



August 10, 2014
Colossians 1:13-14
Pastor Matt Pierce

A Tale of Two Kingdoms

Hello, my name is Larry Adams, and I want to take a moment to personally thank you for tuning into this week's podcast where you downloaded or are streaming this week's Bible message. I hope it will be a great encouragement to you, and it's our prayer that God will use it to strengthen your faith.

I just want be sure to tell you too that we in no way intend for this message to be a replacement for your weekly involvement in a good local church. We hope that you are involved in a church in your community to worship, grow, and serve and to sit under the authority of pastors and teachers who can speak into your lives. We also realize that around the world there are places where there is no local church, so we're hoping that these messages each week will be a great encouragement to you and anyone else you may be gathering with to pray with, encourage, and to share with in this message. Thank you again for downloading this message, and we hope it will be a great blessing in your life.

God, thank you that you are a life-changing God, a heart-changing God. We don't have to be dependent on ourselves or dependent on circumstance or dependent on anything else. If we are Christians this morning, we have the power of the living God living inside of us. God, I pray that you would meet us in your word and meet us in our hearts this morning. Change us; teach us. Speak through me this morning, God. Nobody here wants to hear anything from me. They want to hear from you, and I do too. Speak to us. In Jesus', Amen.

Well, we're gonna jump right into the Scriptures this morning, Colossians Chapter 1. We're gonna be all over the book of Colossians this morning. Colossians has some of the most powerful, impactful Scriptures that just scream of the deity of Jesus Christ, the power of Jesus Christ, the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and how that power and that supremacy can impact a person's life. It's some of the richest, incredible Scriptures in the whole Bible about Jesus. I'm gonna read one of my favorite passages of all time. I've always wanted to speak on this; here's my opportunity. Colossians Chapter 1 starting in verse 13:

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Amen? Let's just unpack that for a minute. Let's just look at that for a minute and see the richness that's in here. This is talking about how God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness. Now, it's so important to understand these words and what they mean or they can just kinda roll off and you can miss the power and the meaning behind it. That word "rescue" means "delivered" but not just delivered, not just rescued, but it has a deeper meaning of "rescued for a purpose, delivered for a purpose." And it means "delivered and rescued unto oneself." God didn't just rescue us and deliver us. He rescued us to bring us to him. That's different than plucking somebody out of a flood water and just sitting them off on the bank and saying, "Thank you very much." It's rescue with the purpose. God rescued us and delivered us so that we could have a relationship and come into that relationship and be with him forever. Amen? He rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and sometimes I think that when we lose sight of what we'd been rescued from. We were rescued from the dominion of darkness.

That word “dominion” is an evil realm; a powerful, evil realm where there is an authority there that has full control. Have we forgotten the fact that the evil forces of this world has basically this world locked down, right? Take a look around. We were rescued from the authority and from the power and the dominion of an evil force. There was no way out. We were locked into that, walking around not even knowing. People don't get up in the morning out there and go, “Hey, I'm in the dominion of darkness.” It doesn't dawn on them most of the time, right? And we didn't know that unless God had intervened into our lives. Unless God had delivered us from that, we'd still be there. All glory, all credit for our salvation and our rescue and our deliverance goes to God. He reached down and rescued us from those powerful, evil forces: darkness, ignorance of divine things.

Like I said, people don't even know, and they don't know about the divinity of God. They don't know that Jesus is the Son of God. They're blind. It's dark, that's why they call it the darkness. God came in there and opened up our eyes and shined the light into our hearts and showed us the reality of the situation. He delivered us and brought us into the kingdom of the Son that he loves. So he didn't just rescue us and leave us to figure it out on our own. He brought us into his kingdom, his authority, his sovereign realm, his family. He renamed us. He gave us a new nature, and he's with us every moment of every day. Can I just get an Amen for that? Can I just get an Amen? We were delivered from peril into the kingdom and the family of God. He gave us an inheritance. He gave us our new name. He gave us an identity. We're no longer citizens of this world. We're aliens to this world. We now belong to God. We're part of God's kingdom. We're part of God's family. Amen?

Let me ask you a question. If all this is true then, for potentially many of us, why is it that we're gonna forget that before we even get to our car in the parking lot this morning? If all of that is true, why is it that that doesn't impact me more? Maybe you're here today and you're thinking, “Man, this sounds like a Hollywood movie or some blockbuster summer movie I saw over the summer than it does sound like my life. I mean, ‘Rescued, kingdoms, the darkness.’ I mean this sounds like some movie, right? It doesn't sound like my life. It sounds like a story about some fictional people somewhere else in some far-off land. It just doesn't sound like me and what's gone on in Brentwood, you know?”

I wonder if you're here today and you're thinking, “Man, wow, life in the kingdom of the Son, that's my heart's desire. That's what I long for. That's what I was hoping that this thing was gonna be. That's what I've always thought it was gonna be, but there's a disconnect. It doesn't seem like that's what's going on for me.” If I was honest, if we were honest, maybe there's something missing in my relationship with God. I mean, “I know I'm a Christian,” you might be thinking, “I know I'm a Christian. I love Jesus. I serve faithfully. I pray every day. I read my Bible, but I don't know that I'm feeling the love of God at the core of who I am.”

Maybe that's you this morning, or maybe you're here and you came to church, again, another Sunday. Worship started and you're sitting there and you're wondering, “Why after all this time - - after all this time – am I still struggling, am I still having thoughts and just actions that don't honor God. I mean where's this life change? When is that gonna happen? When is it going to go away? When am I gonna stop struggling? When am I gonna see that life change that I desire? It seems like I take two steps forward with Jesus and one step back, maybe three steps back. It almost seems like I keep going backward into the very darkness that God delivered me from. I feel like I go back sometimes.”

I just want to say to you this morning, number one, you're not alone. Number two, God understands. He knows that, and he understands that. I want to talk this morning, God wants to share with us this morning why that might be happening, why that might be your experience, and the hope that we have about that.

How does that happen? How does a person who knows these things: they know they'd been delivered; they know they'd been rescued, they've read it a hundred times; they know these things but yet there's still that disconnect or that pull back to the darkness. How can happen? How can that happen to a Christian? Well, I said that you're not alone. You're definitely not alone. It's been going on ever since the beginning. In fact, when Paul wrote the book of Colossians, and in that time when Paul was doing his missionary journeys, he would start churches and he would deliver this incredible news, the gospel, about Jesus and the deliverance and the salvation that we have in him and him alone. These churches would start up and these people were all excited, and everything was going good. Then inevitably somebody, or a group of people, would come along, most the time behind Paul, and just poison everybody's mind and just pervert the gospel. There were heresies all over the place.

In the book of Colossians, some theologians have identified eight heresies that were going on in that church. A heresy is just something that's not true about God and about us. It's not truth. It's a heresy, false doctrine. Paul loved these people, and he saw that they were being lured back to the darkness. They were slaves that had been set free going back to slavery. Oftentimes a lot of these letters were addressed to these people that he loved.

This one guy, a guy named Epaphras, was in charge of this church. He was trying to warn Epaphras, "Don't let this happen in Colossae." It had already happened in Galatia. The churches in Galatia had already grabbed hold of something other than Jesus. They had already trusted and believed in something other than Jesus, and he didn't want that to happen here.

I would say the number one heresy, the number one challenge that these early churches were having -- and I'm not just gonna say the early church -- the number one challenge that we have today in the modern church is this: that Jesus alone isn't enough. People begin to add things to Jesus so that they can live their life. It's this "Jesus plus" mentality. No Christian would ever say that. Nobody's gonna say that. It creeps in. When we were saved, when we were rescued from the dominion of darkness, God brought us under his divine, supreme, sovereign authority. We were rescued from the dominion of darkness. We were rescued from the power of that darkness, but not the presence of that darkness. Look around, it's still here. We were rescued from the bite of the darkness but not the bark. It's still here, and it's a very powerful lure. Not just spiritual forces of evil but our own sin living inside of us pulls us back. Our culture pulls us back. It goes on today. It was going on then. Jesus alone isn't enough. You need this. You need that. The people in Colossae and us today have bought into this fact that Jesus alone isn't enough to sustain me. Jesus alone isn't enough to guide me. Jesus alone isn't enough to teach me. Jesus alone isn't enough to perfect me and transform me into his image. I need to start adding things to him to make that happen.

When we were saved and God brought us into his family and into his kingdom, according to Acts 17 we now live and breathe and have our very being in Christ. We are a temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives in me and he lives in you if you are a Christian. God lives in me. He's not over here doing something down at the church and then I gotta go down there to join with him. No, he is my life. He is a part of my life. He goes wherever I go. I'm in Christ. Do a search if you have software, or if you just have a pen circle how many times in the book of Colossians alone Paul uses the word "in Christ" or "in him" or "in Jesus Christ." You'll be circling a lot because he's trying to get the point when we're saved we're in Christ. He's not over here, he's here.

Here's another way to put it. My very identity is found in Jesus Christ. My worth and my value, my life is in Christ. He's my Lord, right? I belong to Jesus. He bought me with a very high price. I belong to him. He belongs to me. I'm in him. He's in me. We're connected. He's my very identity, and because he's my identity he has the sole right to tell me who I am. He defines me. He names me and he names you.

A pastor in a church in San Francisco, Dave Loomis, put it really good. I heard a message from him just recently. He says, "You know, that's not the only thing about me. I'm a father. I mean, I'm a pastor. I'm a coach. I'm a husband, so there's other things that's true about me. But the fact that I'm a Christian, the fact that I'm in Christ is the most true thing about me. It's the core truth about me. It's what my life is founded on and your life is founded on. It's my identity. It's who I am. It's the most true thing about me."

Here's the problem. If we slip away from that, if we move away from that, if Jesus alone doesn't define us, if we don't give him that authority to tell us who we are, and we start listening to the other sources out there, here's what'll happen: You will become a slave to whatever it is that you allow to define you. When we do that, we move right back toward the slavery and the bondage that we were rescued from. When we let someone other than Jesus Christ tell us who we are and tell us what we're worth and tell us that we matter and tell us that we have value, if we base any of that stuff on anything other than Jesus, we become a slave to whatever. Now I have to obey whatever that thing is because it's defined me. It owns me.

Paul addressed this in Colossians 2 verse 8. Paul was adamant about this. It's hard to get from just a casual reading. You have to dig a little bit more, but he says in verse 8:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

You know he's saying? "If you're gonna let the world define you. If you're gonna let the world tell you what you're worth and tell you if you're valuable or not, then you've been taken captive and you've been brought back into the darkness. You're now a slave to that. I'm sure the world, my own traditions, my flesh, the sin that lives in me, the culture that I live in, the spiritual forces of evil that just love to just yap, yap, yap, yap in our ear all the time; there's a lot of ways that they can define us, but, man, I'll tell you, the three that I bumped into in my own life and in the people that I work with more often than not are these three. This is how the world, the flesh, and the enemy define me or define us. I'm defined by what I do. That's who I am, what I do.

"What do you do?"

"Well, I'm this. I'm a banker."

"Oh, yeah. What do you do?"

It's our first response when you're getting to know somebody, right? "Oh, what are you about?"

"Well, this is what I do."

"Oh, what are you about?"

"Well, this is what I do."

Because we're defined, that's our identity by what I do or what I accomplished. It's a performance-based mindset. We're inundated with it every single day because that's probably the number one defining term or the defining phrase that the world wants to hold us captive to. You are what you do or don't do. You want to flip it around. You're a failure because you didn't do that.

How about this one? You are what you look like. You are your appearance. That's who you are. When you believe that about yourself, if you think that that's who you are and what defines you then you're gonna spend all your time and all your energy trying to look good because when I look good I got it dialed in, because I gotta serve that now because I'm a slave to that. I gotta look good.

The third one is we're defined by what others think. If I can just get you to like me. This is my personal struggle as most of you know. If I can just get people to like me; if can just get people to say good things about me. You know, some days if they could just not say bad things, that's a good thing because I can find myself defined by that. How crazy is that? I have now given you authority. You're basically Lord of my life. I've now given you authority to tell me what I'm worth, to tell me who I am, to tell me whether or not I have value based on your opinion of me. I'm a slave to that and so are you if you let any of these things define you. Don't think this doesn't creep into the church. It does. Nobody's gonna admit this but, "So, you're a Christian. So what's that about?"

"Well, I serve here. I serve there. I'm a part of this ministry over there. I'm a part of that ministry over there." By the way, none of these things are bad. They're good, but God never intended them to be the things that define us. Again, no one would admit this, but creeping in there will be things like, "Man, I hope everybody thinks I'm doing a good job. Man, I hope this goes well because I don't know how this is gonna look. I'm going to church on Sunday so I gotta appear like I got it together. I gotta look good. I gotta put this church thing on because I don't want anyone to think that I'm messed up." You don't even know you're doing it because it's deceptive and hollow. It's deceiving, and you don't even know you're sucked into it. How does this happen?

About a month ago, Pastor Larry was preaching a sermon on a communion Sunday, and he used an illustration I've been thinking a lot about. He used an illustration about the slaves on the plantations in the South during the Civil War and how the 13th Amendment freed those slaves. The irony or the interesting fact about that was that many of the slaves didn't take advantage of that freedom and they ended up going back to the very slavery that they had been freed from. Man, I've been thinking about that like, why would anybody do that, right? I do this sometimes, but I try to think about it in terms of how that would impact me. There's no way we could know, obviously. I'm not trying to minimize the pressure that the slaves were under. There's no way to know, but I want you to think about this for a minute. If you want to close your eyes, close your eyes, but you're a slave. It's 1865, and some courier or somebody is announcing all over town. They come by the plantation and you hear "You're free! You're free! You're not a slave anymore! You're free!"

You're like, "Really? I'm free?" But every bone in your body knows nothing else. Every fiber of your being knows nothing but slavery. "Yeah, somebody said I'm free. It's true, but I don't know anything but slavery. I was born a slave. I was brought up a slave. I live in a culture of slavery. My parents were slaves. Everywhere I look, I look around I see slavery. The slave master is telling me I'm a slave every day. You're telling me I'm free and there's this rub, there's this ahh." Then I think that can happen as Christians. When we got delivered from the dominion of darkness, as I mentioned earlier, it's still barking. The enemy is still barking. We still have a sin nature of flesh that is just drawn back to the darkness because just the moment we get saved we don't forget all of that time in the darkness. Sanctification, which is a fancy term for "being made more like Christ, for being transformed into his image" is a process. It doesn't happen overnight.

When we come into the kingdom of God we hear “You’re free!” every Sunday morning. “We’re free!” When I’m walking out to my car, man, I don’t feel very free. Being a slave to sin was all I ever knew. It’s the culture I live in. I get reminded of it every day. It’s the family I grew up in no matter how good or bad they were. It’s my identity. When we allow our own self or the culture or the enemy define us and tell us we’re still a slave and we believe that, our growth in Christ will stop.

Do you know how easy it is? Let me just give you a pastor’s example. Do you know how easy it is or how tempting it would be for me to allow, let’s say, my ministry to define me? I’m not saying that ever happens to pastors. Let’s take this Bethesda Village incredible ministry. Let’s say, I’m allowing the success or failure of that ministry -- by the way, success and failure are often gauged by me. God’s got a whole different agenda and plan and timeline, but I’ve got my agenda and plan and timeline -- if I allow that to define me, if it doesn’t do well, I’m gonna feel like a failure. That’s gonna be my identity because I’ve reverted back and bought back into, I am what I do. I am my success. I am, I am, I am instead of just trusting that God’s gonna do what he’s gonna do and know that, yeah, I may make some mistakes in my ministry. I do all the time, but that’s not who I am. Amen? And that’s not who you are.

What defines you? Who have you given that authority to? Your work? Your performance at work? How about your kid’s performance? Now, I’m up and down and all over the board dependent upon how my kid’s doing. Jesus reserves the right to tell us who we are and what we’re worth. Jesus alone. He rescued us, and he owns us. He bought us. By virtue of that, he has the right and really the only one that can because he created us. He knows me better than I know myself. My relationship with him is not dependent upon my performance. My relationship with him is not dependent on how I look on any given day. My relationship with him is not dependent on whether I do this right or that right or I don’t do this at all. My relationship with him is dependent on him. He defines me. It’s what he did for me, not what I do for him. I don’t slip in and out of this relationship with God. He has the right to tell me who I am. He has the right to tell me what my worth is and what my value is. In light of that, how do we live our lives? Okay, some of you are, like, “All right, finally. Let’s get to the application part of the message. I got the pen and gonna write -- he’s gonna give me four things I need to do this week so this can be a reality in my life.”

Put the pen down for just a minute, okay? Just put then pen down. There’s nothing wrong with making lists. I make lists. You should see my office. I have lists all over the place. Hear me out. The Bible, God, is intentional and goes to great lengths to make sure that we know who we are in Christ before it ever produces a command. There’s commands all over the Bible, right? They’re everywhere. Do this. Don’t do that. Love others. Love God. Forgive others. Bear with one another. Don’t do this. It’s all over the place, but I want you to take note. Here’s your project for this week. I guarantee you, usually before, but in and around any set of commands or anything that the Bible says, “This is what you need to do” is gonna be an identity Scripture. I call them identity Scriptures. It’s a reminder of a Bible writer wanting to make sure that before you get into application, before you get into doing things for Jesus, before you get into serving, before you get into raising your kids, before you go to work, before you do anything, don’t forget who you are. In this case, it’s all over this letter. Your goal, your task, this week is to find those identity Scriptures. Find those things that are indicative about who we are in Christ and focus on those. Meditate on those. In this case it’s in Colossians Chapter 3 verse 1. Let me read this Scripture to you. This is the application section of the book of Colossians. He’s gonna get into “Put to death this. Put to death that,” but before he does, look at these identity Scriptures.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

“We’ve been raised,” well, you can’t just skip over that. We are programmed to look for the performance part.

“What do I need to do? Tell me what I need to do and I’ll go do it” because that’s what we’re prone to want to do.

Paul’s saying, “Wait a minute.” The whole first three chapters of Ephesians are identity. Before it gets into the second half of the book which is based on this, now this is how you can live your life. “We’ve been raised with Christ.” We have a new life, okay? We’ve been given a new life. Our old life is dead. We have a new life. We’ve been raised with Christ. Think about that for a couple hours. Meditate on that.

We’ve been raised with Christ,

so in light of that,

set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died,

Here’s another identity.

you died, and your life is now hidden (or protected, or secured) with Christ in God.

Then a great identity statement.

⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

You find that all over the Scripture. I was rescued. I’m now in Christ. I have a new life, and he’s coming back. I’m not gonna be here forever. He’s gonna take me home in glory. Now, in light of that, “Put to death . . . “

Doesn’t that make a difference? It makes a difference to me. I don’t know what you do in your devotions, but, man, I pour into this stuff because I forget. All I have to do to forget who I am, go to sleep, right? I go to sleep and wake, “Oh, all these things I gotta do today . . . “ and it starts all over again and I get in there. I can’t start a day without meeting God in his Word. Do I go meet in his Word to look for the things I need? Sure. But, man, I know myself. I know what I do. I know what I’m prone to do, and I focus on these identity statements that tell me who God is that tell me what he thinks of me. If we skip over these verses and run right to the obedience, a couple of things could happen. Not good. If we jump right to the commands of the Bible and forget who we are in Christ, we could try to do those commands on our own.

How is that working? Can I just say flat-out you can’t live a genuine Christian life without Jesus. You can try. You can kinda look like one, okay? You can do nice things for people. You can say nice things. You can give money. You can do things that would make other people think, “Man, that guy’s on fire for the Lord.” But you know and God knows it’s coming from an identity other than him. You know that because you’re feeling that. Don’t skip over your identity. Don’t forget who we are.

The other thing that can happen -- I think this is even worse -- The other thing that can happen, when we skip over identity and we go right to the commands is we can begin to think, “I need to obey in order to get that identity. I need to do these commands in order to be lifted up with Christ, in order to be loved by God, in order to be redeemed and forgiven and rescued.” Ah,

man (sigh). No. No way. The biggest list in the Bible, the Ten Commandments, that's the biggest checklist there is, right? The Ten Commandments. Even that has an identity verse before it. If I was to ask you, "What's the first verse of the Ten Commandments?"

You might say, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

I would say, "You're wrong." Here's the verse before the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:

And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Identity.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me."

"I am the Lord your God. I'm yours. I delivered you. I'm the one that brought you away from Pharaoh. I'm the one that did all of those miracles, I'm the one that did that. I love you, and I care about you. Why would you want to have any other gods other than me?"

Doesn't that make a difference? Don't forget who you are. If I could retitile this message and steal it from Pastor Dave from couple weeks ago, it would be "Be Who You Are." We have these things. These things are true of us. We don't have to earn these. As soon as you try to earn the identity that God has already given you, you're a legalist and you're in trouble.

So you're saying, "Well, Jesus does it all then what do I do? Just sit there?" No, that's the beauty of it. Because of these truths, because we have all this stuff, because we have the security in Christ, believe it and then live like you believe it. It's not "What can I do?" What can't I do? is a better question. I'm in Christ. I can do all things in Christ. I can do it all, but I focus first on who he is and who I am. May I read in Colossians Chapter 1 verse 15 some of the most powerful verses that describe who Jesus is:

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body,

"Matt, he is the head of the body, the church; he is the head of my ministry; he is the head of Golden Hills; he decides what's going on down here." It's not up to me. He is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

That's who Jesus is. And he follows that up with a description of us.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you

continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.

Don't do what I know you're gonna do. "See, it says right there, 'If I continue, if, if . . .'" I don't want to claim to be anything other than whatever, but that is a first-class conditional statement. That last verse is conditioned on the one before it which is a proven fact. We will stay with him. We will be with him. We will continue with him. That's what Paul was trying to say. There's no "if." The "if" was tied to what has already been done. Amen?

We've been bought. We're redeemed. We're forgiven. We're in Christ. We're in the family. We're in the family of God. I've been adopted, haven't you? Paul summarizes the whole thing in Chapter 3 verse 17. He says, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

"In the name." do you claim the name of Jesus Christ? You know, in a lot of ways, as incredible as that event of freeing of the slaves was, in a lot of ways they didn't have a chance. You know, they really didn't. The culture they were freed into didn't accept them. It was dangerous. They were starving. A lot of them had no choice but to go back or die. All I'm saying is that's not the case with us. Can you imagine one more time you're a slave on that plantation? Some guy comes by "You're free!" He doesn't just walk away.

Another man appears with authority, and he says, "Not only are you free, but you're mine now. I purchased you. Slave master, don't worry about him. I own him too. I own every plantation on the planet. They're mine, okay? Don't worry about him. You're mine now. I own you. I bought you. I love you. I adopted you. I'm gonna give you a new name. You're gonna come and live with me. You're gonna be part of the family business. You're gonna work with me, and we're gonna go out and get other slaves and bring them into the family business. You're never gonna lose it. You have an inheritance. You're with me forever." Would that have made a difference? That's who we are. We are slaves who were delivered from the kingdom of darkness for the purpose of being brought into the Father's kingdom and the Father's family. Believe that and then live like you believe it.

God, I just want to thank you today for this word. Thank you for being a sovereign, incredibly gracious, compassionate, and merciful God who rescues sinners from peril and brings us into your kingdom and brings us into your reign and your family. You gave us a name. May we live by that name and stop letting the world define us. We're Christians and you're our dad, and Jesus is our Lord. May we leave here this morning with that truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.