

Matthew 20-07-19b

Thank you, Dan and Anna-Lynn and Lori for that wonderful reminder of the secret to success and pleasing God in our lives. Faith and obedience is absolutely the guiding light for all of our decisions and actions and approach as we find expectations in society changing and shifting and putting requirements on us of varying degrees of worth. What is our criterion for what we do? What reflects faith? What reflects obedience? What reflects mercy even more than sacrifice? Well, when the Sabbath law got interpreted by the rabbis in later Judaism, post-captivity Judaism, they came up with these 39 halakot and they based it on, as is so often the case, let's over-literalize everything.

So, because of the context of Bezalel and Aholiab and the tabernacle, and they rightly saw that the Sabbath rest requirement follows hard on the heels of, here is the work that will be necessary to construct the tabernacle, whether it's the jewels or the preparing the hides and making the curtains and all of it, the implements, casting gold and artisans in wood and so on. So, what they said is, well, these are creative activities. So, when it comes to the Sabbath, this is how you can avoid being creative or making things.

So, there are three orders. Actually, there are four orders of work, four kinds of work. So, first of all, you have the order of bread.

And this is the one that the Pharisees are accusing Jesus' disciples of breaking. And so, in the order of bread, there is to be no planting. And planting has been expanded to include any kind of promotion of plant growth.

So, not only planting is included in this category, other activities, watering, fertilizing, planting seeds or planting grown plants. Secondly is plowing. So, this is promotion of the substrate in readiness for plant growth, whether it's soil, water for hydroponics or whatever else.

So, included in this is any preparation or improvement of land for agricultural use. So, this includes dragging chair legs in soft soil, thereby unintentionally making furrows, pouring water on arable land that is not saturated. Making a hole in the soil would also potentially provide protection for a seed placed there from rain and runoff.

Even if you don't place the seed there, the soil has now been enhanced for that purpose. So, if you're walking with a cane and you leave an impression in soft soil, you have plowed on the Sabbath. So, you can't let your cane hit soft ground because... I'm not going to read all of these, but you begin to catch the drift here.

Reaping. Reaping is defined as severing a plant from its source of growth. You've got heads of grain, you take them off the stalk, that's reaping.

So, removing all or part of a plant from its source of growth is reaping. Climbing a tree is

forbidden by the rabbis because you may accidentally tear off a branch. And if you're climbing the tree and you knock a branch off, you're guilty of reaping on the Sabbath.

Riding an animal is forbidden as you may unthinkingly detach a stick to hit the animal with. And so, you don't want the potential that you might forget and need a crop. So, you're going to grab a stick.

Well, as soon as you snapped off a stick, you've reaped on the Sabbath. So, then you're guilty. So, under the order of bread, there's planting, there's plowing, there's reaping, and then there is gathering.

Now, this is the initial gathering of earth-born or organic material in its original place. So, for example, after picking strawberries, forming a pile or collecting them into one's pockets or into a basket, collecting rock salt or any mineral from a mine or from the earth, and making a pile of the produce. This is only in the place where the thing originally comes from.

So, if you've got a basket of apples in your house and you knock it over, you can gather them and put them back in the basket. And that's not working on the Sabbath because they were already gathered once at the tree and brought in. So, you get a pass.

If you spill something on the floor, you can gather it back up because regathering is not included, only the initial gathering. If you spill salt, you can sweep it up on a clean surface and put it back because you're not at the salt mine type of thing. But subsequent gathering which improves the objects is included in the law.

So, stringing diamonds together to form a necklace is an improvement of the gathered diamonds. They were just loose, now they're in a string. You've improved them.

You've made something that didn't exist before. So, that kind of gathering, you can't do on the Sabbath. You can't make a necklace out of pearls or diamonds.

And then the final part of the bread, well, actually there's several more parts. Threshing or extraction, removing the undesirable outer shell, the chaff. Juicing fruits and vegetables, wringing fluids out of cloths.

The juice or water inside the fruit is considered desirable for these purposes. The pulp of the fruit would be undesirable. So, squeezing is forbidden unless certain rules are applied.

The wringing of undesirable water out of cloths may come under scouring or laundering, could be viewed as extraction. Winnowing is forbidden, sorting undesirable from desirable via the force of the air or the force of air. So, chaff from grain.

The Jerusalem Talmud says use of the venturi tube spray system and spray painting

would come under this prohibition because you're separating the paint from its liquid source by the force of air. So, spraying something, using a squirt bottle that creates a mist or a fog, you're winnowing on the Sabbath. Sorting and purification, removing undesirable from desirable from a mixture of types.

So, debris from grain. If you find rocks in your food, you can't pick the rocks out because that's improving the grain on the Sabbath. If there's a bowl of mixed peanuts and raisins, and you desire the raisins and dislike the peanuts, sorting the peanuts out of the bowl, leaving a purified pile of raisins free from unwanted peanuts is sorting or purification on the Sabbath.

But removing the desirable raisins from the peanuts does not purify the mixture as one is left with undesirable peanuts. So, that's okay. So, you can't pick the peanuts out of the raisins if the raisins are what you want, but you can pick the raisins out of the peanuts because you're leaving the undesirable behind.

So, need I continue? I'm not going to waste the rest of Bible class going through this. You can get this list in many places, but if you go to Wikipedia, they've got a 39-malicote article. If you want to really exhaust yourself in looking at all of the fine distinctions, you can read it there.

It's interesting that when you list this in Hebrew, it's the lamed tate avot melaka. You recognize that last word, melaka? This is the work. And avot just means forms or kinds.

And the lamed tate, this is the number system in Hebrew. If you go through the Hebrew alphabet, which I'm sure all of you know, it's aleph, bet, gimel, dalet, hei, lau, zion, chet, tate, yod, kaf, lamed. Suffice it to say, after you run out of your nine numbers, then you start with 10, 20, 30.

And so lamed is 30 and tate is nine. So 39 in Hebrew is lamed tate. And anyway, a little free numerical Hebrew lesson about the only Arabic I can remember now.

I used to know quite a bit more, but all I can remember now are the numbers and the word for fire, as in pull the lanyard and fire your artillery piece. It's nar, fire. So that's the important stuff if you're an artilleryman.

But let me get back to the idea here. This is the law, and you can see how it was expanded to suit the self-righteous requirements of people who wanted to use it as a stick to beat people over the head on the Sabbath. Now they've got a requirement against using a stick to beat anything on the Sabbath, but they themselves are using the law itself as a goad and as a whip and as a club against other people.

And of course, to call out the unrighteousness of others is to inherently enhance your own. And this is what we see going around today. People, it's like Paul says in Romans, when Israel didn't have the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own

came up with this kind of thing.

That's what you have today. People who lack the righteousness of God that is based on mercy rather than sacrifice and obedience rather than the fat of rams. This is what you have today.

It is a false system of righteousness, self-righteousness. As I call you out, as I point out your shortcoming, your flaw, your crime. And what is the nature of this new morality? You can talk about new morality that came out in the 1920s, but what is the morality that persists today? Well, the nature of it in a nutshell, and you can read, you can study up on this, but the new morality is basically thought crime.

And instead of saying that destruction of public property, destruction of private property, creating chaos and disturbing the peace are crimes. No, these are not crimes. The crime is hate the theme and the exact opposite.

What is the defining principle in God's law? Old Testament and new love, mercy, looking out not only for your own needs, but also those of others, not your own interests. Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who was sacrificial, didn't think his privileges were something to be held onto, emptied himself, came in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men, a huge demotion for the Lord Jesus. And he humbled himself and was obedient to the plan of God.

Greater love has no man than this, than that he lays down his life on behalf of others. Well, the secular, amoral, atheistic ethics of the current time, the current, and it's, there's no getting around it. It is political and it is the left.

It is political and it is the rise of socialism in this country. And there's no, I don't like to talk politics in Bible class, but there's no getting around it. This is what has raised its head and is beginning to dominate life and reporting.

I keep having to turn off software. Microsoft did a windows update and they've got a new version of edge and it gets automatically placed on your machine. Well, I clicked edge just to see, it's supposed to be fast and best and most efficient for use with windows, which is what's on my laptop, on this Bible class laptop.

So I click edge and it sprays six or eight stories from MSNBC, all of which are exceedingly twisted and left-leaning, disparaging the president, disparaging conservatives. It is full of vituperation and it is twisted. It's not objective.

