the fish is eating, the acidity, the digestion... all of that. It was a very, very uncomfortable place to be. But that's not what he's focused on. He is not focused on his physical circumstances. He is focused on the pursuing love of God in his life and that's what he is awakened to here. He is changed by that pursuing grace. Fellowship is restored. He is aligning his heart again with God's heart. He is not all the way where he will need to be, but he is certainly back in a place of blessing because he's ready to listen again.

Here is the most important thing. He's no longer a runner from God but verse 9 shows us that he's again worshiping God. It is his God that he prays to. It is again the word Lord in large caps. Jehovah. It's Yahweh that he is calling out to. It is the personal God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is aligning himself again with the heart of God, this one with whom he has a personal relationship. We're seeing the restoring grace of God at work in Jonah's life. We're seeing Jonah expressing thanksgiving to God for what God has done in his life by means of His grace. There are some pretty exciting stories going around Covenant just in the in the last weeks and months of lives being changed, people who did not know Christ before coming and being a part of our fellowship and of our family, discovering through the connections and friendships and through the hearing of the gospel that God the creator loves them and wants to have a personal relationship with them. They've made that discovery. We'll hopefully hear some of those stories as we go forward and have opportunities to do that. But that's what God's doing. That's the work of God. Salvation is of the Lord. Jonah is once again mindful of the steadfast love of God.

So what do we take away? There are a couple things again. We bring nothing to this process, right? What we bring is our brokenness and our sin. That's what we bring to God. We bring to God our brokenness and we bring to God our sin and He gives us

everything that we need. This is no “You give me this, God, and I'll give You that”. This is no “God, you do 99; I'll do one”. This certainly isn't any 50-50 deal. This is a work of God. Even the measure of faith by which we respond to God, Paul says in Ephesians, is a gift that God gives to us. Now we have to exercise that faith. We have to believe God. We have to take Him at his word. That faith is not something that we are taking merit for. It is not meritorious. When we talk about our spiritual journey and our walk with God and all that God has done for us, we dare not take credit for our responding to the wonderful grace and mercy of God. It is what God is doing in our life by His sovereign, wonderful grace and mercy. That is what Jonah is acknowledging and realizing here. It is nothing in my hand I bring. What I can bring is brokenness, a messed up life and bad attitudes. All of that I can bring to God. He is going to have to provide everything else. That's what he does. He provides everything that we need.

I say to you as I say to myself this morning let's spend time every day looking for evidences of this rescuing grace in our life. I assure you, if we look, it's there. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, God is at work in your life. It is good to fall in line with Jonah and to have a heart of thanksgiving when we see the rescuing grace of God arrive. Maybe that rescuing grace in some instances is God keeping me from some sin. That's a rescuing grace. Maybe that rescuing grace is God pulling me out of some circumstance in which I am yielding repeatedly to some sin. That's a rescuing grace. Maybe it's simply an awakening of my conscience and my heart and my mind to something that I had been previously inattentive to. That's the rescuing grace of God. Remember! Sin by its very nature is always going to take you farther than you ever thought it would. It's going to hold on you and entangle you and keep you longer than you ever intended to stay. It's going to cost you more than you ever thought you would pay. Into that, God's rescuing grace comes and we say thanks. We say praise God! We thank Him for His rescuing grace.

If you're here this morning, maybe God in your experience and in your life journey to this point is simply a higher power. Maybe He's a being that you have acknowledged must exist out there somewhere. That God has a name and His name is Lord and it is Savior and it is Jesus. He loves you. He wants to have a relationship with you. He created you. He made you. He has a purpose in mind for your life. That

purpose is that you would live every day of your life in praise of His glory and grace. In that relationship, He calls you simply to acknowledge that you're a sinner. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. What sin brings into our life is separation and death. What God provides for us is rescue and salvation in His son Jesus. All we are called upon to do is to say I don't bring anything to You, God. I want to have a relationship with You. I want to experience Your love and that comes to me as a free gift through Jesus and what He did for me on the cross. If you agree with that, God says He'll give you the gift of eternal life. Then, come and join to be a part of this family of believers and allow God to grow you in that new spiritual journey that you find yourself on. If you're here this morning as a child of God, maybe the Spirit of God is speaking to you this morning about the rescuing grace of God in your life. Or maybe He's pointing out some way that He's done that in this past week. For that we give thanks.

Let's pray. Father God, we are eternally thankful that You are a loving and pursuing heavenly Father. Lord, just as we as earthly parents love and pursue our children and do all that we can for them within the realm of our possibility to do them good, so magnified abundantly beyond that is Your work in our life on our behalf. Father, if there is somebody here this morning who does not have a personal relationship with You, we pray that before this hour is over, before this day is over, that Your Spirit would give them understanding of what Jesus did for them and all that You have provided. Nothing in our hands we bring, Father, but simply to the cross of Christ we cling. Rescue us, Father, every day. Keep us walking close to you, acknowledging this wonderful steadfast love. In Jesus's name, Amen.