

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 1:1-4

November 8, 2020

I have some things I want to say to you today, speaking as a pastor and as a shepherd, who is also, like you, one of the sheep. So, I'm a sheep speaking to fellow sheep. I want to focus our attention, as sheep, where it should be. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, "the author and perfecter of our faith", who is our Good Shepherd. We need to never look away from him. That is the bottom line. That is the message I have for you this morning. I have more to say to fill it in, so don't go anywhere. But I have some things to say here at the beginning that won't sound like good news to you. It won't be pleasant to hear, but truth is sometimes like that. The Gospel is like that. We need to hear the bad news before the good news make sense.

For some of you who are prone to fear and anxiety and some amount of worry, this may be a bit of a struggle. But I want to

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encourage you to absorb what I'm, what I am about to say, to take it in and to keep on listening because I've got words of strength to speak to you this morning from God's eternal Word. So, hold fast and hang in there. Hope is on the way and we will get there. We're going to more through three basic parts in this message. And first, first part we're going to assess the situation that we are in. Second, we'll take a look at the prescription for us. And then, third, we will talk about making an appropriate application, an application we are making as a church, actually.

But first, the bad news. Let's talk about the situation that we're in. The media has called the election for Joe Biden and while, if I understand correctly, the media does not have the authority to call elections, nonetheless, the media has a very strong influence. President Trump won't conceded without a fight. So we're looking at recounts and litigation, many, many lawyers fighting this out in courts. It might be a while because lawyers charge by the hour. But it could be literally weeks; it could even be a number of months before we find out in who is in the Oval Office.

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Whatever the Trump legal team is able to come up with, I believe it's unlikely to make a difference. We all know there is what you can find by way of evidence and then there's what you can prove in court. And I'm not sure the country or the courts have the stomach for a long, legal fight. Many, even on the right, seem ready to throw in the towel and watch yet another episode of whatever is next on T.V. If the Trump team is able to win in the courts, then our country is going to face more rioting, I think, political violence on a level we have not seen, even though we've seen a lot. It's troubled times we're living in. The character of a country's leadership is one indication of God's favor or God's disfavor.

Clearly, God has chosen to remove his hand of blessing in the leadership that we have and the leadership that may well come into office. Significantly, this is something, beloved, we should not miss in all of this: The voters have voted for God's judgment in the leaders that they have chosen and elected. Stanford University Professor Victor Davis Hansen once described President Trump as "Chemotherapy for a dying nation. Yes, chemotherapy is a toxic poison, but," said Hansen, "it is aimed at killing the cancer before it kills the patient."

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Americans are okay with that because Trump doesn't come across to them as presidential enough. They know what presidential is supposed to look like from watching *The West Wing* and *House of Cards* and other political dramas on T.V., and they think that Biden-Harris ticket is a better typecasting for the presidency. The mark of God's kindness in all of this may prove that, the, there is a political gridlock that is caused by the GOP majority in the US Senate and that provides a substantial check on leftist power. It retards the progress of the progressive agenda somewhat. Left will always find a way around it. But this restraint could be another sign of the Lord's kindness to ease our descent, even if just a little bit, for a little bit of time.

As Christians, we are the salt of the earth, which means that we serve our communities well, we serve our state well, our nation well by taking our Christian world view out of the church and into the world, to the ballot box, voting as Christians, in conversations and influencing our neighbors, our coworkers, friends, family, influencing them all toward good and godly ends.

Jeremiah told this to his nation when they were under God's judgment, Jeremiah 29:7, he said, "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare, you will find your welfare." We, too, need to seek the welfare of our nation, our state, our county, our city by praying, praying specifically, by working, by voting, by encouraging, by influencing. But folks, the writing is on the wall. The message is the same one that was delivered to King Belshazzar's court. "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and UPHARSIN. [...] MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL - you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting."

Here in the beautiful state of colorful Colorado, a majority voted in favor of saving grey wolves. And sadly, an even larger majority voted not to save human babies. Colorado is a safe space for wolves and dangerous place for the most helpless, most vulnerable of our citizens. A rapacious wolf is preferred over a baby. Can God bless our state? Can God bless our nation when such wickedness prevails?

When the majority of the state and the nation, the population votes to protect the right of its citizens to kill children in the womb? Child sacrifice rites of Molech worship are starting to look tame in comparison to this. As we no longer use technology to save human life, but to take it from the weak and the vulnerable. All of this killing is in pursuit of the lie of modern sexual liberation. Throwing off sexual restraint has always been a feature of false religion. No different now.

Sexual perversion ritualized in ancient pagan idolatry is today a protected form of individual self-expression. It's protected, as we read in Psalm 94, it's protected by law. The sin staining our nation, all of that is registered as guilt before God. God does not miss one soul-destroying guilt. All of it is revealed in the outward evidence of shame upon shame upon shame.

To cover over that persistent gnawing sense of shame and guilt, drug use has risen to epidemic levels. It's rising so high that it's impossible to deal with it all, so they decriminalize, it's what Senator Patrick Moynihan, the late Senator from New York,

called, "defining deviancy down." When transgression becomes so thorough and so widespread, it overwhelms the court system and overwhelms the jails and overwhelms any sense of being able to pull things back. So they have to define deviancy down. Let the convicts out.

Dulling the conscience with chemicals, it does nothing to deal with the underlying sin and the destruction of lives. Families and children continues unabated as covetous hearts devour more and more, but are never ever satisfied. The right to keep pursuing sexual immorality, the right to inebriate one's mind with drugs and alcohol, these are some of the last rights of individual liberty our citizens seem willing to protect.