And look, this software is called a browser. I'm supposed to be able to go to an objective page, enter a search and find what I'm looking for. I don't, it's a browser, not a pusher, but now it's a pusher.

If I try to read my AOL email online, I had to spend about an hour configuring a client

that will go and get my personal email out of the clutches of AOL who took over Verizon, who took over Comcast, who took over all the way. I've had the same email forever, but it's been in the hands of three or four different entities, but it's the same account. Well, I had to wrestle that away from the online interface because if I go to AOL mail, I don't get AOL mail.

I get AOL homepage full of extremely left-leaning, twisted political statements and unbalanced reporting. And I can't get past that to get to my mail. So now I download my mail into Thunderbird and I don't have to see any of that.

Same thing with Edge. I've taken Edge off its pinned location on my taskbar and I've replaced it with Chromium. Chromium is a wonderful open source browser.

I've got a version that the satellite internet people gave me that enhances privacy. It keeps you from being tracked. It doesn't store your history, doesn't report every move you make and every word you type to Google or to Microsoft or to America Online or any of the other extremely liberal, left-leaning, proactively socialist companies that are now in control of almost all of the media on the internet.

I don't need or want them storing every single thing I do. So I have a virtual private network. I use Chromium and to the extent that I am able, I keep myself off the radar in the same way that the Chinese church meets in secret and other places in Africa and around the world.

You've got to duck and cover these days. And I'm telling you now as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to start taking steps because persecution is here. It's not coming.

It's here. You are now being persecuted for your faith, your values, and most of all, your politics. The law today, Jesus was fighting the law of Moses as it had been twisted and perverted by the Pharisees, the scribes and the chief priests.

We are fighting a morality today that is instead of based on love, it's based on hate. And instead of based on morality and the golden rule, do unto others as you would have others do unto you, it is now political. So I can deem your thoughts hate and I can now punish you.

I can cancel you. What is cancel culture? It goes beyond disagreement. It goes beyond debate.

I am going to make you lose your job and your standing and your future. I'm going to assassinate your reputation. I am going to destroy you.

Cancel doesn't mean ignore. Cancel means destroy. Now, to be fair, think about this.

In the past when there was largely dominant Judeo-Christian values, if someone committed adultery in public office, were they held to account and their future and their job was on the line? True, right? You could have an open mic moment and let something out and it would cost you. Under good Judeo-Christian morality, if somebody outs themselves as nefarious, should a pastor who commits adultery with the church secretary, should that cost him his job? Yes. Why? The law of love, the morality of the Bible that says that breaking covenant and breaking faith with the people of your church or with the person to whom you are married is tormaia and that's condemned by God.

And if you are in a position of authority, just like the requirements for an elder are higher when you're in a position of authority and responsibility, your moral behavior matters. Can you rule well your own household? Are your children disciplined? Are you prone to bibulosity or anger or lack of self-control? You should not be in a position of authority. The Bible teaches this.

What do you get canceled and rubbed out for now? What do you get destroyed for now? I perceive in you a thought crime. Your white privilege is a crime and you need to pay. You need to pay reparations.

You need to pay for social action. You need to pay higher taxes. You've got too much and that's hate.

By keeping too much, you're a hater. How do you respond to the accusation of being a hater? How can you prove you're not a hater? You can't. Other kinds of overt crime, you can go to court and let the evidence speak.

You've got the adversarial process. You've got a prosecutor and a defense attorney. Let's figure out the truth.

Was a crime committed or not? What court are you going to take a hate thought crime to? No human court. You're guilty as soon as you're accused and there is no defense. You cannot defend yourself against an accusation of hate.

It's an intangible and this is the key. This is what the left has discovered that they can beat down and use for political purposes. It used to be that we tried to protect ourselves from immorality in high places and immorality in the population in general for the good of the majority, for the good of the general citizenry of the United States.

This is why you need to obey speed limits in school zones. This is why you need to not let poisonous water leak off of your property into the water supply for the community. If you're a business, you are causing harm and you've got to be stopped for that.

Now, any imaginary harm just by walking around as a non-minority, you can be accused of systemic hate, systemic racism, systemic crime, thought crime, hate crime, just by the fact that you grew up and aren't a minority, you're a criminal. You're a hater,

whether you know it or not, and as soon as you say you're not a hater, that's the proof that you are a hater. You see the twist.

You see the lie. You see the law as it now exists. Now, just draw the parallel.

Why are the Pharisees ready to destroy Jesus and his disciples? Because the law as it exists in their mind has been broken and Jesus has not committed an act of criminality. It's the way he thinks. It's what he says about himself.

The son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Well, we can't have that. We can't have him thinking that he's the son of man.

We can't have him saying that he's the son of man and that he's got authority over the Sabbath. We can't have him reinterpreting what the scriptures say. We can't have him embarrassing us by pointing out the ill logic and the lack of foundation under our pronouncements and our efforts to exert authority over others.

Do you see the parallel? We used to talk about legalism and how bad legalism is in the church, and you can't have spirituality by rules. Well, this is it on steroids and way beyond the church. This is right by my rules, and my rules don't apply to me.

They only apply to you. We're going to change the name of the Washington D.C. football team because by my rules, any reference to skin color is heinous, and we're going to withdraw sponsorship and all of that until this team changes its name. Despite the fact that the alleged victims of this, Native Americans, including those of us here who are card-carrying Native Americans, better than 90 percent in any survey said they have no problem.

Look, here's somebody that is lifting up and presenting as noble Native Americans. But no, it's off the table because the word skin is in the name, and a color is in there. However, if I want to talk about which kind of lives matter, I can refer to skin color all I want.

Do you see the double standard? I can refer to skin color all over the place, but you can't. The Pharisees say we can determine what's righteous and what's not on the Sabbath, but you can't. And if you don't agree with us, we're going to find a way to destroy you.

Cancel culture is not just ignoring. Cancel culture is destroying. We're going to write your employer.

We're going to call you a bigot and a racist, and we will get you fired from your job. We're going to make you pay because you have violated my idea of what you ought to think and what you ought to say. That's what you're facing today.

So having pointed that out, what does scripture enjoin us to do? How should we then live? Should we stand up and say, I'm going to think and say whatever I want, and you can't stop me? And I want you to look back at Matthew chapter 12 for Jesus' solution and pay close attention. I doubt that there is another church in the country looking at this passage and drawing this conclusion. So once again, take it with a grain of salt.

This is Sam standing in the midst of the unbroken snow with a single set of tracks and feel free to understand it another way. I'm telling you what I see in the word of God. Feel free to draw your own conclusion, but look at this in chapter 12.

There was a confrontation in the grain field. And Jesus said, the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath in verse eight. And he departed from there.

He left the grain field and went to his original destination, which is the synagogue. You have the man with the withered hand and in verse 14, the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, how they might destroy him, how they might uphold me him verse 15. What did Jesus do when he found out that that was their plan and their plot? What does it say? Read it out loud with me.

Verse 15. But when Jesus knew it, I'm going to start over. Everybody read.

But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew from there. He withdrew. This is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's got all authority. He can incinerate these people with a thought. But what does Jesus do? What should the body of Christ do in the face of rejection, opposition, criticism, and the desire to destroy? What did Jesus do? And you'll find this is not just one isolated case.

Jesus regularly does this. It's the same thing as he told the disciples to do back in chapter 10. If they persecute you, flee to another city.

You will not run out of cities until the son of man returns. Flee the conflict, flee the persecution, go to another place. Could Jesus have stood his ground here and said, I dare you to destroy me.

Try it. I'll call 10,000 angels and you're going to be a puddle of organic goo, right? What did Jesus do in the face of brute rejection and opposition of his absolutely scriptural righteous acts and words? Jesus withdrew from there. I am encouraging you based on my understanding of the word of God to do the same.

We are body of Christ. We are not here for social change. We are not here to try to take back the country for God.

When you encounter persecution, opposition, the desire people start manifesting to

destroy you, leave. Get out of that conversation. Get off of that social media.

Get out of that circle. Stop talking to those people. Jesus withdrew.

Now evil thrives when good men do nothing. No, evil thrives when there are no good men. Did you hear me? Being the person that God calls you to be is more powerful than trying to go out and commit good social action.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Being what we are supposed to be, thinking how we are supposed to think, trusting and obeying in our personal life, our personal home is the key. If you want to preserve the nation, be salt.

Be salt. Don't be salt that has lost its savor. Be salt and be salty.

When you are contacted, you taste like salt, but the salt doesn't throw itself against the food. God has put us where we are. We should be salt and light.

Our conversation should be seasoned with salt. If people reject that and start calling us out, it is time to leave that context. Jesus withdrew from there.

Why? Well, keep reading. Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. When Jesus withdrew from the place of opposition and went to his own place, those who were attracted, those who recognized that they needed healing, came to him.

He went to a place. He spoke in the synagogue. He was rejected.

He was attacked. They are trying to plot to destroy him, so he leaves, and the people that he can actually minister to are not in the synagogue. They come to him.

Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works, your good life, and they glorify your Father who is in heaven. It's what you do. As for me in my house, Joshua said, we're going to serve the Lord.

You choose this day whom you're going to serve. I and my family, we're choosing the Lord. We're going to be over here.

Anybody that thinks like we do, David, when he flees Saul and the corrupt administration, the corrupt monarchy goes out to the cave, and people that were attracted to David because he has recovered and gotten his spiritual eyes back and his spiritual heart back, people of integrity were drawn to David. It's a filter. You cannot change people's minds.

You cannot use logic. You cannot use reason. These people believe that their pseudo morality and pseudo ethics are based on reason and science and do no harm and all the rest of it, and it is a self-centered, self-justifying form of empty righteousness, and you cannot pierce it.

It is blind. It is as blind as Satan. This is a blind spot, and he cannot understand that his pride is his downfall, believing that he is right, and he'll never see it.

He can read the Bible from cover to cover, and Satan can't figure it out. If Satan can't figure it out, do you think that people who have fallen for his lies and deceptions are going to figure it out just because you have a word fitly spoken or something? Only people who are seeking will find. What does God say? You will seek me and find me when? When you search for me with all your heart.

People that are not seeking, people that are not searching, you cannot convince. You cannot catch old. You cannot reason.

You cannot persuade. Withdraw. If you withdraw and some people follow and say, hey, I'm curious, why do you have this view? Why do you have this vote? Why do you have this understanding? Why are these your priorities? You can take them to the foundation in the word of God.

It is the word of God that is alive and powerful. Those who are seeking are going to see it, but the God of this world has blinded the minds of those who are faithless. Otherwise, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, would shine unto them.

But it doesn't shine because they have chosen not to trust. They've chosen not to trust and obey. They've chosen not to believe.

You do not have the power by any means or eloquence of piercing that darkness. People have to initiate that toward God, and then the people of God can speak the truth and love. But you're not going to change your community.

You're not going to change your culture. You're not going to change your chat group online. You're not going to change a single mind or a single heart unless and until they are seeking and we speak the truth of the word of God.

That is the only actual supernatural change agent. All of these people that want to change society, do you seriously think that by taking away guns and pulling down statues and rewriting the laws and inviting everybody in and printing buckets of money and all the rest of it, the leftist political agenda that is being driven by this pseudo righteousness, genuine righteousness, what is the agenda? It's the glory of God. It is humility before our creator.

What is the agenda of the self-righteousness of the current day left? It's political. We want political power, and we're going to browbeat you into submission. Well, you cannot win that debate on the public stage, and you're not going to change any minds.

What you can do is live your life as under the Lord, cast your vote when it's time to vote,

be that silent majority that has often accomplished great things in the face of a lot of hand flapping and blather and bloviation and nonsense. There either is or isn't enough of a remnant in this nation for us to survive with meaningful and rational government. If there's not, having outed yourself as the vocal minority is just going to get you destroyed.

I'm telling you now, it's just like saying, well, you know, I've got 12 weapons in my house and announcing it to the world. What are you going to expect when people who want to confiscate guns go back and review every word you've ever said, every purchase you've ever made online and say, well, we know you've and we're coming for it. Get off the grid.

Stop handing out your free information. I'm telling you now, dark days are coming and we need to be as innocent as doves, but as wise as the enemy. Wisdom comes from God.

Look to yourself, look to your privacy, look to your freedom and look to your savior and through him to God himself for guidance, for wisdom, for peace, for joy, continue to practice love and the fruit of the spirit. That's what marks us out. We don't actually need an inkhorn angel to come mark us.

The old campfire song from when I was a kid, they will know we are Christians by our love, charity, putting ourselves out on behalf of one another, being true to God and his word, where we have the power to do so. I cannot change my community. I cannot change the culture.

I cannot talk down people who are irrational and political and driven by feeling good about themselves without sacrifice. Do you notice that all of this posing and posturing about how right the position is costs people nothing? Genuine humility, genuine love is sacrificial to self and beneficial to others. It isn't sacrificial to others and beneficial to self.

It's the exact opposite. It's the devil's own life. That's what we're facing.

That's what we're seeing. The Bible told us it would come. It is necessary that it come.

Woe to them by whom it comes, but don't be knocked off your balance. Remember who you are and why you're here. Let your light so shine before men.

And often this is a wordless testimony. Why is it you have peace? Why is it you're not concerned? Why is it that you are noncombatant with these great social upheavals? Well, because my future, my happiness, my stability, and that of my family doesn't depend on the community, doesn't depend on the culture, doesn't depend on the laws, doesn't depend on the election, doesn't depend on politics. It's my father in heaven and my savior, the Lord Jesus Christ and the spirit of God that dwells within me.

I've got those things. Why should I fear what men can do unto me? Most you can do is destroy my body. I'm much more concerned with my father in heaven who's looking at my soul, right? So be who we are supposed to be and look to God for guidance.

Be prayerful, be humble, be invested in the word of God, not just hearing it, but doing it. Read James. You look into the law of liberty and walk away and forget what you saw.

It doesn't do any good. Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only. When it comes to genuine sacrifice, genuine worship of God, go back to Romans 12.

In the light of the mercies of God, Paul says, I beseech you. You present yourselves a living sacrifice, not to society, not to the oppressed, not to the downtrodden. Who do you present yourself as a sacrifice to? Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

That's your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world. Don't be shaped by this world.

I want to read you one final thing out of an article on secular ethics. The International Humanist and Ethical Union, it's I-H-E-U. It reminded me of Huawei, you know, the Chinese phone company that's getting their tentacles into everything.

But this is the I-H-E-U, International Humanist and Ethical Union. This is the worldwide umbrella organization for those that adhere to the humanist life stance. Humanism is what's replaced Judeo-Christian morality.

Humanism is the standard. This is what they say. Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives.

You have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to your own life. I don't argue with that, right? But keep reading. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities.

It is not theistic and it does not accept supernatural views of reality. So while they begin by saying you have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to your own life, but if you believe in the supernatural, you're out. You're off the table.

We're not going to be moral or ethical or anything else to you because we do not accept supernatural views of reality. So we don't accept you. If you believe in God, you're unacceptable.

And it's a free license for all the hate crime, thought police stuff that's going on today. It's built into their credo. So don't be surprised.

Don't be fooled. And don't be worried. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

It doesn't depend on us. It doesn't depend on our wisdom. It doesn't depend on our steps to secure our privacy or any of the rest of it.

We are in the hands of God. Don't forget it and live your life like you mean it, like you know it. Avoid confrontation, avoid conflict.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself didn't seek out conflict. He withdrew and he told his disciples, if they reject your message, leave, shake the dust off your feet. And if you get persecuted, flee.

This is not the time for active resistance. It's not the time to start a movement or take back the country for God. It is the time to take back our soul for God, take back our love, joy, and peace for God and be who we are supposed to be representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ in this country, on this earth until such time as he comes and gets us and he'll fix all the rest of this.

Leave it to him. He knows when, he knows how, he knows where, and he knows why. And we do as well.

So that's an interesting lesson from Matthew chapter 12 in the example of the Lord Jesus. And we'll continue our study in the gospel of Matthew next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you that you have not left us as orphans.

As the Lord Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit is our gift and our constant companion, our comforter, our encourager, the one who leads us into all truth. As we reflect on these truths from your word, we pray that your spirit will minister them to our hearts and souls, grant to us the peace that the Lord Jesus promised us and gave us as his personal gift. Help us to see clearly our responsibility.

There is a time for everything and a season for every purpose under heaven. We pray that you will give us the discernment to know the better things, the better way, the higher path that fulfills your plan and purpose in our lives, that promotes the health of the body of Christ in the time that remains to us in this life. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen.