

GLENWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

November 8, 2020

The Suffering Servant

*I Peter 2:21-25*

Pastor Paul Jackson

[song: "Man of Sorrows"]

*Ben Cunningham:*

Good morning! Great to see you, Glenwood family. We do praise God for that rugged cross. Welcome, to those of you who are here and to those of you who are online. We are privileged to gather to worship the risen Christ.

I want to let you know about a couple of opportunities. People matter to God, and so they matter to us. And there's a couple ways that you and your families can serve others in the season I wanted to make you aware of. The first is the Fish Food Pantry. It's a group that serves the short and long term needs of those who are hungry in our area. A great organization; I've seen it first hand; they do great work there. So you can always learn more on our website [glenwoodcc.org/fish](http://glenwoodcc.org/fish) about that ministry. Check them out and consider helping them during this season.

The other thing that we can do to serve those around us is something called Hats and Gloves, which is a ministry at Glenwood to those who are homeless. That's typically around Thanksgiving time; it's going to be a little bit earlier this year. But what we do is we gather here; we'll be gathering on Saturday November 21st at 10:00am, and we collect and gather warm clothing items to be able to pass out to those in need. And so if you come that morning, there's a bunch of things that you can do. You can help pack boxes of food out at Fish and pass out some of that food

at the Fish pantry--we're partnering with them this year. Or you can relay some of those goods to people in need around our community. So take advantage of that.

Another thing coming up we wanted to make you aware of is a seminar called "Think!". COVID has affected everything, right? From politics to probably the holiday plans even that you're making right now. So how do we be faithful citizens of heaven while being citizens of earth? And how do we navigate relationships and all the dynamics and differences of opinions and those things? That's what we're doing this seminar for, so that we can think biblically and theologically about this pandemic and all of its implications for our daily lives. So that's coming up next Sunday, November 15, from 6:00 to 7:15, right here at the worship center, or we'll be streaming it online as well. And we invite you to come and participate in that. If you'd like to submit a question for us to consider answering during that time, you can email us at [Think@glenwoodcc.org](mailto:Think@glenwoodcc.org). If you want to register, you can go to the website, [glenwoodcc.org/think](http://glenwoodcc.org/think), and get more details there.

The very last thing we want to do is, this Wednesday is Veterans Day, and so we want to thank those who have served in any branch of our armed services. And so if you have served or are serving in any branch of the armed services, would you stand? We would like to thank you.

As we prepare for worship, let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Lord of the nations. As we think about the sacrifice of those who have served our nation or are serving it, we pray for the preservation of the flourishing of our country. We pray for those who are currently paying that cost of service. We pray also for what continues to be a contentious election process. We affirm what Your word says in Romans 13, *"There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."* We trust Your sovereign will, and we pray that decency, humility, and collaboration would mark the days ahead for the United States. Save us from gloating or complaint. It's in this kind of social turbulence, Lord, that we thank You for Your covenant with Noah and Your promise to preserve.

We thank You that there's a hope even amongst the threat of darker days. The Light of Life has come and is coming again, and Your Word readies us for unpredictable and unstable times. So, Father, though the earth give way, You offer us refuge. You know what we need now, and You have prepared every kind of grace that we'll need in the future. Thank You for I Peter's constant reminder that those in Christ are exiles here. Keep our status as exiles from leading to a shrugging lack of concern or a pride that keeps its distance. Help us to keep our conduct honorable among those outside of Christ. Keep us sober-minded. Help us to dirty our hands for Your purposes and to imitate Jesus in willingly spending our lives and freedoms for the good of others. Thank You that the call to self-sacrifice was modeled supremely by Jesus, Your Son. Help us to follow in Your footsteps towards Your appointed crosses. We save judgement and vengeance to Your capable hands, and we thank You that our judgment has been swallowed up by His body on the tree. Thank You for the collection of wayward sheep represented here. Help us now to hear Your voice. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen. Would you please stand with me as we sing to our great God of mystery, who, in royalty, served, and, in humility, in His greatness, came to rescue us. Let us sing.

