

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-07-12b

We resume our study now of Christ in the sacrifices. We're looking at one of the most famous, most memorable, and in some ways most difficult of the Old Testament examples of sacrifice foreshadowing the Lord Jesus, and this is in Genesis chapter 22. We've seen God call to Abraham.

Abraham responds. God gives him an instruction. He obeys immediately.

This is something good parents try to impress upon their children. If you get an instruction, do it now. If you procrastinate, you forget.

As you get older, you realize that when a thought occurs to you, oh, I need to do that. Do it now, because you will forget. Open the big garage door.

You know how to shut that. Day later, I've been sitting here with everything open to view for a day. My big garage door is open because I didn't close it when I thought about closing it.

So he obeys immediately. It's a wonderful principle of obedience. Obey aggressively.

Obey completely. Obey promptly. Wonderful example.

I'm going to read through the rest of this rather swiftly. On the third day, verse 4, Genesis 22, on the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. I see it, but not near.

Shades of Balaam. Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey. The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.

We will come back to you. So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac, his son, and he took the fire in his hand. Now, what are we talking about here? This is a vessel containing coals.

He doesn't literally have a fire in his hand, right? Those who are a little bit overly, woodenly literal in places in the Bible need to recognize that the Bible uses language the way we use language. He took the fire in his hand. He's got a probably a clay vessel that is used for this purpose.

You transport coals so that you don't have to sit there twirling a stick for two and a half hours in the hot sun trying to get a fire going. He took the wood, took the fire, and a knife, and the two of them went together. These are the essentials for a sacrifice, three of the four essentials.

There are probably five essentials, as you think about it, for animal sacrifice in the Old Testament sense. You need an altar, which you can assemble from unhewn stones any place. You need an altar.

You need wood for the fire, if it's going to be a whole burnt offering. You need a source of

ignition for the wood. You need a knife to slay the animal, and you need the subject of the sacrifice itself, normally an animal.

Those five things constitute the essentials for animal sacrifice, right? What does the fire represent? Why is it a burnt offering and not a drowned offering, or a buried offering, or a launched from a catapult offering? We'll launch it to heaven. We'll construct a catapult and fling it beyond the reach of our senses, and that will send it to God. Why is it fire? Fire, consistently throughout Scripture, is a representation of not just judgment, purifying judgment.

Fire consumes that which is temporary, that which is corrupt, that which is impermanent, wood, hay, and stubble, and what does it leave behind? Did you ever notice that in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the except in rare cases, the altar is not consumed, unlike a Viking funeral? Why weren't burnt offerings in the Old Testament like a Viking funeral? Why didn't everything go up? The altar has a sense of permanence about it that the sacrifice does not. So, Abraham took the wood, laid it on Isaac, his son. He took the fire in his hand and a knife, and the two of them went together.

So everything is in verse 6 except the altar itself, which he's going to construct at the place. He's going to the place where the altar must be. He could just say, okay, young men, turn your faces.

I'm gonna do a sacrifice right here. I've got everything I need. I've got the sacrifice.

I've got the knife. I've got the fire. I've got the wood.

What's lacking? It's not the right place. Go to the place I will show you. That was the first thing God said.

So Isaac spoke to Abraham, his father, and said, here, father. Here am I, my son. Second time he says, here I am.

He said, look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? Isaac understands the essentials. He doesn't mention the knife, but of course he understands that his father's got that. And he says, we've got everything here, but we're going to the place where the altar is, but where's the sacrifice? Abraham said, my son, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering.

God will provide for himself the lamb. It's not an accident that this question is asked by Isaac and not by one of the young men, so that when Abraham replies, what are the first words out of his mouth? My son. My son.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him, and Abraham built an altar there. The place where God told him, that's where he built the altar. Complete obedience.

Timely obedience. Diligent. Aggressive obedience.

He didn't dilly-dally around. I one time told a guy to dig a pit so that we could put the

accumulated trash from the battery, having been in a position for a couple of days, had a couple of PFCs, Lance Corporals, gave him shovels and said, dig a pit, we're gonna bury the trash. That's what we used to do.

Well, this guy just dallyed around, just sticking the end of the shovel in the dirt with one hand, looking off, you know, dancing a little bit, and just messing around. The other two guys, digging away. This guy's just messing around.

I went over and had to give him a repetition of the order, Lance Corporal X, dig this hole. Didn't do it. So I turned to his immediate enlisted supervisor and said, Gunnery Sergeant so-and-so, take charge of this Marine, and of course, that's when the guy swung the shovel at my head, and went to the brig for it.

But dilly-dallying around, unmotivated, uninterested, rebellious, find a way around it, don't want to do it. If I delay long enough, maybe something will happen, and I don't have to do it. Abraham is prompt, he's complete, and he is diligent.

Place the wood in order, bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. Laid him on the altar on the wood. Well, we've covered this in great detail, verse-by-verse, in our Genesis study, but you can quickly see that at the, there are several similarities to, that hark forward to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a father-and-son relationship, and at the point that God says to Abraham, Make your son a burnt offering to me, and a place I will show you, at that point, in a sense, Isaac is, is dead to Abraham. It is a sentence of death, and the day you eat thereof, you will surely die. You don't have to have your heart stop beating to essentially be under the sentence of death.

In Adam all die. Well, we're in Adam, and we're not dead, but we will die. We're under sentence of death.

Apart from Christ, that sentence is carried out. Right? So, on the first day, there is the sentence of death on Isaac. He, to Abraham, Abraham realizes that God has placed his son Isaac under sentence of death.

He's dead to him. As Isaac ascends the mountain, he is carrying the wood on his own shoulders, just as the Lord will carry the cross to Golgotha. So many similarities.

In verse 10, Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. Why does he have to call his name twice? Well, Abraham is focused, and I'm sure this is the most difficult thing he ever had to do in his life, and his faith is wrestling with his intellect.

His faith is wrestling with his rationalization. His faith is wrestling with the apparent extinguishing of all of his hopes, all of his his dreams, his the intense love he has for his son. I doubt there was ever a father that loved his son more than Abraham loved Isaac.

And to be the agent of his death, promises notwithstanding, presence of God notwithstanding, this cannot have been an easy thing. And he is so focused as he raises that knife on being obedient, that the angel has to call his name twice to get his attention, to break his concentration. Anybody that concentrates, especially for a living, knows that sometimes people really have to make an effort to get your attention.

You may absentmindedly respond, but you don't, you're not really hearing, you're not really listening. Abraham, Abraham. So he says for the third time, here I am.

He says it to God, he says it to Isaac, and he says it to the angel, here I am. It's an attitude. It is a pattern of life.

The angel says, do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me. Another classic case of the angel of the Lord speaking in the first person for God. Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked.

Remember the first time he lifted his eyes and looked, what did he see? The place. Now he lifts his eyes and looks and he sees the sacrifice. Lifted his eyes and looked and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns.

Behind him. He doesn't see it until he is stopped and turns. It wasn't in view.

This substitute sacrifice. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham called the name of the place, the Lord will provide.

Jehovah Jireh is the way they used to put that in the in the King James. Yahweh Yireh. Yahweh Yireh.

The Lord will provide. As it is said to this day in the mount of the Lord, it shall be provided. When you are in the right place and you have the right attitude, what you seek will be found.

What seems to be an insurmountable challenge in the name of obedience, it will be provided. It will be found. Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven and said, notice there is no here I am this time because you have that perfect three in the passage already.

Called Abraham a second time out of heaven and said, by myself I have sworn, says the Lord. Is the angel of the Lord the Lord? People argue from the first pronouncement that he is because he says you have not withheld your only son from me. Capital M. So if this is the angel of the Lord and he says me then the angel of the Lord must be the pre-incarnate Christ or something similar.

But here he quotes the Lord. By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son. Blessing I will bless you and multiplying I

will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore.

And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Why? Because I am a merciful God.

God is going to bless through the seed of Abraham. Why? Because you have obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned to his young men.

Just as he said, by the way, we shall return again after we offer the sacrifice. God will provide himself a lamb. Went together to Beersheba and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

What does Beersheba mean? Kind of reminds me of Hezekiah's sacrifice when he reopened the temple. Remember on Friday night what Hezekiah offered by way of sacrifice? How many of each animal, four different types, does Hezekiah offer as he reopens the temple? Seven. Beersheba, seven wells.

Seven wells of living water. Beersheba. Beer is well.

Beer l'hai roi. This is the well of the God who sees me. Beersheba, seven wells.

There's a lot you can say about this, but we're focusing on one particular aspect. Abraham almost impossibly, almost unaccountably, is obedient. Obedient to the point of the death of his son.

And you think, I just can't. This has to be some kind of a mythological thing. It can't be real.

No father would do this. Especially given such powerful reasons to not do it. God's express command that you don't take the life of other people.

It's human sacrifice for crying out loud. How could God command Abraham to do a human sacrifice? And Abraham says, okay, with his own son. Isn't this condemned? And the basis of the elimination of the Canaanite nations because they caused their children to pass through the fire and sacrificed their children to Molech.

And you remember the king slaying his son on the city wall that we covered not long ago. It's just unthinkable. And Abraham does the unthinkable.

How is this even possible? The answer is in Genesis chapter 15. And in case we missed it, it is detailed for us in Hebrews chapter 11. Turn to Hebrews 11.

We've already covered 15 in great detail. Turn to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews 11 8. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.

And he went out not knowing where he was going. Has Abraham been told to go to a place he didn't know exactly where it was before? Go in this general direction. I'll show you the land

when you get there.

Sound familiar? By faith, verse 9, he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country. It's the land God says is his, but it's like he's a stranger there. Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

Notice Jacob knew his grandfather Abraham. Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him with the same promise. He waited, and look at verse 10, he waited for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Now I've been through the Abraham account from Genesis 12 all the way through to his death. And then Isaac and then Jacob and then Joseph all the way to Genesis chapter 50, and I see no mention anywhere of a city. Now, how does the author of Hebrews here claim that Abraham was waiting for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God? Keep reading.

By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man and him as good as dead were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. Now, I do find those specific comparisons in the Genesis account.

God tells Abraham, your descendants will be as the stars of the sky and as the sand on the seashore, right? Verse 13, these all died in faith not having received the promises. When does all mean all? Who is all here? All is always defined by context. These all died in faith.

You know who the all is here? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah. These all, these four died in faith. That's who it's talking about.

You know how I know that? Look back in verse 5. By faith, Enoch. Did Enoch die in faith? Whoops. Can't say it's everybody that preceded.

Enoch didn't die in faith. Enoch was not, for God took him. He didn't die at all.

These all, these four, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Abraham's wife Sarah, all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off. Lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. Do you think this is accidental language? When God told Abraham, get thee up out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of your people, out of your kindred, go to the place I will show you.

Abraham could envision a place afar off. Hadn't gotten there yet. Hadn't seen it yet, but he, to him it was real.

When you envision a thing and it becomes real to you, that's enough. It is transcendent. Something can be real without being physical.

Yes? How about an idea? Is an idea real? Can I envision something that I haven't built yet? And

is that plan, and is that purpose, and is that design a reality? Yes. Can a scientist put it in a test tube, or put it on a gram scale, or measure it with any instruments? No. But is it real? Yes.

It is an intangible reality. This vision, this expectation is as real to Abraham as anything given to him by the evidence of his senses. It's real.

All reality is ultimately our perception, isn't it? As far as we're concerned. You know, I look at the bricks of the fireplace. Well, there are atoms, there are quarks, and all kinds of subatomic particles going on there.

There's an arrangement. There's silica. There's who knows what else in this brick.

I have a perception of the brick. It's very superficial. I can't see the inside of the brick.

I can't see the other three sides, the other... Actually, that's five sides of the brick. Isn't a brick six-sided? I can only see when it's mortared in. I see one side.

But I believe in the rest of the brick. Yet, I have no evidence of the senses. Do I? I can't scientifically prove that there's an interior to the brick without digging it out of the fireplace and cracking it into pieces and destroying the brick in the process of confirming to my own satisfaction.

Yes, there really is brick all the way through. It's a reality to me based on other things. So, he was waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, having seen them afar off, were assured of them. The promise was an assurance. The promise became reality.

Sarah started knitting baby booties at 90 years of age. She started figuring out how she was going to arrange for the care of a child. She had never had one before.

Most ladies in their late teens or early 20s or mid 20s or 30s or early 30s, whenever it is, they get around to having children. You know, the first one, it's all new. You buy books.

You talk to people. How did you do it? Is it pink or blue? Decorate and anticipate and clothing and all that stuff. Well, why do you do that? I believe that the positive pregnancy test and the prediction of the doctor is such and the physiological changes the body is beginning to undergo that there's going to be a baby here in X number of months.

Can't see it. There's evidence. Well, there's a positive test, you know, to physical changes and so on, but the baby itself? What if it's a cancerous tumor? You could account for a lot, but you expect it.

It's a reality and based on that expectation, based on that reality, you do things differently. You shuffle your priorities. You reallocate resources.

You make plans. You figure on time and working ladies now have to figure on time away from work. And do we have a everything in place? Being assured of them, embraced them and acknowledged that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Now, this is interesting to me. The promise of God is what? You're going to have innumerable descendants through them. Everybody's going to be blessed.

Why would that make you confess that you're a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth? Because there's more to the promise than proliferation of descendants and possession of the land. Genesis chapter 15, the dead heifer, the heifer is dead and yet God in the midst is going to bring to life. Sarah's womb was dead.

Abraham as good as dead. He's over a hundred years of age at this point, right? The dead heifer isn't dead when God is present in the midst. The goat, the goats, the proliferation and fecundity, what kind of sacrifice is it caught in the thicket? It's not a bullock.

It's not a lamb. It's not a turtledove. What is it? It's a ram.

Isaac represents the beginning of the innumerable descendants of Abraham. And that is the biggest and best picture of substitutionary sacrifice. Isaac should die, is under sentence of death, but he doesn't die because there is a substitute.

Abraham has spent a whole day staring at a dead ram and yet it's not dead in the same way that the Lord Jesus Christ is not dead. If you don't think Abraham wasn't a smart man, and as he sat there all day long looking at those particular animals at that particular age and then that night sees God pass between the pieces with a dimmed light, a smoking, I see it, but not near. I see things, but they are far off.

This is down the road, but it is nevertheless real to me. It doesn't matter how distant, it is still real. Abraham might have woken up the next day and said, well, I don't even know if that was God.

Maybe I just ate something that didn't agree with me, got a hold of a bad leek or a bad piece of garlic or something. He believed, he was assured, not just of the promise that Isaac would be the basis of innumerable. He's not going to live to see whether you can count him as much.

Well, you know, Lord, you said as many as the stars, but if I die and there's only, you know, 70 or so, how am I going to know that, I mean, those guys could all get wiped out by a plague or an incursion or famine or a military intervention or something. How do I know that this promise is true? You have the heifer. In some ways, Abraham, as he stares at that all day long, is thinking about Sarah.

Sarah's womb is dead, but that's not an impediment for God. She can still reproduce in the presence and power of God. The ram, who is the ram? If the heifer, and I'm looking beyond the immediate things that we talked about, the significance of those sacrifices, all of which is true,

but in another light, looked at from another angle, you think about the heifer.

Why a heifer and not a bullock? What gender is Sarah? Three-year-old heifer, just coming into the prime reproduction years, but it's dead. Not a problem for God. The hegoat, the ram, fecundity, reproduction, but he's dead.

What gets substituted for Isaac? Of all of the possible animals, it's a ram. Isaac in the midst, right in the middle. And then what is the third? Those birds.

What do birds almost universally represent? These things that move in an element that we can't attain, we can't fly, we can't go into the heavens, heavenly things, eagles, doves, the Holy Spirit as a dove, turtle dove, divinity, the realms pertaining to God, not divided. Not divided. An older one and a younger one, a mature one, a parent one, and an offspring one, a father and a son, a parent and an offspring in the divine sense, passing between, dead but not dead, far off but not far off.

And in that, Abraham, as he analyzes that all day long, I think, draws the conclusion, you know what? All of this stuff is temporary. This life is temporary. There is resurrection life.

God is telling me that in his presence, death isn't death. A dead womb is not dead. A dead son is not dead.

There is a realm beyond this realm. There is a life beyond this life. There is a land beyond this land, and there is a city beyond anything I could build on this earth, something that God builds.

Genesis 15 is where Abraham gets the city, whose founder and builder is God. It is a place beyond this life, beyond this earth, beyond this land. If in the earthly realm, God can take what is dead and bring it to life, death is not death.

Past the age of childbearing doesn't matter with God. A son under sentence of death isn't dead in the presence of God. And what can only be accessed by the birds isn't inaccessible to me.

I am just sojourning on this earth. I'm just a stranger and a pilgrim in this land. Yes, he has promised this land to me and my descendants, but we will ultimately be like those animals.

We will die. We will fall and become a part of the dust, but that's not the end. There is a life beyond this life.

There is a city that God has built that is everlasting and eternal in the heavens. That's what the author of Hebrews understands. That's what he talks about in chapter 11.

Looking at these passages, we're looking at looking at Christ in the sacrifices. Through Christ, all of this is possible. He is the ultimate Isaac.

He is the ultimate son who is dead, but not dead. And through him, all nations of the earth are blessed. Through him, we look forward and it is real to us.

And it is an assurance, just as sure when we lift up our eyes and look, we see the place. And it is real. Hebrews 11, 13, these all died in faith, not having received the promises.

Abraham didn't even see the fulfillment of the earthly promise. He didn't see his descendants possess the land, nor did Isaac, nor did Jacob. Where does Jacob die? In Egypt.

He doesn't see the fulfillment, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, we're assured of them. That's what faith is. Substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

That's what this chapter is about. They embraced them and confessed, acknowledged, affirmed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

A homeland with a capital city. And truly, if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, Ur of the Chaldees, I'm dead to that now. Not going back to Ur, not going back to Chaldea.

They would have had opportunity to return. I'm going to go back. I don't think these promises are real enough.

I don't think they're firm enough. They don't do enough for me. I don't find it convincing.

I'm going back to Ur. I'm going back to the idolatrous pagan practices from which God called me. I like the reality of that because I can see it.

I like an idol because I can see it. I like the fellowship of people who worship idols because they all say the same thing. We're all hail fellow well met.

But it's temporal, it's earthly, and it's fallible, and it is as corrupt as the people who generated and perpetrated. If they had called to mind that country from which they came out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is a heavenly.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. Isn't that something? That God would be ashamed to be called your God? But God is not ashamed to be called their God. Why? For he has prepared a city for them.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Abraham obeyed God and had this testimony in verse 5 that he pleased God. Look at verse 17.

By faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Not he who just blinded himself to the moral problem. He who just gritted his teeth and did it even though it made no sense.

He who had received the promises. Abraham figured out these promises that day. He stared at those animals cut in half.

The heifer, I get it. It can still be productive. It can still produce offspring.

The ram, I get it. This is my son. He can still be alive and reproduce and fulfill God's promise.

The turtle dove and the young turtle dove. This is a divine thing. This has an eternal and a heavenly destination.

This is moving toward notice the birds are last not first. We're not going in order of size. We're going in order of chronology.

Sarah will first have a womb that comes to life. Isaac will first be alive though he were dead and ultimately we are going to that heavenly destination. That's the order.

He had the promises. He received the promises. He embraced the promises and offered up his only begotten son of whom it was said in Isaac your siege shall be called.

Look at verse 19. This is our concluding thought. Concluding that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.

Abraham concluded ahead of time. How did he draw that conclusion? Staring at those pieces. Shooing away the carrion birds.

Concluding the bible specifically tells us he drew this conclusion in advance. That's how he was able. It is not human sacrifice.

It is not a morally reprehensible act of murder if it is in fact the occasion by which God brings salvation to the world. God fulfills his promises and demonstrates his power. It is a transcendent truth.

It is a transcendent act and out of death and out of what ought to be the end of all things God brings forth life and renewal and eternal fellowship. Concluding that God was able to raise him up even from the dead from which he also received him in a figurative sense. He received him back from the dead.

There is a picture there of resurrection and Abraham gets it. Abraham grasped this. He is not a dusty old goat herding patriarch.

He is a tremendous believer. He is a tremendous theologian. Abraham figured this out.

That's why God gave him a whole day to look at those animals. Time spent in contemplation, in reflection, in meditating on the word of God. Psalm chapter one.

How many times have we quoted it? It makes a difference. We need to take time to think and imbue our souls with the truth of God so that we can draw these conclusions. Concluding God was able to raise him even from the dead from which he received him in a figurative sense.

That's what we're talking about. That is Christ in the sacrifices. Abraham saw him afar off.

As our final verse here, turn to the gospel of John chapter eight, verse 56. Turn back a few pages in the New Testament. John chapter eight, verse 56.

This is red ink in your Bible. This is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking. In verse 54, he says, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing.

It is my Father who honors me, of whom you say that He is your God, yet you have not known Him. You say He's your God, but you've not known Him. Abraham claimed the Creator God as his God.

Did he know Him? He absolutely did. These people claim God, but they don't know Him. I know Him, and if I say I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you.

But I do know Him, and I keep His word, says the Lord Jesus. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Do you have any doubt that as Abraham looked at those sacrifices and as he climbed Mount Moriah, that he didn't really know what he was doing? The Lord Jesus Christ testifies that Abraham saw his day, the day of the coming of the Messiah, the perfect sacrifice, the greater Isaac, the greater ram caught in the thicket.

He saw it and rejoiced. He saw it and was glad. This can be us.

This is our opportunity to claim the promises of God by faith. They are real to us. Are they tangible? Are they provable? Are they evidentiary? They are as real as anything in this life if we make them so by faith, if we choose to believe the God who created us, who calls us, who has made a way for us to become acceptable in His sight.

Is humanity corrupt and a blight? Are we hopelessly mired in our own short-sightedness, our own ignorance, our own fallibility? Of course we are. But we were originally as a race created in the image of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ has come to bring life out of this death. Paul says in Romans, Who will deliver me from the body of this death? But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Abraham rejoiced to see the Lord's day, and it made him happy. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll continue our study next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for its consistency, its powerful testimony to Your truth, Your faithfulness, the integrity of Your promises. And like Abraham, we look forward to the day when we too will inhabit that land, and by grace and through obedience be citizens of that city that You have founded, that You have built for our fellowship, and our residence, and our service to You.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will cause these truths to live and to be real in our souls and give us the basis upon which to make decisions and fulfill Your purpose in our lives until the day that the Lord Jesus returns to take us to Himself. We pray these things in His name. Amen.