Lost amid the noise about the presidency, four more states legalized marijuana for recreational use. CNN's business section Friday was almost gleeful in its report. It says, quote, "Plenty of uncertainty remains with the 2020 Election, but one thing is clear, recreational cannabis had a big night at the ballot box." That makes 15 states that use marijuana for recreation, thirty-seven of fifty states that use it for medication. Oregon has

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gone completely mental, decriminalizing the possession of hard drugs for personal use; drugs like cocaine, heroin, oxycodone, methamphetamines. You might want to take that off your vacation plans, going to Oregon. So sad.

All of this has stymied law enforcement as it tries in vain to manage this loss of public sanity. The citizens that they've sworn to serve and protect have just gone stark crazy. Greeley Chief of Police, Mark Jones, posted on Facebook Friday, trying to help the public understand what's behind the recent rise in violent incidents in Greeley, and he wrote this, quote, "The wearing of masks due to COVID, the wearing of masks has emboldened law breakers as they have less fear of identification during and after their crimes. COVID, along with, politic, America's political unrest, has placed a tremendous amount of stress on everyone. People simply lose their mind over a simple contact with the police. There's been an increase in the use of alcohol and drugs since COVID began, as people try to cope with their newfound problems. The substance, abutes, abuse contributes to individual's lack of self-control and their inability to control anger and other emotions."

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Chief Jones went on to describe the struggle, to police the consequences, of today's leftist politics and policies. He says this, quote, "There is and continues to be a push from the state," from the state, "not to incarcerate people for drug convictions. A number of other crimes that drug users are involved in leads to more serious, violent, and nonviolent crimes. As a society we have emboldened the criminal with all the defunding the police talk, reduction in sentences, not revoking parolees, and decriminalizing or greatly reducing the levels of many crimes. All this plays a powerful role in criminal behavior and what seems to be an increased boldness and aggression toward police and victims of crimes." End quote.

Tonight, we're gonna pray specifically for Chief Mark Jones and the Greeley PD and the Weld County Sheriff's Office. We're going to pray for these people. When people are willing to forfeit the right of free speech, interviews on college campuses all over the county are showing that, that young people are very willing to give up free speech, if free speech means something that might make people feel uncomfortable. Well, let's censor it. They have no idea what they're saying.

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If they're willing to forfeit the right of free assembly, then they are willing to put up with criminality and transgressive behavior, whether it means more lockdowns, which is the destruction of small business, the erasure of the middle class. Whether it's wearing masks in perpetuity, an increase in drug addiction, rioting in the streets, they will vote for whoever lets them sin with impunity. Just keep the sex, drugs and entertainment flowing freely. Don't shut off my connection to the Internet.

A crowd of protesters marched in Denver last week, this election week, with a sign that said, quote, "Death to fascism and the liberalism that enables it." And as they walked, they chanted a slogan to clarify their message, "No borders, no walls, no USA at all." That used to be called treason. Today, calls to end the United States are not only accepted, but they are applauded. And you might think to yourself, rightly, Aren't the liberal ideas that helped to build the United States what helps to give these people, even these people the freedom to march in the first place? So why do they seem so willing, especially young, among the younger generations, why are they so willing to defund it, deconstruct it, burn it all down and throw it all away?

People have chosen to believe the lie that, godless socialism, removes the burden of personal responsibility. The collective pays the bills, while the lazy man loafs around doing the bare minimum to get by then enjoys numbing his mind with distraction and deviancy. They seem to think socialism gives us the most bang for the buck: free education, free healthcare, job security, guaranteed wage. Of course you understand, free, means you pay for it. But that's a cost they're willing to pay.

I wrote to a geo-political expert friend of mind asking for his take on the deconstruction of American and the push to replace the current order with socialism. He lives in Europe, and he is seeing, by the way, wrote me this morning said he's seeing an absolute elation in Europe of what's going on here as this country moves towards globalism. This is what he said when I wrote to him. He said, "The current world order, based on nationalism, capitalism, democracy, and individual freedom, was established by the United States after the end of the second World War.

"The American world order, effectively based on the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution, has created unbelievable wealth, enabled unparalleled technological progress, and lifted hundreds of millions of people around the world out of poverty.

Capitalism, however, must be moderated by the restraints of a Christian worldview for it to work. The West's wholesale abandonment of the Judeo-Christian moral system, the Ten Commandments, has resulted in extreme corruption and decadence, that is the moral decay of a society due to material wealth."

End quote.

My friend's views are well-substantiated and broadly supported by many other conservative thinkers. And really, what we're seeing in our decline in the nation is the decline that all empires go through. They have a period of taking over, then building, then growing, then advancing, and then ruling and dominating and spreading out and influencing, but then all the wealth that comes in, because of all that, it allows intellectualists to sit in universities, drinking their wine and coming up with theories to deconstruct what they have inherited. And so moral decay takes over in the nation and the nation

starts to decline, and we've been on the decline for quite some time now. Eventually, empires fall from within.

I'm currently reading Rod Dreher's book called, *Live Not By Lies*, subtitled, *A Manual for Christian Dissidents*. That's what we are in this world, Christian dissidents. We, we do not agree with what's going on in the world, and it's actually going to become quite cool and trendy to be where we are. We're going to be standing up against the, the cultural mainstream. So, we're on the right side of history, right? But he wrote this in the chapter, *How to See Totalitarianism Coming*. Rod Dreher outlines a number of signs of pre-totalitarian culture, which happens to describe our culture right now. I'm just going to give you a few of these signs, not all of them. But he points out, firstly, the loneliness and social atomization of the younger generations.

"Loneliness, social atomization, isolation of people, separated, pulled apart, the grandparents and the parents of Generation Z and the Millennials, they abandoned their families in pursuit of material wealth and comfort. The Socialism is attractive to this younger generation, who long for closeness, long to be a part of

something because their families have completely destructed. So it's attractive as if," writes Dreher, "they aspire to a politics that can replace the community that they wish they had."

Dreher points, also, to the loss of faith in hierarchies and institutions. That's what we're hearing everywhere, right? Systemic evil in all of our institutions. It's been the project of post-modernism, which has sown destructive seeds of what James Lindsay and Helen Pluckrose refer to as cynical theories. Cynical theories, these are, this is activist scholarship that is happening at the college and university level and has been for decades is now infiltrated all of our school systems. Cynical theories, post-colonial theory, social justice, critical theory, intersectionality, feminist theories, this is activist scholarship in the colleges and universities that has bred and groomed several generations of political leftist activists.

Dreher continues his outline of pre-totalitarian tendencies. He speaks about the desire to transgress and destroy is a mark of a pre-totalitarian culture. We've seen all that in our major, in

many of our American cities. He points out, also, the use of propaganda and the willingness to believe useful lies; several examples of this, we heard throughout the past years. They are useful, but false narratives about Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd; can't even speak the truth about those things without being pilloried, de-platformed, and censored. That's what a number of people have found as they've tried to speak to these issues and draw out the truth about the deaths of these people. Which any death is tragic, but let's talk about the truth behind these things.

Media fixation on destroying President Trump, Russian collusion, impeachment charges, character assassination of Supreme Court, Supreme Court nominees; true or false, it doesn't even matter, journal, journalism has been serving the left. Nikole Hannah-Jones was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the 1619 Project, have you heard of this? 1619 Project, that America's founding date is actually not 1776, but 1619 when the first slaves hit the shores of America, and it's been slavery that has marked this nation's history.

It's basically sins, trying to show the prevalence, the universality of the sin of racism. It's a debunked thesis, actually, publicly, embarrassingly debunked, but the useful lie means that she gets to keep the prize. Rod Dreher cites a Zach Goldberg study, which showed that, "Over," quote, "Over a nine-year period, the rate of news stories using progressive jargon associated with leftwing critical theory and social justice concepts, shot into the stratosphere. That framed news and events according to what was, until very recently, a radical ideology confined to leftwing intellectual elites." What that is saying, basically, what you need to understand is that America has been, for decades, groomed to accept what we're seeing today.

That's probably enough, at this point, to give you a sense of what has happened to our country. Well, where's it all heading? I'm no prophet, but many cultural observers, especially those who study totalitarian regimes of the recent past, it looks like we're heading into a period of totalitarian governance. By totalitarian governance, we're not talking here, about a hard totalitarianism like the former Soviet Union. What's coming is referred to as a soft totalitarianism. That's a, that's a

euphemism, it's pretty misleading, but it's probably true; more like a modern hybrid of communism-capitalism that we see practiced in China. And it may appear benign on the surface, but it's actually malignant and quite aggressive.

What's coming in the near future will be less like George Orwell's dystopian novel, 1984, the hard totalitarianism of the jack boot. As Orwell put it, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face forever." It doesn't seem likely that that will be the outcome soon, except for the very worst of dissident factions that don't line up with the narrative. But keep on speaking the truth in love, keep assembling together in obedience to Christ, they might get the boot in the face.

But for most, what is coming will look more like the soft totalitarianism that is portrayed in another twentieth century prophet, Aldous Huxley, his novel, *Brave New World*. The government is still in complete and total control. It is a totalitarian government, but it does so by keeping people distracted with entertainment, happy with sexual immorality,

subdued with drugs, and, adiquat, adequately productive with state-sponsored work.

Think of it this way, if the government were to come to you, come to your home, knock on your door, and ask you, Would you like to install this device in your home that will monitor your conversations, have a peek at what you're doing every day, monitor all your movements, track all your purchases so that it can build algorithms to predict your behavior? How many of you would sign up for that? But when Google, Amazon, Apple, or any number of these big, friendly tech corporations comes to sell you nifty products that do the same thing, like this little device. In fact, wait a minute, they're probably listening right now, aren't they? Most people say, Hey sign me up for that! I'll buy another one. In fact, I want a newer model. And we think these godless corporations are our friends?

This is happening in China. The Chinese Communist Party has improved that old hardline totalitarianism by applying technology to it. Totalitarianism on steroids. They've implemented a social credit system, where daily activities of

citizens are tracked, recorded, and analyzed through the grid of, chine the kine, Chinese Communist Party ideals. So what you sell, what you buy, what you say and to whom you say it, whom you associate with, your social credit score goes up or down based on its agreement or disagreement with the party. It's updated in real time.

Artificial intelligence uses, uses intelligent algorithms to predict your behavior. You can be guilty of thought crime. But you won't be arrested and thrown into jail, that's costly. Your social credit score will go down, which limits your options, limits your buying options, your selling options, your business options and encourages party adherence by a higher social credit score. Download some of Xi Jinping's state addresses, social credit score goes up, attend a political rally for the communist party, social credit score goes up.

Not too difficult to see how this can be used to enforce virus contact tracing, social distancing. Bill Gates wonderful plan for your life to vaccinate everybody in the world. And in the not-too-distant future, buying and selling for those who bear a

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very special mark, the ultimate mark of social credit, implanted as a chip in your skin. The technology's already there.

Folks, as the devil said to Jesus, "All these I will give you if you just fall down and worship me." That's the future, folks. That's where we're heading, not just because the younger generations are voting in this direction and captivated by leftist thinking and eager to burn down national interests and replace them with global interests. It is the future because the Bible says so: Ezekiel, the Thessalonian Epistles, Revelation. The future is happening right now, and it is exciting to be living in these days.

This globalist impulse is being given a hard push by wealthy supranational, like above nations elites, technocrats. Look up men, names like George Soros, Klaus Schwab, these unelected influencers have a lot of money, more money than they can spend in a thousand lifetimes. They have power because of the money. They have influence. They control the means. They've taken over the means of cultural production a long time ago, the Hollywood, the media, entertainment, news. There is no going back to what

once was. So what do gazillionaires want that they don't already own? What do gazillionaires want that they don't already have? The world and the power to create. These wealthy elites are building a new Tower of Babel. They're trying to reproduce Babylon in a metaphorical way of speaking. They're recreating the world in their own image.

And I just want to tell you, folks, we are not afraid or dismayed about these developments. God has told us all along in Scripture that this is coming. This Book is two thousand years old, when John put down his pen. It's no surprise. We just have the privilege of getting a front seat to what's happening, to being there, to being the Church of Jesus Christ. God's Word predicts this exact state of affairs. And whether it's now or years from now, we don't know, but this, all this leads to Anti-Christ's reign. He wants to perch himself atop a one-world government with himself being worshiped as god and the false prophets serving his purposes. The more I hear Pope Francis talk, the more I feel like, with the Reformers, he could fit the bill. This state of affairs is a prelude to something even greater, even more radially destructive and devastating to the world order; more devastating than the Anti-Christ and Beast

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religion, this state of affairs leads to a radically different world order, which is called The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one then, I want to focus on now.

This is the second part of the message for today and I want you to go ahead and exhale slowly. And I want you to inhale and do that a couple of times. Clear your head and settle your heart because this is the good news. Ready for it? Our God reigns in Jesus Christ! Turn in your Bibles, if you will, to the first chapter of Hebrews. This is where we're going to spend the remaining time we have, in this magnificent chapter about the superiority of Jesus Christ.

This is the prescription for all Christians who are now living in this time. Here it is, fix your eyes on Jesus. That's the bottom line. Fix your eyes on Jesus. He's written eleven chapters expositing the superiority of Christ in the New, comement, Covenant, when the writer to the Hebrews applied those truths to his readers in this way. He said, "Let us lay aside," in chapter 12, "Let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race

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that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Let's follow him. Let's look to him. The writer tells us why we should fix our eyes on Jesus in the very next verse, it said, “So that you may not grow weary and fainthearted.” Any of you feeling weary? Any of you feeling fainthearted? Fix your eyes on Jesus. We're to consider how Jesus endured hostility from sinners against himself and know that we, too, will endure hostility from sinners against ourselves, but you've got to know that is all a part of the plan. We live in some good days for the church.

These Hebrews, like us, but these Hebrews desperately needed this reminder, along with strong encouragement and some stark warnings, as well. They're professing Christians, many of them true believers, but their church, like the church in our country, their church was being winnowed. It was being separated. It was being divided to tell who the true and the

false are. Social and political pressure from their own countrymen, a coming destruction by the Roman general, Titus Vespasian; all that was winnowing the church.

All that pressure was winnowing the church. True Christians stood firm. They faced the reprisals, they accepted the consequences, some lost property, some were arrested, some were taken to prison, many of them were publicly exposed to reproach and affliction. Others in the midst of that forsook the fellowship. They stopped meeting. They returned to their former Judaism. They preferred safety and security through social compromise, and they preferred that over suffering.

Hebrews was written, delivered around 67 or 68 AD. Very shortly after that, you know your history, AD 70 Jerusalem fell to Titus Vespasian. It's a clear judgment of God on Jerusalem, on the people of Israel, for rejecting its Messiah. And beloved, I don't want you to miss the connection here. That the original readers of this Epistle to the Hebrews, they, too, were watching the crumbling of their society and their culture, their way of life. They were lamenting all they thought they held onto, all

that they thought kept them safe, secure. They were suffering under the just judgment of God for turning their backs on the truth, just like our nation is. So it's an apt place for us to spend time this morning. A place to refocus our perspective and to give us reasons to fix our eyes on Jesus.

I've got six reasons for you from this first chapter of Hebrews, six reasons for you to fix your eyes on Jesus. Here's where you can start taking notes. All that other stuff was just an introductory. It's stuff that's gonna, honestly, that's just news. It's going to change tomorrow. So don't write any, hope you, hope you weren't writing any of that down. If you were, I'm sorry your hand's sore, but start writing now. Six reasons to focus your eyes, to fix your eyes on Jesus Christ.

Number one, first reason, fix your eyes on Jesus, number one: Because He is God's Final Word of Revelation. He is God's Final Word of Revelation. You don't need to listen to anything else, turn on any other voice because Jesus is God's final word of revelation. As we track the author's argument throughout this epistle, he proves the superiority of Christ over everything

that these professing Hebrew Christians might consider important; every source of news, every source of perspective they have elevated over Christ.

The writer to the Hebrews says, listen, Moses, Aaron, the Jewish way life, all of that, all of that is not superior to Christ. Listen to him. Most of this first chapter, all of the second chapter is providing Christ's superiority over the angels. But this opening argument, it establishes the basis of authority, which is God in his revealed Word, put simply Christ is superior to all the prophets because he's God's final word of revelation. Look at verses 1 and 2. "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."

It, that, in one sentence, just summarized 1,500 years of prophetic revelation; God spoke to our Fathers by the prophets, he spoke long ago, he spoke it many times, in many ways, and his point here is to draw their attention to an emphatic set of contrasts. He contrasts God speaking long ago, he has spoken to

us, the writer says, "Now, in these last days." Last days, it's a statement with rich, rich prophetic significance to it. We're living in the same last days, in contrast to our fathers, God has now spoken to us, he says, this first-century generation; he's spoken to us, the church. In contrast to using, many ways, many messengers, God has chosen one. He has isolated his revelation. He is speaking exclusively through one spokesman, by his Son.

All the verbs there in verse 2: spoke, anointed, created; all those verbs are aorist indicative verbs. He intends by those, by that verb tense to convey a full stop nature of total perfection, of final completion in the revelation of Jesus the Son. God appointing Jesus Christ to be the heir of all things that is complete and final. God creating the world through him that, too, is complete and final. Here, God revealing himself to mankind, complete and final, as well. Complete and final revelation in the Son, Jesus Christ.

What had been progressive in nature in revelation that's come to an end. All revelation from God is culminated in the person

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and the work of Jesus Christ, nothing more to be said to finish God's redemption, nothing more to reveal to bring his purposes for this world to its final end. In him, God has spoken. It's complete.

And there are so many implications and applications of this point. The time we have only allows me to stick to our purpose for this morning. Here's the point: Fix your eyes on Jesus because he's God's final word of revelation. If you keep reading and studying the completed text of Scripture, which became complete when John put down his pen in Revelation 22, you're not missing anything needful. You've got it all. You have everything you need in this Book. You have everything you need to keep you safe and secure; everything you need to keep you content and grateful.

You have everything you need to sustain you, to satisfy your soul, to cause you to rejoice and be glad no matter what anything looks like out there. Listen, in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Not in the pollsters, who, again, were abysmally wrong, not in the pundits, not in the

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daily diet of news media or talk radio. It's in Christ, not in Netflix. It's in Christ, not the Disney Channel. It's in Christ that there is fullness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forever more. Why look anywhere else?

So beloved, give yourselves to mining the gift of God's Word so you can see and savor the Lord Jesus Christ, so you can know God, your eternal reward, so you can know him as Father, enjoy the purposes of his being and glorify God and enjoy him forever. Fix your eyes on Jesus because he is God's final word of revelation. In Christ, God has spoken the only words worth hearing.

Second reason to fix your eyes on Jesus, number two: Because he is the creator, the God who sustains. Fix your eyes on Jesus because he is the creator, the God who sustains. Look at verse 2 again, looking at the first part of verse 3, as well. God "has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

Look at the order in verse 2, the Son of God was “appointed heir of all things” and then he adds, it’s through the Son that God created the world. That tells us that the creation has a, *telos*, that is to say, it has an ultimate object, it has a purpose, it has an end in mind. God is the one who brings it to its end. To sum up all things in Christ, Christ is the beginning, the Creator, and he is at the end as God, “puts everything in subjection,” to, “under his feet,” Hebrews 2:8. In other words, prior to the creation of all things, the Son has been appointed, we might say it more accurately, he has been eternally appointed as a function of his Sonship, appointed to be the heir of all things. And then, God created all things through the heir of all things.

So the end was determined before anything was spoken into existence. All things, literally, it says, “Through whom also he,” made, “created the ages.” That’s the word, *aionos*. In its singular form, *aion*, refers to a lifetime, refers to an era, an epoch. In some constructions, that word can refer to eternity, like “unto the *aionos*,” the ages. It means forever. Here in its plural form, *aionos*, refers to the entire time-space creation.

As Paul says in Colossians 1:16, “the heavens and the earth,” things, “visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.” The term, *aionos*, is used to comprehend the entirety of the created order. It leaves no created thing out of it. It comprehends every era of history, every turn of the calendar, every presidential election, every rise and fall in power: Everything.

This One, God appointed as the beginning and the end, the creation and the *telos* of creation. This One, shares in deity, verse 3. First, he’s the radiance of the glory of God. If God is the source, the invisible essence, Christ is the light who makes that invisible glory known to the creatures who are able to see and comprehend it. He is the effulgence. He is the radiant splendor of the unseen God. Paul said, “He’s the image of the invisible God.” John said it this way, “No one has ever seen God;” but he, “the only God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.” So he is the radiance of the glory of God.

Second, he is the exact imprint of his nature. That word, *exact imprint*, refers to an engraving tool, literally. But it's used figuratively to mean an exact or an authentic representation; exact representation of God is God. He represents God's nature. That word is, *hypostasis*, his substance, his *ousia*, his essence. The Son and the Father share in the exact same ontology, which is deity.

Thirdly, he upholds the universe or literally, he bears up all things by the word of his power. How can he do that? Only if he has superlative power, creative power, divine power. He has omnipotence, omnipotence possessed by virtue of the first two points that he is God. So, folks, this is why you should fix your eyes on Jesus. Because he's the Creator. He is the God who sustains. He is all powerful. He doesn't share his power. He doesn't share his glory. He's not concerned by power dynamics here on terra firma, in any country at any time. He's unconcerned. An elected group of wealthy elitists, a corrupt band of oligarchs, drunk with their money, intoxicated with their power, thinking they can dismantle this world and create a new world, their own Tower of Babel. People like them believe

they can be like God, that they can ascend to his level. They actually believe that, to be their own gods.

Listen, that's the language of the beast. That's the language of Anti-Christ, Isaiah 14, to say in their hearts, hearts "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly," whether that's Davos, Switzerland, or wherever, Washington D.C. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Tiny little human beings, they cannot hold a tiny little candle up against the radiance of Christ's divine glory, his divine power. One puff on their little, tiny candle will snuff out their little, tiny light. And *this little light of mine* will not be shining any longer. It will be banished to eternal darkness while Christ moves forward with God's foreordained program. End of story.

The more you fix your eyes on Jesus, the less you're gonna be concerned about the forces that are out there aligning, and scheming, and plotting, and planning; executing silly little rebellions against God and his anointed King. All their

machinations will end with their death. So fix your eyes on Jesus because he's God's final word. He's the Creator and Sustainer.

Third reason to fix your eyes on Jesus, number three, is because: He's your savior, the perfect redeemer. Fix your eyes on Jesus because he is your savior, he's your perfect redeemer. The writer needed to establish the authority, the Word of God, that he's the final revelation. He needed to establish the fact that Christ is fully God and fully man here, but here we see, after establishing the transcendent power and the glory of Jesus, the author now shows us Christ's eminence, his kind condescension to come from heaven and to save us from our sins.

It says there, "After making purification for sins," verse 3, "he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs." At this point, I've got to stop and give you a bit of background. Some scholars believe here the community of Hebrew Christians that were reading this letter, they were influenced by some Jewish separatist group.

The Dead Sea Scrolls had this community of Essenes, who lived there, and they had some kind of strange views, millenarian views and all the rest. And these Christians here could have been connected to one of the groups and may be confused by an incomplete theology about Christ, at least some of them. And one author says, quote, "Members of this Dead Sea sect were awaiting the advent of two Messianic figures, of whom the kingly would be subordinate to the priestly, but both of whom would be subordinate to the supreme figure of the archangel, Michael." Jehovah's Witnesses aren't anything new, are they? But they also looked for another prophet, a second Moses to fulfill Deuteronomy 18:18, who would, who would resume the whole sacrificial system prescribed in Mosaic Law.

First Century Jews, even the sincere ones like Christ's disciples, they failed to discern, at least at first, they failed to discern that all those figures, prophet, priest, king; all rolled into one. They needed to see how their Messiah, how Jesus is superior to all, even the highest-ranking angel, Michael the Archangel. Beloved, we need to see that too. We need to see that he is superior to all. We need to see that he is our

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prophet, priest, and king. And we need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. All those roles, prophet, priest, and king, fulfilled in one person, one human, with a human nature and divine nature put into one person. The majesty, the glory of this person would be demonstrated not in a, some spectacular act of exultation that we would expect, the way we would expect a great person doing great deeds. His honor, his glory would be demonstrated in his great humiliation.

Notice it's not after conquering the world that God exalts him to his right hand, it's before that. He exalted Christ after he made purification for sins, after he humbled himself becoming obedient, even to the point of death, death on a cross. That's when he exalted him. At the moment when it looked like his greatest failure to the world, Paul illustrates in Philippians 2, God exalts the humble. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

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Jesus sat down. No High Priest entering into the Holy of Holies ever sat down, never. They entered in there and because lingering in there and accidentally touching something that would result in their death; so they got in, got out. They did their work, and they did not linger. Christ, his atoning work is finished. He passed through the veil. He entered into the Holy of Holies and he sat down. The work to secure our redemption was accomplished. Sin paid in full by his perfect death, his obedience to death on the cross. That is why, all hail the power of Jesus' name, because he is our perfect redeemer.

Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Ronald Reagan, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Charlemagne, Constantine the Great, Nebuchadnezzar, whoever, those names do not qualify to be the name above all names. Praise God! Only the suffering servant qualifies because he poured out his soul to death and he was numbered with the transgressors.

Fix your eyes on Jesus, beloved, because he's your Savior. He's your perfect Redeemer. He lives. He's exalted to the Father's right hand and from that position, he rules and reigns over all

things right now. He's watching over you. He's watching over all of you. If he died for you, he's watching over you. He intercedes for you. Your salvation is safe and secure. Your religious freedom is not ultimately in jeopardy at all. Your freedom to worship is still fully intact and you may bow down. You may worship him as you please and you should.

Fourth reason to fix your eyes on Jesus, fourth, because: He is the Son of God and Son of Man. Fix your eyes on Jesus because he is Son of God and Son of Man. Starting in verse 4, He has "become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'?" Answer: none. Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?" Did he say that to any angel? No! But, "again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angles worship him.'"

His superior, his superior nature, his superiority to the angels, the more excellent name he's inherited is established in his unique one and only relationship to the Father, and his

unique one and only relationship to humanity. In his divine Sonship, his status as the Son of God is eternal. He is one person among the three of the Triune God. He shares in all attributes of deity and all prerogatives of deity. He is Son of God. In his human Sonship as the Christ of God, his status as the Son of man signals his place in humanity as the firstborn, as the preeminent one. He is the representative head of a new humanity no longer in Adam, now in Christ.

And so along with the holy elect angels, we bow down. We fall on our faces to the ground in joyful worship of Christ. We're not fretting about elections, conceding elections, recounts, litigation, changing politics in a fallen world. Beloved, we have our King and he is appointed by the perfect, all-wise, all-powerful God. He is not elected by a mob of fallen human beings. He is God's final word. He's the creator and sustainer. He is your savior, your perfect redeemer. He is the Son of God and Son of Man. And he is appointed, not elected.

Fifth reason to fix your eyes on Jesus, number five because: He's eternal, the Eternal Immutable King. He is the eternal

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immutable, if you prefer the word unchanging, he is the eternal, unchanging King. Have you ever imagined a world without elections in every four years, not to mention the mid-term elections? I'm not advocating we do away with the elections; who wants to be stuck with whoever it is sitting in the White House at any given point for the rest of your life?

There is only one person I want ruling perpetually in any place, whether it's Washington D.C. or Moscow, or Beijing, or London. But I want him to take the throne from Jerusalem. I want him to rule there and to bring us into his eternal kingdom. Look at verse 7, "Of the angels he says, 'He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.' But of the Son He says," they're just equal with the elements; God uses the wind, God uses the fire, God uses the angels; they're just part of the created order; they're servants to do God's will. "But of the Son he says," verse 8, "'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.'"

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Because he shares all the attributes of God, because he shares the substance of deity, Christ is the only one who is ontologically and morally qualified for God's throne. He doesn't change his positions like some politicians we see when they put their finger into the political wind and suddenly, they're someone else. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is as motivated as God is to see righteousness reign, to see wickedness punished, and banished from the earth. And he's the only one capable of doing so, of enforcing righteousness, of executing perfect justice.

Again, no votes put him in that seat of power. He doesn't need to, to sway a population. He's absolutely unconcerned who agrees with him or not. There's one who agrees with him, God the Father. That's the only one that matters. This is declaration of God, who said this in Psalm 2 verse 6, "As for me," God says, "I have set my King in Zion, my holy hill." I've already made my decision. I've cast my vote: Jesus. He testifies to that decree of anointing and this is what he recalls. He says, "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall

break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

This Anointed One, that's what the title Christ means, by the way, anointed one. He's eternal, he's unchanging, even the universe that he created cannot claim that. Take a look at verses 10-12, in the immutability of Christ. This is quoted verbatim, by the way, from Psalm 102, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth, in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;" They're not eternal, though. Contrary to Darwinian evolution, atoms do not remain forever. "they will perish,' verse 11, "but you remain; they will wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they'll be changed. But you," ah, you, "are the same, and your years will have no end."

One day there will be no more elections. There will be no more need for the peaceful transfer of power, which is what our system was wisely established to do. We don't have violence and unrest, I mean set this year aside, but historically, don't have violence and unrest in the streets every time there is a change

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in power. That's a wise thing our founding fathers gave us; gift of democratic elections.

But if people chose to abandon the good system that they've inherited, there's no need to be anxious or afraid of those who will arrogantly take advantage of the weak, those who will lie, make use of useful lies, those who prosecute, and persecute, and even murder the innocent, because our King loves righteousness. Our King hates wickedness and he is God, and he sees it wherever it is, and he will persecute justice to the nth degree to satisfy his Father's righteousness. "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

It's in the spirit of that word of comfort for all who take refuge in him that we come to a sixth and final reason from this text to fix your eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus, number six because: He is the returning, conquering King. Fix your eyes on Jesus because, he is the returning, conquering King. Now that

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is only good news if you are in Christ. A returning, conquering God-King coming back to the earth, that is not good news, if you're not in Christ. "To which of the angels has he ever said, verse 13, "'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool at your feet?' Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"

That question is rhetorical. The answer is a resounding Yes, that's what they're for. Holy angels are indeed, "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." Salvation from what exactly? From the wrath of God; from the wrath of the Lamb; from his impartial justice by which he will execute his righteousness. Look, this is what really, this is when it really counts to be on the, quote, unquote, "right side of history;" here, as the ruler of history, as the victor who will most certainly be the one, the last one standing in the end.

God has the only right to tell us history and no one can oppose his telling of the tale. No one can rewrite it. He's written it

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in the Book. To be written into his Book, on the winning side of that history, this is where identity matters. You'd better get this identity right. God does play identity politics. And for those whose identity is found in his beloved Son, you know what? They are in. They are in, end of story. No questions asked. Those who are not identified with Christ Jesus the Lord, they're out. And by out, I mean they're out for eternity. There is no redemption after death. Turn over to 2 Thessalonians, just a couple books back.

2 Thessalonians chapter, chapter 1, I was gonna start in verse 5, but let's back up, verse 3, "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing." That, that is Grace Church, beloved, right there. That is us. "Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring."

Folks, that's coming to us. But this, verse 5, these persecutions, afflictions we endure, verse 5, "This is evidence

of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed because our testimony to you was believed.”

That’s when it’s important to be found in Christ, to have all of your identity wrapped up in him, to not be a part of any faction in this world, any movement in this world, to be a part of that assembly. We are among those who long for this day. Not simply for the judgment and the vengeance of God, which we do pray for, because we, not because we hate people, but because we love justice. We love God’s righteousness. But of even superlative, of even greater joy for us is to see our Lord Jesus Christ no longer blasphemed, no longer relegated to the sidelines, but to

be front and center and to be glorified to see him in his majesty so that we can admire him and worship him and fall down and praise him.

One more major point, let's wrap this up. What's the situation? The situation is that things are bad and they're getting worse, but God has told us this gonna, this is all gonna happen. That's not to be feared, not to be feared by Christians, anyway. It's all part of the plan. That's the situation. What's our prescription? The prescription for us is what's it's always been: Fix our eyes on Jesus. Study his perfections. Study his glory. Follow him to worship the, the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, to worship him in Spirit and in truth, to see him as Father, to pray to him, to see him as our perfect and eternal reward.

Finally, an application. Back in Hebrews, after this glorious perfect opening chapter, look at Hebrews 2:1. The writer says, "Therefore we must pay with much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away." I think that is exactly what we've been trying to do here at Grace Church. And that is

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exactly what we will continue to do by the grace of God. We'll keep on proclaiming God's Word. We'll keep on pointing everyone to Jesus Christ. We'll keep on getting the message of the Gospel out to as many people as the Lord allows us to do.

What I've just taught here this morning, it's, it's not, it's, it's not exceptional. It's just normal Gospel truth. But in private discussions with friends, family coworkers, neighbors, whether our discussions and conversations are private or in the public conversations that we have in our Red Team and Green Team outreaches, we sadly find that in many pulpits in churches the message of Christ, like what I've just preached, just basic Gospel truth is rather foreign to them even among those who still profess to be Christians.

So here at Grace Church, we want to lift this banner of Christ and his saving Gospel high. We want to shine that light brightly because Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." In context, he's speaking about his crucifixion, the way he would atone for the sins of people,

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of being lifted up, put on that cross. We take that same principle, and we lift high the message of Christ crucified.

After the last election 2016, that post-elects, election message that I preached, I encouraged us all to, to pray, and to stabilize, and to build. The election of President Trump was evidence of the grace of God to us, the church, as God granted the true churches of Jesus Christ a, a brief reprieve to allow us to kinda catch our breath, get our bearings, and prepare for the future. He allowed us a time, four years, to pray and to stabilize and to build. And in the kindness of God, he granted us the grace to do exactly that, to pray, to stabilize, and to build. We could pray that the courts prevail, and righteousness prevails and if the votes did come in, that President Trump is president for another four years, because that's actually a barrier of protection for the church. We can pray for that whether he gives it or not.

We look back on the last four years and see that we've been making hay while the sun's been shining. We've been retooling some things internally. We've been freeing up some funds, trying

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to be good stewards of the resources that God has directed our way. We've continued to keep the church open, preaching God's Word, proclaiming the Gospel. You have kept on coming. You've been attending faithfully. You've been giving very, very faithfully generously to the work of the ministry. Because of your gifts and efforts, many people have found us through the livestream, doing searches, online searches, social media. There, there's many people here still hungry for God's Word, hungry for fellowship of the saints, eager to learn and to learn to live like Christians in these changing and uncertain times because, honestly, this is unprecedented.

We have a lot of questions to ask and answer of the Lord. His Word gives us every answer. The world's never seen this level of modernism, progressivism, all advance the tools of information technology. So we all need to be prepared for suffering, suffer well, suffer righteously, to live obediently, to rejoice all the way through in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to keep the lighthouse lit for those who are weary pilgrims who need to find their way here.

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So the elders have been planning. They've actually decided and we're getting ready to execute on an opportunity to get this teaching on Christian radio. This coming week, Lord willing, I'll sign an agreement with KRKS to get us on 94.7 FM and 990 AM. And the point in doing that is to lift up the Word of God through preaching so that the faithful can hear it, find us, come near for shepherding. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. They follow me." If we speak the voice of the shepherd, the sheep will find him.

Your faithful giving, the wise stewardship of competent people, the skill and expertise of our members, these are all the gifts Christ has given to this church and it's the reason we can plan and execute and reach out like this to let people know we're here. That we're preaching.

We, too, are trying to be faithful. We're not one of those churches, you've seen it this morning, we're not one of those churches, where we're gonna have dancing bears and big spotlights and balloons going up and stuff like that. We're not gonna do that. The way people are gonna find us, I mean, it's

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been said, What you use to attract them, you need to use to hold them. That's the failure of the seeker movement. They tried to attract people with entertainment, and they had to hold them with entertainment, and the whole thing imploded. We want to attract people the right way, with the Word of God; plain, simple preaching of God's Word.

God has provided all the competencies we need to build out the website, edit sermons for broadcasting, handle calls, contacts and all the rest. It's just another way that we can seek and save the lost, help lost sheep find their way to a good church by exalting the voice of the Chief Shepherd. And when we get them in here, you know what they have to their advantage once they're here? You. They need you. They need your love. They need your counsel.

They need the wisdom that you have learned from walking in obedience to Christ. We've talked about it earlier, the atomization of the young, their social isolation. They are lonely. Beloved, we need to give them the only family that is going to last for all of eternity, which is the family of God,

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the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

So we preach Christ. We preach Christ crucified. He is a stumbling block and folly to many, many in this world, but to those who are the called, Christ is the power of God, Christ is the wisdom of God, and I hope that, that's enough for you to keep things in their proper perspective. We're going to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, and that's the plan. Okay? It hasn't really changed, but that's the plan going forward. If you needed that reminder, there you have it.

Let's pray. Our Father we thank you so much for this church. And we thank you for the Gospel of your Son, that salvation is found in him and him alone, that there is no other name under heaven by which men and women must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. It is our joy to proclaim him because he is all glorious. He is majestic and beautiful, and his salvation is perfect.

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In him, you have answered the most important question in the entire universe, how can a sinner be made right with a just and holy God and God still remain just? In Christ, you've answered that. Your justice has been executed by punishing him for our sin. And we're made right with you. And we're drawn into a reconciled relationship with you, now tenderly under your fatherly care because of Christ. We thank you so much, Father, for granting us this great salvation, this great Savior and drawing us into this great kingdom where there is no fear, no worry, no anxiety, nothing but a glorious future ahead for us.

We know, Father, that there may be some listening today right now who do not yet know you. And the things that were said at the beginning of this message have just created churn and anxiety, all the stomach acids are flowing because they don't know a saving relationship with you through Christ. So we pray, Father, that you would grant salvation, open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, take away hard, cold, stone-like hearts, replace them with a living heart. Regenerate them to new life, even now I pray, grant them salvation that we may draw them near and love them as you've loved us. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen!