

14b ACTS

Our study now in Acts chapter 3. Now we had sort of a long, slow ramp up to the main point here in our first session tonight, which is that there is a need for us to heed the sermon of the Apostle Peter here. He has taken the man who was lame and through the power of the Holy Spirit and the discernment that was given to him as an Apostle capable of doing miracles, he healed this man. He said, look at me.

And when the man looked at him, he reached down and raised his hand, raised the man up and he walked. He's leaping. He's dancing.

He's using this newfound ability to go and the first place he goes is inside the courts of the temple, in where Solomon's porch is, and he's hanging on with a death-like grip to each of the Apostles, Peter and John, and will not let them go. Now they are the prophets in this scenario. What does a prophet do? The prophet foretells.

He preaches the word in Old Testament Israel. They were the great evangelists, not in the sense of getting people saved, but in the sense of calling people back to God. That's what Peter is doing here.

He is functioning in the same way that an Old Testament prophet would function. So notice what he says here, again, beginning in verse 19 and 20, he says, Repent, therefore. This is our old friend, Metanoeo, change your mind.

They have these things they say about it's a woman's prerogative to change her mind. Well, all of us have the prerogative and we have the responsibility to change our mind. That's where it needs changing.

Change your mind and be turned around. Now what I find interesting about this is that change your mind here is Metanoeo, which is an active verb. We produce the action.

We change our own mind. But the second verb here is an aorist active imperative, and it means to turn yourself around, epistrepho, turn upon, turn yourself around. It's like we talk about turning on a dime, spinning on a dime, turning in a very short space.

These are both aorist active imperatives, and the difference between a present and an aorist is present tense has the idea keep on doing something that you're already doing. The aorist means start doing something new that you're not currently doing. You're not currently changing your mind.

You're not currently changing your direction. So change your mind and change your direction so that times of refreshing may come. Now, the times of refreshing are predicated on sins being blotted out.

What are we talking about here in terms of sins being blotted out? There is a great

psalm, Psalm 51, that talks all about the blotting out of sin. If you have your Bible and want to turn with me to Psalm 51, this language that Peter uses is drawn from Psalm 51. This psalm is dedicated to the choir director.

It is the Psalm of David. When Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone into Bathsheba, Nathan told the story about the rich man who had a big flock and the poor man that had one lamb. The rich man has a visitor come and decides he wants to have lamb for supper, and he goes and gets the poor man's lamb and kills it.

Be gracious to me, O God, according to your lovingkindness. According to the greatness of your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Now, was David a believer or an unbeliever when he was king of Israel and looked down from the rooftop and saw Bathsheba and committed all of these terrible sins? He was a believer and had been for years, had slain Goliath in the power of God, had declared the victory for the God of Israel.

But he has committed these sins, sins of adultery, terrible sins, murder. He says, Lord, be gracious to me according to your chesed, according to your lovingkindness. According to the greatness of your compassion, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you and you only I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified when you speak and blameless when you judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being and in the hidden part you will make me know wisdom. Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness. Let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins and once again blot out my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will be converted. Sinners will be converted to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation. Then my tongue will joyfully sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips that my mouth may declare your praise.

Now this is clearly a 1 John 1-9 type of prayer. It is confession of known sin by a believer

to God and he says he claims God's compassion. According to the greatness of your compassion, blot out my transgressions.

This is the exact language that Peter uses and he was probably even using the same vocabulary as it transfers into Aramaic from Hebrew. I suspect that the speech that he is giving here in Acts chapter 3, this sermon was probably delivered in Aramaic and was translated probably by Luke into Greek for our New Testament. Change your mind and turn yourself around so that your sins may be blotted out.

And there has been an abuse of 1 John 1-9. There are people who go so far in the direction of grace and they say, you know, I can basically do whatever I want. I'll just confess it afterward.

God will have to forgive me because he's faithful and just. And they have not read, I think they just memorized 1 John 1-9 and they didn't read the rest of that chapter. 1 John 1-7 says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Did you know that if you are not walking in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ does not cleanse you from all sin? Now, 1 John 1 is not talking about salvation because salvation doesn't depend on walking in the light. Salvation is an act of God in response to our faith. Ephesians 2-8-9, for by grace you have been saved through faith, didn't come from you.

It's not of yourself. It is a gift of God. Works has nothing to do with it.

Otherwise, people could boast. But in 1 John 1-7, it says, if we keep on walking in the light, since he keeps on being in the light, these are all present tenses, we keep on having fellowship, us with him and he with us and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, will keep on cleansing us from all sin. That is the basis for 1 John 1-9, walking in the light.

If we walk in darkness rather than light because our deeds are evil, but then we get scared of a judgment, we say, oh, God, I sinned, please forgive me. And then we say, well, I'm going to go commit this sin over here and then I'll just acknowledge it to God and it'll be wiped off the slate. No, it won't.

There are many conditions that can keep us from being forgiven. Men who abuse their wives, their prayers are not heard. If you pray for forgiveness, it's not going to be heard.

Failing to forgive others, bearing a grudge, refusing to bury the hatchet. If you walk around with a grievance in your heart against someone and you're holding something against them perpetually, day after day, you might as well forget about confessing your sins before God, because unless we forgive our brothers, we ourselves are not forgiven. It's a truth of Scripture.

So walking in the light means releasing those grudges, recognizing that sins that are committed that we think are against us are really against God. Do you think that Uriah, the Hittite, had a beef with David? Well, he would have if he'd lived long enough to have one. David had him put in the front of the army and pushed up against the enemy, and then the enemy, then his army withdrew and left him hanging out there to be slaughtered.

Which he was, and that was on David's orders. David told Joab, be sure that Uriah gets pushed to the front of battle and then leave him so that he dies. Do you think Uriah could bear a grudge and hold it against David? But David says, Lord, I didn't sin against Uriah, I sinned against you.

Well, that is a useful thing to know. Can you think of somebody that has done you an ill turn, someone who has done you wrong, someone who said something that wasn't true, somebody that did something unfair, something that makes you want to hold a grudge? Well, think about it in the same light. Whatever that person did, Jesus said, if you do it to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it to me.

The Lord Jesus says, when sins are committed against us, they are committed against him. I am content to let the heavenly court find for or against the defendant. I am content for the heavenly court to pass sentence and render judgment.

And execute the sentence, because God is absolutely fair and absolutely just. He has all the facts. He can see things that I can't.

He knows the thoughts and intents of every heart. And if God considers that to be a sin against him and I go jumping in there and saying, well, I'm going to get even, I'm going to take care of this. Vengeance is mine.

Say it, Sam, I will repay. I'm just going to gum up the works and God may have to reduce or eliminate that person's heavenly sentence because I went in there and tried to punish him myself. And we don't have time to turn there, but there are actually passages of scripture that say, if you judge someone and decide that you're going to punish them, God will take the punishment that had been intended for them because they actually committed a wrong and a sin and put it on you.

Well, if you're going to jump in and take part in this, then you can just bear their sentence and you wind up getting you. You God launched a judgment at them and you jumped up and and took the bullet in the chest for them. So if you really want someone to get justice for having done wrong, just remember, if they have, in fact, sinned, they sinned against God.

Let God handle it. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

Do you think God knows how to execute judgment? I think if the earth opens and

swallows people, I think if snakes come out of nowhere and bite them, I think if lightning falls from heaven and consumes them, if fire comes out from the pillar and burns them alive, I think God knows how to judge people, render to them what what is due. And I also hope that he is merciful because I am often that sinner. I sin against people.

I would rather throw myself on the mercy of God's court. Wouldn't you and claim the blood of Jesus Christ and turn myself, this is what David does. David committed adultery and murder.

What did he do so that he ended up staying on the throne in Israel and living into his old age? He prayed this prayer, Psalm 51. Be gracious to me, O God, according to your loving kindness. Wash me from my iniquity.

He didn't say, Lord, watch, I'm going to wash myself from this iniquity. Look how hard I'm going to work to get myself clean. I'm going to wear a scratchy shirt.

I'm going to crawl on rocks for two or three miles. I'm going to beat myself on the head with a stick for an hour every morning. I'm going to deny myself pleasures.

I'm going to stop doing anything that's fun. I'm only going to do depressing things all day long and punish myself. So, Lord, watch and then you'll forgive me.

Is that what he says? He says, Lord, there is nothing I can do to get this spot and this stain off of me. He says, you wash me from my iniquity. You cleanse me from my sin.

I know what my transgression is. My sin is right before my face against you and you only. I have sinned.

And done what is evil in your sight, what does he desire? How is it that we walk in the light so that we're qualified for forgiveness and cleansing? We have to do what Peter encourages these men in Jerusalem to do, change our mind, decide that God is smarter than we are, that God is holier than we are, that God is more important than we are. And because he saved us, we owe him obedience. We owe him fulfillment of the calling that he has given to us.

It's not optional. There is a penalty for failing the grace of God. He bought us with a price, a precious price, the blood of Christ.

And it's not just a nice option. It is required and there will be tribulation, wrath and anguish for everyone who is self-seeking and does not obey the truth. It's the word of God in Romans chapter two.

We have got to pay attention. This is what the word of God says, I am presenting it to you so that on the day of judgment, we won't be in that category. And if anybody is, they're not going to say, well, there's the guy you sent to teach the word of God.

And he never said anything about this. I didn't hear about this judgment, tribulation, wrath and anguish. This is the first I've heard of it.

Don't be coming up with that argument. I've read Romans chapter two. You've heard it.

You've seen it. Many times. And we are all without excuse.

Right. And there's no need. This is like reading the old rocks and shoals or what they have now, the uniform code of military justice that talks about all the bad, terrible things that can happen to you in the military.

If you break regulations and go AWOL or do other bad things. It has all kinds of penalties, right? But if you're, I never sat up awake at night wondering if the military police wouldn't come get me and lock me up because. I am not of those who draw back under perdition.

I am of those who are pushing ahead, trying to do a good job, not seeing, well, what's the minimum line where I can get by without getting locked up or how close, you know, how long can I fool all those who are watching me? If you stay away from the trailing edge and get up in the cutting edge, then these things are good to know, but they're not a fear. They're not a dread. The only people that have to worry about the judgment of God are people who are not interested in pleasing God.

If you are concerned and if you have a godly fear, if it crosses your mind from time to time, am I really walking in the light? Am I taking advantage of the grace of God? Those are the people that God is searching the earth to find because when he finds people like that, he will bless, he will provide, he will create a wall of fire. Your enemies will fall to your right hand and to your left. Opposition and adversity will move out of your way because God says there are so few of these people, I'm going to take really good care of the few that I have been able to find.

And these are the ones with whom God is pleased. These are the ones the Lord Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. It's such a short test.

This brief life that we have is such a short test compared to the thousand years of the millennium and the eternity of God's kingdom. Why not be on the positive side? And we don't have to dread the tribulation, wrath and anguish. But in order to do that, we all fail and we all fall short and we have got to get that cleaned up.

David made horrible mistakes, terrible mistakes, far worse than any of us are likely to make. Hopefully none of us are going to commit murder. Hopefully none of us are going to commit adultery.

Hopefully none of us are going to do some of the things that David did. But here is his

prayer. This is how we recover.

Peter says, repent and be converted, change your mind and change your direction. How do you do it? Does anybody want to know? Read Psalm 51. This is how this is the answer to the question.

How do I walk in the light? How do I have myself purged of my failures? How do I avoid the judgment of God on his people? How can my sins be blotted out? I am so grateful that God blots out our sins. We commit embarrassing sins. Painful sins.

God will blot them out. He will wash them away. If you go over to Numbers chapter five, this is one of the first places where the idea of blotting out comes into play.

And you are going to love this passage because it is one of the weirdest things in the whole Bible. You do not believe me? Look at Numbers 5.11. The Lord spoke to Moses, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, if any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him and a man lies with her carnally and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and it is concealed that she has defiled herself and there was no witness against her, nor was she caught. But a spirit of jealousy comes upon the husband and he becomes jealous of his wife.

He suspects he has an idea, but there's no proof, no witness, no way to tell for sure. But he's got the spirit of jealousy. He's just got the notion that hanky panky has taken place.

Spirit of jealousy comes upon him. If you don't think this is in your Bible, look at it. Numbers 5.14. If the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife who has defiled herself or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself.

Then, verse 15, the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her. One tenth of an ephah of barley meal.

He shall pour no oil on it, put no perfume on it, no frankincense, because it is a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance. It's bizarre enough, and we haven't even gotten to the strange part yet. The priest shall bring her near and set her before the Lord.

The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it in the water. Then the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord, uncover the woman's head and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. Now, can you picture this? They're in the tabernacle.

They've come right to the door. The woman is there. Women typically had this cloth.

What am I trying to say? Not a veil and not a shroud. What do you call the thing over your head? Well, the thing over her head. So she's standing there in front of the doorway of the tabernacle and he says, all right, hold out your hands.

She holds out her hands like this and he puts this barley meal in there. It's got no oil and no perfume on it. It's just a handful of barley meal.

So she's standing there staring into the tabernacle with barley in her hands. And he reaches up and takes her head covering there. It's like a shawl and and pulls it back so that her head is uncovered.

OK, what is the covering of the head symbolizing the scripture for a woman? It's the authority of the husband. What does this symbolize in this ritual? The woman. In marriage, past, present and future is shielded by the authority of her husband.

If the woman runs amok, it is the man who gets divine discipline. One of these days, I'll give you all of the scripture for that, but you just have to take it on faith. In the same way, remember, it says a husband shall love his wife the way Christ loved the church.

Who took? Who took the hit for the sins of the church? The Lord Jesus Christ, we sinned. He died on the cross when a wife malfunctions. And I'm talking about in the area where she is under the authority of her husband.

It is the husband who gets the judgment. But in this case. She has sinned against the marriage or potentially she is suspected of sinning against the marriage, so puts barley meal in her hand, stands in front of the tabernacle before the Lord and removes the symbol of her husband's authority.

You know what this means? Lady, if you're guilty, your husband's not taking the hit. You're taking the hit. Why is this important? Because Hebrews chapter 10 says, if we sin willfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ is there and he is available. We can change our mind and we can change our direction and his punishment avails to blot out our sins. But if we throw that over and reject it and say, you know, that's really not important to me.

I've got other things on my mind right now. There remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. This is Hebrews chapter 10.

This is church and this is believers. We are the woman. Standing in front of the tabernacle with barley in our hands and the shawl is taken off the head.

The protective covering that represents the husband's authority and the husband's presence is removed. You're a bareheaded woman in front of the tabernacle and whatever judgment is passed is going to fall on the woman alone. That's what this is all

about.

So now we continue. Uncovers the woman's head, puts the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. Now this is the dust of the floor of the tabernacle in the water.

Okay, the priest shall put her under oath and say to the woman, if you are innocent, if no man has lain with you, if you've not gone astray to uncleanness while under your husband's authority, do you see that phrase? This is all about. Have you disrespected? Have you violated your husband's authority or not? If you have not, if you haven't sinned against your marriage, then be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. But if you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you, then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse.

And he shall say to the woman, the Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people. When the Lord makes your thigh rot and your belly swell, may this water that causes the curse go into your inward parts and make your belly swell and your thigh rot. This is not fall in Hebrew.

It means fall. It's I just can't even picture what this is, but it's not good. Then the woman shall say, amen.

So be it. Then the priest. Now watch this verse 23.

Then the priest shall write these curses in a book. So he gets a piece back then it would have been parchment, piece of animal skin. And he writes this down.

If this woman is laying with a man while under the authority of her husband, may her belly swell and her thigh rot. And he's going to hold it over this bowl of bitter water, the water that's got the dirt from the tabernacle floor in it. And he washes them off, scrapes them off, the lettering, the writing into the water.

The curse goes into the water. So now the water has this written curse and the dirt from the floor of the tabernacle in it. Right.

And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse and the water that brings the curse shall enter her bitter. Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand shall lift. This is the heave or what they call the wave offering.

He raises it up and presents it to God. Brings it to the altar, takes a handful of the offering as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar. Afterward, make the woman drink the water when he has made her drink the water.

Then it shall be if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband. The water that brings a curse will enter her and become bitter and her belly will swell. Her thigh will rot and the woman will become a curse among her people.

But if the woman is not defiled herself and is clean, she shall be free and may conceive children. So you get the idea that there is conception involved here. She will, among other things, be barren as well as disfigured by this curse.

This is the law of jealousy. Notice. The blotting out of the curse.

The washing off of the curse, it is blotted off of the paper into the bitter water and then it is drunk. So we have a choice. Do we let our federal head, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffice and atone and satisfy the Father's righteousness and justice for our sins by acknowledging our sins, changing our mind and changing our direction, taking our healed feet and walking through the gate beautiful toward the Lord? Or do we ignore all of that and say, I'll think about that some other time or I'm really enjoying this vendetta I've got against this person.

It kind of makes me happy to think of all the different ways I'm going to pull the wings off of that particular fly. And we keep digging it up like an old bone and treasuring it and gnawing on it and not letting go of our sin. And we sin willfully after we know this truth.

God says, either I can blot your sins out and they're gone or I can blot them into the bowl and you're going to drink them. And there will be no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. Turn with me to Hebrews chapter 10, verse 26.

If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, a certain fearful expectation of judgment, fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who rejected Moses law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment do you suppose? Will he be thought worthy? Who? Now, listen, this is us.

If we decide that bringing our sin before God is not important. If we decide that violating the authority of our federal head, the Lord Jesus Christ is not important. If we ignore the sermon of Peter that says, change your mind and change your direction, if we ignore it.

Trample the God, the son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified. This is not some godless pagan. This is someone who has been sanctified by the blood of the covenant.

But that person has now counted that blood a common thing. It's like the dirt on the floor of the tabernacle. I just don't think it's holy.

I think the candlestick is holy. I think the showbread is holy. I think the altar of incense is holy and the veil and the angels and all of the other things are holy.

But I just don't think much of the dirt on the floor of the tabernacle. I don't really consider it to be holy. God says anything associated with my habitation is holy.

What did he say to Moses when he came up on Mount Sinai? Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest in the old King James is holy ground. And Moses had to take his sandals off because he was walking on holy dust. And it is that holy dust that is scooped up and God says, you have trodden underfoot the son of God.

You have counted the blood of the covenant that sanctified you as a common thing. If you're not going to accept the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you're going to drink the curse. It's going to be your turn to suffer consequences for sin.

And we think, well, now, wait a minute. I'm saved. Jesus died on the cross.

Isn't all of that penalty and judgment stuff over? Doesn't it say there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. If we walk after the flesh, there is condemnation. He that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

Read Romans chapter two. Read Hebrews chapter 10. Anyone who rejected Moses law died on the testimony of three witnesses.

How much worse punishment do you suppose? Will he be thought worthy who tramples the son of God underfoot? Counts the blood of the covenant by which he sanctified a common thing and insults the spirit of grace. God, the Holy Spirit counsels us and encourages us and pleads with us to return and come back to the Lord. Acknowledge our sin and not just say, yes, I certainly did make a mistake there, but have a change of mind and have a change of direction and start walking in the light.

If we do not do that, we're insulting the spirit of grace. Says in verse thirty one, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. So.

He says down in verse thirty five, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. Look on the positive side in the military. You've got your laggards and your ne'er do wells and your barely get bys who show up at the last possible moment with the minimum possible level of performance and just barely squeak by and are constantly in danger of falling into.

Office hours or court martial or whatever. Why be that way? He says, look, have confidence. Be a go getter, be a hard charger, be striving for excellence, not seeing how little you can do to get by.

Do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. We don't have to dwell on the negative side. There is great reward.

Do you think God knows how to reward? We talked about how he knows how to curse. Do you think God knows how to bless and how to reward someone? I would think he probably does. He made us.

He knows what makes us happy. You have need of endurance, he says in verse thirty six. And this is the part that separates the men from the boys, separates, spreads the field.

You look at that tour de France at Lance Armstrong. Everybody you look at the Boston Marathon, everybody starts out at the same starting line, don't they? Everybody's all bunched up at the beginning. But when you get to the end, they're all stretched out and you find out who's a good runner and who's not, who's got endurance and who doesn't.

Well, any low life, lame brain, apathetic, indifferent scumbag can fall back and fail. It takes no strength of character. It takes no wit.

It takes no talent. It takes no brains. It takes no strength.

You can be the lowest off scouring of humanity and fail. What does it take to succeed? You can still be the off scouring of humanity and succeed if you know one thing. The power comes from God.

All you have to do is persist. All you have to do is endure. Look at King David.

He made some of the biggest mistakes a man can make, but he knew where cleansing was. He knew how to change his mind when he found himself out of the will of God going in the wrong direction. He said, whoa, I am going the wrong direction and I made some serious mistakes.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me. I shall be whiter than snow.

You know that I was conceived in iniquity. You know that I was born in sin. I acknowledge my sin.

It is ever before me. It's you that I have sinned against creating me a clean heart. Oh, God, renew a right spirit within me.

Teach me to walk your path. And the thing that David had was endurance. He just kept on keeping on.

And his name is forever and eternally attached to the son of God himself. Jesus Christ will forever be known as son of David, son of the murderer, son of the adulterer, son of the man who numbered the people and got thousands killed, son of the man who ran away from Saul and pretended to be mad and let the spit run down his beard. He's had some egregious, embarrassing failures, but David had endurance.

He just kept coming back to the well, the infinite well of the grace of God. And that's

what we need to do, says in verse 36, you have need of endurance so that after you've done the will of God, you may receive the promise. And that's what we need.

God can create a clean heart. God can create a right spirit. God can purge us and cleanse us.

God can blot out our sins and there will be no judgment. If we judge ourselves, we won't be judged. It's when we sin willfully and we don't change our mind, we don't change our direction and we just keep on falling by weight of gravity on a downward spiral that these fearful, grievous consequences fall on us.

It is not God's fault and it's not anybody else's fault. If we fall into this category, it is only us because God has extended his hand and says, take hold and I will lift you up. I will put you on your feet.

You can walk through the gate beautiful and you can stand with the apostles on Solomon's porch. It's up to you. It's an encouragement to us to remember who we are and why we're here and whatever our stage of spiritual growth, all of us have to claim the same grace of God because we all sin.

We all fall short of the glory of God. We all have access to this grace wherein we stand. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for making clear to us where we do stand before you in this life and what awaits us in the eternal future. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts. Remind us day by day, hour by hour, that the time that has been allocated to us is rapidly passing and we only have an ever decreasing ability to redeem the time and to make this life count toward eternity.

We pray that in all things our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be glorified. We ask it in his name. Amen.