[music: "Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery"]

[music: "Let Your Glory Shine"]

Amen. He will indeed, amen. Amen. Please be seated.

*Pastor Paul:*

Good morning. It is great to see you, thanks for gathering with us this morning, and those who join online, we're grateful for you and for your presence with us this morning. This morning I want to talk about a daily choice, a daily decision that will shape who we are right now, and tomorrow that will totally transform the rest of who we are the rest of our life, and impact on generations yet to come.

Couple weeks ago, I was purging collectibles. I have some boxes in my basement that are full of things that I didn't want to throw away, didn't know what to do with, so I just postponed the difficult decision of throwing away things that used to mean something significant to me. But I came across something that I have had since I was a young man. I found a piece of paper in my mother's handwriting. I snapped a photo of it, and I put it on my family text thread with my siblings - there are seven of us - and it immediately blew up with comments and responses. One of them spoke of the beauty and comfort of my mother's handwriting; another sibling spoke of the generosity of a mother who would give this gift at a time like that. What it was, it was simply a list. It was a list of names and addresses and phone numbers. I was flying the nest; I was headed a thousand miles south back to where our family had originated. It was a list of my grandparents' names and addresses and phone numbers. It was a list of my uncles and aunts. And I took it and folded it up, and I put it in my wallet, and I really didn't think much about it. But it turned into one of those layered gifts that later in life you begin to understand the heart of a parent who is about to say "goodbye" to their children, and they want to bless their children in every way they possibly can.

And what she gave to me turned out to be one of life's greatest blessings. Again and again, I called and contacted those uncles and aunts while I was in Southern California, went to their homes. One of my aunts, after she met Nancy, invited Nancy to stay with her for a short period of time. Nancy got to meet my grandparents and to step into their world and into their life. And I, now, looking back, I have done six of their funerals. I have tried to summarize their life and look

at the Word of God and the correspondence of their life to the Word of God. Like all of us, they're human; they're fallen; they were not without fault. But in each of those cases, these were men and women who listened to the voice of God in His Word, who stepped toward Jesus in obedience to Jesus when He said "follow Me." And their lives represented Jesus in this world, and they reflected who He is to other people. And their examples that went before me gave me an example of how to live and how to be faithful throughout our lives, passed on to our children. And so you have a generational influence that has lasted for well over one hundred years.

Well, this morning, we find a generational influence that has lasted for two thousand years. And it is the example of the apostle Peter as he shows us and tells us what it looks like to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, to say "yes" in this moment, this intersection of stress and doubt and wondering what to do next, but turning to who He is, and saying "yes" to Him in an action of obedience to Him while we still can. We're going to end up this morning in I Peter 2:21-25, but I want to start with the story of Peter at the end of the Gospel of John - John 21:15-19, this life-transforming encounter that Jesus has with Peter, the apostle Peter.

Peter has denied his association with Jesus three times; Jesus has now suffered and died; He has been raised from the dead; the disciples are at the Sea of Galilee, they're fishing, going back to their earlier vocation; Jesus pursues them and He commissions them. And as He encounters the disciples in the Sea of Galilee, He comes face to face with the apostle Peter. And Peter, who denied three times his association with Jesus, is now given a grace gift by Jesus.

And so we pick up the account in John 21:15. "*When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?'*" Peter had claimed that, even if everybody else fell away, he wouldn't, and he clearly had failed to fulfill his promise. And so Peter's response is to say, "*Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.*" That's the first public opportunity that Peter has now to say "I love You." The second one is in verse 16, "*He said to him again, a second*

*time, 'Simon, do you love Me.'* And he said to Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love You." And He said to him, 'Shepherd my sheep.'" So the first response, Jesus says "Tend my sheep," and now He says "Shepherd my sheep." And then a third time He said, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" And Peter was grieved because He said it a third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'" The power of that moment is, three different times, Jesus commissions Peter - the Great Shepherd to Peter, who is this earthly shepherd - that he would so tend this flock of God, the people of God, feeding them the Word of God, modeling for them what it looks like to love and to follow this God of the Bible, and Jesus says, "Tend my sheep."

But He's not finished with Peter. He tells Peter something that I don't want to know about me. He tells Peter how he's going to die in verse 18. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wish; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."* I always look at Peter as one of those guys who, when he grabbed a hold of an object, it moved. I mean, I picture the dude as yoked, from yarding in nets full of fish and the work and the ruckednes of the day. And, "When you were young, Peter, your strength was strong, and you could do whatever you wanted." Well, the good news is, here, Peter's going to get old. But the bad news is that the day is coming when you're going to be taken where you don't wish to go, when your arms are going to be stretched out - the same word used of Jesus when He was stretched out to be crucified. "So, that's yet future for you, Peter."

And that piques his curiosity. He looks around, and he wants to know about the apostle John. And so we pick up the account in verse 19. *"Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He,"* - Jesus - *"said to Peter, 'Follow Me.'"* You can't say any more than that. Two words. Follow Jesus. *"Peter turned around and he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them--the one who would lean back on His bosom at the supper and*

*said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' So Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about this man,'" - what about John? - "And Jesus said to him, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me.'"*

"Peter, that's John's story. Your story is this: wherever you go, whatever you do, you tend My sheep; you follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. As for John, that's his story. John, you follow Me." And John would live to be an old guy. The rest of the disciples died from suffering in persecution long before the apostle John did. That's the call of Jesus, that you would "follow Me." And it's the call of Jesus that we respond to, that Peter talks about in his epistle.

Turn again to I Peter 2. Look at verse 9; we see the call of God on us. 2:9 - *"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has,"* what? *"Has called you."* Called you out of darkness, out of a not-knowing who God is, out of a broken ruptured relationship with God. He's called you out of this darkness, and He's brought you into the most marvellous light. [unclear] but giving of blessing instead, for you were called for this very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. So we're called to return a blessing for cursing. There's more to the calling of God. I Peter 5:10; look at the call of God. *"After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."* After we've suffered for a little while, the God who has called us to eternal glory--so that if we're in Christ, we've been called by God to respond to the voice of God.

What's that look like? It looks like I Peter 2:21-25, which is the crown jewel of the Gospel; it is the crown jewel of the calling of God on us, in and through Jesus Christ. *"Follow me,"* Jesus says. What's that look like? What is this call of God to us? Check it out, verse 21, *"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example to follow in His steps."* Jesus to Peter: *"Follow Me."* Jesus to us through Peter: Follow Jesus Christ by walking, by following in His footsteps. We're called for what purpose? We're called to trust God in the

midst of the hardest and most difficult and challenging stuff that life can throw at us.

The for-instance is in the previous two verses, 19 and 20. An employer who is unjust, who wrongs the employee--verse 19, *"This finds favor, if for the sake of conscience towards God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly."* A lot of our suffering - some of it, anyway - is self-inflicted. It is the consequence of things that we've said and done in our life. But that's not the kind of suffering that Peter's talking about here. He's not talking about self-inflicted suffering; he's talking about when we've done nothing to deserve what comes at us that's wrong, or is unjust. And when we trust God in that moment, when this wrong is done toward us, that that - that trust in God in the moment - that's what pleases God. And then Peter expands this responding to injustice - he responds it to all relationships. Verse 20, *"What credit is there if, when you sin you are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God."*

When others wrong us, we are immediately faced with a choice, and it's simply this: are we going to be like them or are we going to be like Christ? So, our choice is, if we're going to be like them, then when they sin against us, now we sin against them. And that's a very natural instinct. Sometimes, when others wrong us, it's just as easy as can be to just respond to them as they have done to us. But here Jesus, through Peter, tells us that following in His footsteps means that we respond to others in the same way that Jesus Christ responded to others. And when we follow in His footsteps, that we'll be glad that we did.

Why will we be glad that we followed in His footsteps? Well, first, Jesus suffered for us so that we know how to suffer like Him. He suffered for us so that we know how to suffer like Him. Christ suffered for you. Verse 21, *"Since Christ also suffered for you."* That is just like one of the easiest things to overlook. Let's just pause and look at that for a moment. He suffered for you. He suffered what you and I deserve



even though He was innocent and He had no trace of self-pity while suffering for us. He had no word of complaint about the people He suffered for.

The only explanation of the cross of Jesus Christ is the love of God for us. I was recently reading some comments by N. T. Wright, who is an English thinker, theologian, pastor, and he was talking about some of the most powerful influences and shaping voices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the way of Marx and Nietzsche and Freud. And it would be Marx on money. And it would be Nietzsche who believed that powerful people were naturally inclined to just desire more and more power, so that the stronger they became, the more power they craved. And then of course Freud, his views on sex has influenced twenty-first century morals at a profound impact on our culture and our society. And they've attacked the truth of the Word of God, the Bible, and the Gospel. And N. T. Wright notes that Jesus Christ silences all of their arguments on the cross. Why did He suffer and die? What drove Him to suffer for you? For me? And to die?

And to paraphrase what Wright wrote, he said: Look at Jesus on the cross. Was He doing that for money? Was He doing that for power? I mean, here He's preincarnate, Jesus God, God the Son, right hand of the throne of God, worshipped by angels, become like us, now taking our place--was He doing that for money? Was He doing that for more power? Was He doing that to satisfying any biological appetite, like sex? What was driving Him? What's in it for Him? The reason He suffered and died is out of an act of sacrificial love and obedience to the Father, and sacrificial love for us. So that the Gospel story speaks from first to last - Wright says - of a God who did not need to create, but did so out of overflowing and generous love. It speaks of a God who did not need to redeem and recreate, but did so as the greatest possible act of self-giving love. He suffered for you. He died for us.

And He shows us in His suffering and in His death how to live in a sinful world. He suffered the ultimate wrong. Verse 22, "*He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth.*" Sometimes when we say we want justice, what we really mean

is that we want justice for everyone but us. We overlook the mercy that God gives to us in and through His Son Jesus Christ. We just saw that in verse 10, chapter 2. We are the people of God. Before, we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy.

The suffering of Jesus was undeserved. He is right, and He's true, inside out. He's the only sinless human that has ever lived. And when He was sinned against, He did not return with sin. He was reviled, but He didn't seek revenge. Revenge is payback. It's one of those themes that country Western music has in common with Shakespeare. It's just a natural instinct for us to want to get back at those who hurt us. Peggy Noonan, opinion writer, Wall Street Journal: "The hunger for revenge, the desire to hurt the one who hurt you, is among the most human of drives, consistent as the desire for food, strong as the desire for love. It's how we are. Most of us know it's wrong, and yet..." And yet what? And yet, Jesus didn't pay back the wrong done to Him, but He gave His love out of love for the one who did wrong to Him.

Well, how did Jesus resist the impulse to pay back, or to get back, this person who did wrong to Him, or the people who have done wrong? Verse 23, "*While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.*" How did he restrain the impulse to payback, to get back? In that moment, He trusted Himself to God, who is fully informed, who rightly and truly judges in every way.

And the cross is the epicenter of God's justice in that, because of Jesus Christ, judged at the cross, if you and I are in Christ, then our sin has been judged as the innocent Jesus has paid for our sin. Those who are outside of Christ will be judged by God outside of Christ for the sins and the wrongs they have committed against a holy and righteous and just God. But these words are words that are written to believer in how to live. And that is, in that last moment, when life is so difficult and hard and you think "I can't do this," it's trusting God who is just and right. So, it's

as if you take the circumstance, the other person, and you trust God with them. He's the one - He says - He'll do vengeance. Vengeance is His, He says.

Corrie Ten Boom, a shining example of Jesus. Twentieth century - just a giant - a diminutive little woman, but a giant of a person. Spent time in a concentration camp, suffered losses and wrongs and just absolutely horrific-- And Corrie Ten Boom said, "When a train goes through a tunnel, and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still, and you trust the engineer." That's what Jesus is saying here; that's what Peter is saying with the employee who was wronged, with the one who wrong is done to them by anybody or anything. You trust the God who is just; you don't jump off the train or turn away from Him. And it's that heart-trust and the goodness of God that so delights and pleases God.

And that is our calling. Our calling is, when times get tough and sin becomes more popular and relationships begin to fracture, that we keep entrusting - as a lifestyle - that we keep entrusting our self to the God who does justice and who judges righteously. Jesus suffered for us, in part, to show us how to suffer. And when we suffer like Him, we are increasingly becoming like Him.

Why does Jesus suffer for us? Well, Jesus died for us so we can live for Him. He died for us so we can live for Him and become like Him, set free from the power of sin, so that now sin is no longer the dominant shaping influence in our heart and in our life. Humanity's greatest problem is our sin. And humanity has no effective solution for our sin. Humanity has no answer, has nothing that can absolve, forgive, address our sin problem. So God not only, through Christ, forgives our sin; but as we die to our sin, as it has no ultimate power over us anymore - as in we don't have to sin - and we can say yes to Christ, then over a lifetime, we increasingly become like Jesus Christ.

This is the heart of the Gospel in verse 24, and it's not a new Gospel; it's not a new story; it's an old story. Peter takes it back to 800 years to the prophet Isaiah, well known by the audience that Peter was writing to. Check out verse 24, "*He Himself*

*bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by His wounds you were healed.*" This is God's idea from before creation. It was active in the garden when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, and God came after them, seeking them, covering them, protecting them, promising a future for them. It was active throughout all of the Old Testament. Peter's already referenced Isaiah, and much of this passage comes from right out of Isaiah 53.

Turn to Isaiah 53, let's take a moment to see what the prophet Isaiah has to say about the Gospel of God seven hundred plus years before the arrival of the Son of God on earth, born as a babe in Bethlehem. Isaiah 53:4-6. *"Surely, our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquities of us all to fall on Him."* He pictures us as sheep that have wandered away from the Shepherd. And we wander away from the Shepherd when we cave into our own selfish impulses, to sins and defiance against who God is and what God says. We wander away from the Shepherd. And then we look around and wonder, where is the Shepherd? We've wandered away from His voice.

Humanity has no solution for humanity's greatest problem; and when we go our own way, that's our greatest problem. We wander away from the only One who can heal the brokenness of our own soul. The apostle Paul says in II Corinthians 5:21, *"God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might know the righteousness of God."* And that's what Peter says here, that when we die to sin, we live to righteousness. We're already righteous in the eyes of God because of the death of the Righteous One, Jesus. But now as we die to sin in real life right now, as we live for Him, then we become people who increasingly reflect Him in His righteousness. So, we're not only forgiven of our sin because of the death of Jesus, but we're set free from the power of sin.

So we have the Spirit of God and the Word of God and the resurrected Jesus working in us, giving us life and freedom and joy and kindness, so we can represent and reflect Jesus in a hostile world. He died for us; He was wounded for us. And His wounds, they heal us spiritually. We were once broken people. We all needed the Great Physician to mend our brokenness, to purify us from sin, to recreate a new person, a new person who follows in the footsteps of Jesus, who walk with Him in His way for His purposes in response to His calling. And His calling is that we would, right now, trust ourselves to a faithful Creator who has always done and always will do that which is right and good and best for us, so that we would say "yes" to the call of Jesus. We'll be glad that we did.

Why? Thirdly, Jesus guards and shepherds our soul. I mean, we could just park here. It would be one of the healthiest things for us, this next week, is just to park our heart right here in I Peter 2:25. *"For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your soul."* Continually straying away from the shepherd is a lifestyle of indifference to Jesus, the words of Jesus. But now that we're alive to who He is, we've returned to the shepherd who is--He is the Shepherd of our soul and He is the Guardian of our soul. So our soul is that spiritual part of us that immaterial part of who we truly are, that eternal part of who we are.

Remember the words of Jesus that He said to the disciples in John 10? He said, *"My sheep hear My voice."* And those who hear His voice who are His sheep, they *"follow Me."* He says, *"I know my sheep."* He said, *"The Father has given them to me."* He says, *"No one could ever snatch or pluck them out of the Father's hand."* He guards the soul; He is the Shepherd of the soul. He is the Shepherd who has spoken and who speaks in and through His words in the Spirit of God. He keeps us.

There's a practical way - all the way throughout I Peter we find this - but I want to just show one practical way He is the shepherd and guardian of our soul. Go to I Peter 5:8. How is He the Guardian of our soul, the Protector of our soul, the Shepherd of our soul? Verse 8 says, *"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert; your*

*adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*" This roaring lion wants to destroy and divide and deceive. And this roaring lion is at work today and on the prowl and looking for opportunities to divide relationships, to divide people, to upset people in anger at each other, to tempt people to power up and extol their own strength and their own virtues and their own opinion apart from God. So how is Jesus the Shepherd of our soul? Well, look at verse 5, the middle part, and verse 6 and 7.

Verse 5, *"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another."* Jesus is ultimate humility, and Jesus Son of God; Jesus became what He had never been; He became like us, incarnate, fully God now fully man, so He is ultimate humility. He ultimately considered the interests of others as more important than His own. And so Peter says, *"Clothe yourselves with humility, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* Who does He give grace to? To the one who considered the interest of another as more important than our own. That shapes the core of our soul of who we are.

Verse 6, *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time."* That's another way of describing what Peter has just told us in chapter 2, that in that moment of adversity and struggle and difficulty and "What do I do now?" that it's this trusting of who God is, the voice of the Shepherd, that we would in this moment trust Him. He's the one who judges and who executes and who does justice fully righteously. So now, when tempted to control the outcome, or elevate ourselves instead, as we humble ourselves, as we yield to Him, as we consider the interest and the gain and the benefit of other people as more important than our own, we see the work of God in us and we can trust that God is the one; He'll do the exalting; let's trust Him with our good rather than trying to control the outcome of our good.

And, verse 7, *"Casting all your cares on Him because He"* - same word - *"cares for you."* I find that immensely reassuring. He invites his people to stop wandering away from Him; He invites us to listen to His voice and return to Him. He reminds

us that He is the Shepherd of our soul, the Guardian of our soul. He is the one who tends to us. He cares for us far more than any could care for Him. We have cares; that's the way it is in this world. And we can take all of those cares, all of it, and we can just park it with Him. We can just trust it with Him - not in a way that's passive or disengaged from our responsibilities to actively initiate and love and benefit and encourage other people - but we can take those cares, all of them, and park them with Him.

That is how He is the shepherd and guardian of our soul, that we can trust Him who has gone before us to show us the way and how to trust the Father, who goes with us, and who helps us, and who gives us every reason to trust Him because He cares for us, so that we can trust Him with all our cares.

Let's do that together this morning. Will you pray with me?

Heavenly Father, thank You. Thank You that we can trust You right now where we are. Jesus, we have a lot of cares. We have a lot of concerns, a lot of needs. We pray for our families; we pray that our families and our children and the next generations, that they would love you early and follow you always. And we ask that You would open the eyes of their heart, that they would return to You, that they would know You, Jesus, the Shepherd and Guardian of our soul. Father, we would ask that, in and through the power of Jesus, that Your Spirit, that You would help us to be faithful in trusting You even when we might feel otherwise. Help us to trust You fully with our families and with our friends and with our church, with our city with our county, with our state, with our nation, and with this world, Father. Thank You that You're on the throne, that You are sovereign, and that You account to no other for Your will and what You will do and how You go about it. We ask that Your will be done, that Your Kingdom soon comes, on earth as it is in Heaven. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen. Would you please stand as we sing together. He died our death for us; He has redeemed what was lost; He has brought us back into the fold and keeps us so that we can live like Him for Him. Let us sing together.

[music: "Nothing but the Blood"]

Imagine cymbals. Imagine a celebration. Praise the Lord! Go in wonderful peace; be kept by the Keeper.