

This morning, I want to invite you as we continue to worship by turning in God's word to Philippians chapter four. And what we've been doing over the last couple of months as a church is walking through this entire letter to the church at Philippi. The Philippiian Church. And this is a church that we have seen the beginning of, and we looked over in the book of Acts at when Paul was on this journey, going over to Macedonia and then he goes to this city called Philippi. And then he experiences this incredible intervention of God, of God opening the prison. Paul's been in prison, and he is about to go out, but then, instead of fleeing the prison, he stays, and he actually leads a Philippiian jailer to Christ. We hear of another believer that's already become a follower of Christ named Lydia, who's kind of a leading woman in the city of Philippi.

And so we see these believers, and we know that Paul's heart is deeply for these people. He loves them. He shares a deep level of friendship and concern for them. And that's all in Philippians chapter one. But Paul is developing this theme of humility because he doesn't want pride to creep into the life of the church and to make it unfruitful. Pride always makes our lives unfruitful, because pride decreases our dependence on God. In pride, we always think that we've got this, that there's a self-reliance that comes with pride. And so anytime that pride is growing, our relationship with God is getting weaker and further apart. And so he doesn't want that. He wants them to remember Christ. And so he puts on display the gospel again, and he says, "just remember, Christ did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

And he says this and this beautiful poetic way—a psalm that really captures the humility of Christ, but then also the exaltation, the lifting up of Jesus Christ. And then that moves him into chapter three—from chapter two, where he's lifting up the name of Christ—into this application of what he's talking about. And he goes through the significance of our relationship with Christ. Of being in Christ and how we have this ideology—a way of thinking, a worldview—that is different from the world now that we're in Christ. And he puts that on display. And in chapter four, he moves into this passage that we're going to be looking at today, but that we also looked at last week where he's orienting them. He's ending, then, with an orientation kind of ending, so that they, again, are focused on Christ. That they don't lose perspective.

And I don't know about you, but it is amazing to me the brief span of time it takes for me to lose orientation. I don't know if you've ever been there before, where you're in the parking lot—it's a multiple-story parking lot—and you parked there, and you were pretty sure that it was on level three. And you go, and you go back to level three, and you remember it was by one of the columns. And so you're getting there, and then your car's not there. And think about the disorientation that takes place in the span of nanoseconds. Your first thought is someone "stole the car!" Your second thought is, "why would anybody steal my car?" You know, like, "how desperate is this person that they would want my car?" And so then you're like, "no, that makes no sense." And so then you're like, "I must have parked on another level." And then you're like, "how am I going to figure out my level?" Like, "was it level two? Was it level four? What's my strategy here? I know it was somewhere not too far off the ground." And so you begin to kind of panic, but like it's this looking around, and like, there's all of a sudden this disorientation that takes place in just the span of a few moments.

Well, that's parking. That's the easy one, right? But when, all of a sudden, you get the email from a supervisor that says, "we need to talk." Disorientation just floods in. "Oh man, what would I do if I lost my job?" Panic just sets in in a moment—nanoseconds pass by. You see something on your spouse's phone, or you see something on your child's phone, and in nanoseconds, you're like, "oh man. What do I do? How do I deal with this? What's going on?" A diagnosis. "Hey, we need to talk. Hey, you need to come in. Hey, you need to be at the E.R." Nanoseconds pass, and our lives enter into a chaos. And those chaoses are real. And what you're not going to hear me say today from God's word is, "shame on you for

allowing these difficulties to be real." No, they're real. They're real. People really do lose their job. People really do go through great relational strain. People really do go through real sickness and even face death itself.

These things are real. And that's exactly what Paul is acknowledging, is they are real. Brothers and sisters, you have real strength available to you in a real savior, a real Christ, a real king. It's real. It's real for the real chaos that you are in at this very moment. It's real for the real provision that you are in need of right now, at this moment. It's real. And so we turn to the real God in his real word, and I invite you to stand for the reading of it, to receive from the Lord what he speaks to you as the church today. Beginning in Philippians 4:10. Hear God speak today from His word.

"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me. Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship. And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that is increasing to your account. But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

Father, we pray that today you would speak to us through Your word and You would give us the spinal message of orientation that we need today, Father, for the real hard that we're facing, the real challenges that we live in. God, that this would be a real moment of experiencing Your grace in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It's in his name that we pray. Amen. You can be seated.

Today. What I want us to see, this is a unique passage in that we often can maybe be a little confused by it because Paul seems to go back and forth. He seems to say, "you ought to give to help meet the need." And then he says, "but I don't need it." And you're like, "well, which one is it?" There's a rhetoric—a way of speaking and writing—that's going on that was very common in the 1st century in how someone would communicate. And so while seemingly saying, "I appreciate your gift, but I don't need it," which today, 21st century, we would say, "well, that's kind of a slap in the face. It's kind of a backhanded compliment." "Thanks, but no thanks." We would kind of look at this and be a little confused. But as some of the commentators that I studied this week brought to the surface is that there's a little bit of back and forth here that would've made a lot more sense 2000 years ago.

It's important for us to know that Paul—again, you have to look at it in light of all of Philippians—he's been saying how much he loves these guys. How much he respects them. That there's nobody like them. That there's nobody that brings as much joy to him. So it'd be kind of an odd thing for him to end on a note of like, "but I don't really need you." Instead, he's commending them in this act of giving. He's commending them, encouraging them, telling them to keep going. But what he does in it is he reminds them, yet again, of the secret of their existence. The core of who they are. The real key to living, if you will. And it's through Christ Jesus, our Lord. This is consistent with everything he's spoken. This is consistent with everything he writes in the entire New Testament. And we see it on display here that the gospel does things. The gospel changes us.

And so what we're going to see today is what the gospel does, and how the gospel orients us as the people of God. And so first of all, what we see is this: the gospel makes us fellow workers. The gospel makes us fellow workers. This is picking up on a theme that he started back in Phillipians 1:7. He says, "we are partners." So another way of saying "fellow workers" would be to say, "we are partners." But I think it's important because today when we talk about partners, you might think about a business. "We're business partners." And maybe one business partner just put in some money to help make the business work while the other partner is more "boots on the ground," actually doing the work on a daily basis of a business.

Paul is trying to get across to them that, "no, I'm concerned that you are boots on the ground with me." It's not that he's just saying, "I just need some more money." There's something so much more deep about this financial support because it was accompanied, remember, by a person. Who was the person? Epaphroditus. They literally would accompany the money with people from the congregation in order to be of great support to him. There was something significant bound up in this partnership that went deeper than just philanthropy, charitable giving, or a tax deduction at the end of the year for the church at Philippi. This wasn't what they were after. They were really after a deeper partnership with him.

It's important for us to note that when he talks about how the gospel makes us fellow workers, we see it in verse 10, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me." This is important. He's saying, "your partnership with me is reactivating at this moment." Verse 14, "still, you did well by partnering with me"—being a co-laborer, a co-worker with me—"partnering with me in my hardship." He commends them, that, "you weren't just with me when times were good, you were with me when times were hard in this moment that you're helping me." In verses 15 through 16, he reminds them, "and you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone." It's important for us to be reminded of this. That this is a church that knows what it is to give sacrificially. In fact, Paul puts them up as an example for other churches to follow, specifically the church in Corinth. In 2nd Corinthians 8, he uses this church—this church in Macedonia, the church at Philippi—as an example that out of their extreme affliction and out of their extreme poverty, it resulted in this abundance of giving.

It reminds us of the widow's mite, right? Afflicted loss of a husband, now looking to provide for herself. In extreme poverty. All she had was the widow's mite. She only had this one little shackle to live on. And what does she do with it? She puts it in and gives it. And Jesus stops everything and says, "do you see what she's just done? She's put in more than everyone else." This woman who's living in affliction, this woman who's living in poverty, it has resulted in an abundance of worship to the Lord. And this in a day when people were being sure that their money clinked a little bit more than the others. They could hear their coins hitting it. Maybe take their time with it. This widow's mite would've made no sound. The Lord heard it. The Lord saw it. And it resulted in praise, glory, and honor to God.

You see, when the gospel makes us fellow workers, what it doesn't make us is missions and ministry panhandlers. In other words, what we are not seeing advocated for in this passage is that ministers and missionaries are to come and, with the pan in the hand, to be saying, "I sure hope you love the Lord" and then guilt people of God into giving and to pass the plate, if you will, in order to get sympathy dollars to flow into our ministries. That's not what Paul's advocating for. This isn't his way, in his day, of doing "the ask" at the end. Where you get up, and you tell a bunch of emotional stories, and then you say, "now here's what I'm going to ask for you to do. I'm going to ask for you to give your best gift in this moment." Brothers and sisters, you just need to be aware that even within church culture and nonprofit culture, there's a whole industry devoted just to making "the ask." How to best get people to give on giving. To let go of a little bit more to give to your ministry. And if we're not careful, we can get caught up in an understanding of passages like this that have nothing to do with what Paul was saying. This was

a church that in their affliction—a church that in their poverty—was overflowing in giving to support real ministry and missions. So it's not that.

The gospel makes us fellow workers, not benevolent dictators. Sometimes people, when they begin to give, and they begin to give generously to a ministry, they think, "well, that somehow gives me power over a ministry or a missionary." To begin to say the direction that things go. That's not at all what Paul is advocating for either in this passage. He not communicating that this is how you get your name on the building. That this is how you get your name on the specific thing that you've donated money for. He's not advocating for that kind of heart. Instead, what we see is an overflow of love that's flowing to them in a true and lasting partnership. Notice in the text, in verse 10, that sometimes that partnership needs to be renewed. Notice he says, "once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it."

This idea of renewal is a botany term. Right now, if you look around at crepe myrtle trees in New Orleans, most of them just look like you planted a bunch of sticks. It's just a bunch of branches with no leaves on them. And they're all just kind of dormant. In some ways, that's what he's saying it's like for the church. It wasn't that they were dead. It wasn't that they had no concern, but like a dormant plant waiting for Spring to arrive, they were waiting for this opportunity to show the renewal of their concern and for those leaves and branches to begin to grow. And grow it would. But not just in the sense of growing in their own congregation, but in a fruitful way that would begin to spur on others, which is exactly what we see Paul do in 2nd Corinthians 8. He uses their example.

I remember the conversation that I had in front of the church when I was pastoring Edgewater with a missionary named Ben. Ben is a missionary with his family—his wife and four boys—in the country of Pakistan. And he's been living there for many years now, working with the International Mission Board. And we're so grateful for his ministry and service there. And I can say his first name, and I can even say his country, because Pakistan actually allows people to come in on a missionary visa. So they keep a close watch, but they do allow this to happen in their country. But we were interviewing Ben just like we were interviewing the Bundricks last week. And I asked Ben this question. I said, "Ben, how can we most meaningfully partner with you guys?" And I'll never forget his answer, because I've never gotten over what it meant to him to have a deep, meaningful partnership.

I expected, if I'm just being honest with you, the answer to be "Give to Lottie Moon. Give to the cooperative program. Pray for us. Be sure you get our prayer card. And then if you ever get the chance to go on a short-term trip, come. We'd love to have you." His answer stopped me, and I still haven't gotten over it. He said, "Well, the most meaningful way you can partner with us is by doing the same thing here that we're doing there." Doing the same thing here that we're doing there. Now, that's partnership. Can I tell you that I actually had a little bit of the benevolent dictator heart in me? "Ben, what can we give you? Can we give you some prayers? Can we give you some money?"

Partnership is when we labor together. Ben challenged me that day that I'm supposed to live like a missionary right here in New Orleans. He's given his life to living as a missionary in Pakistan, in the city of Karachi with 13 million residents, and less than 1% know Christ. I do a great disservice to him when I cease to live as a missionary here. I have broken the partnership. So brothers and sisters, Paul here is encouraging them for the sake of the gospel to keep going to live as missionaries. And part of that certainly is the financial aspect. We want to be sure that they're taken care of, but we cannot lose the great commission. We cannot lose the mission. The missionary task. And this is what Paul is constantly encouraging them toward. And he even says in so many words, when he communicates the power of the gospel.

Verse 15, "And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. For even in Thessalonica

you sent gifts for my need several times." Brothers and sisters, you're going to have the chance this week, when you open your newsletter on Tuesday, to be able to partner with missionaries to meet urgent needs—urgent needs of believers, but also urgent needs of those who are just hurting right now—but in a way that will help expand the gospel. Don't miss the partnership opportunity.

Second, the gospel defines our worldview. First of all, the gospel makes us fellow workers, and then secondly, the gospel defines our worldview. Paul, in verses 11 through 13, puts forward an aspect of our thinking that changes everything. Listen to what he says, in verse 11: "I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me."

This is one of these passages that—for us as believers today—we often will see verse 13 on a pillow or on the helmet or the cheek of a football player. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." But we need to step back for a moment from the quick applications to pillows and face masks to step back 2000 years and consider what it is that he's up against at this moment. What was the common way of thinking that maybe he's actually having to counter and begin to train the people to think against?

Well, one was stoicism. Stoicism was this idea, this prevalent thought that we were to really to master ourselves. To master our own emotions. In other words, there are external forces acting on us all the time. That we can't control. You can't control the way that someone else treats you. You can't control things that are happening governmentally all the time. You can't control even things happening in your family all the time. But you are, so stoicism says, in full mastery of your emotions. And that's the realm, the internal realm, that you ought to have full mastery over so that no matter what happens to you, you never lose emotion. You never show emotion. You never become too angry. You never get too sad. You just stay even keel through all that matters. That's stoicism.

Epicureanism is another idea that was prevalent in Paul's day, that Greeks and Romans would've been familiar with and been exposed to. And it is this idea that life is all about exalting and elevating pleasure and minimizing pain. That the fullness of your life really existed in "How do you get the most pleasure out of life?" "What conditions create the most pleasure?" "What way of ordering your day and ordering your physical surroundings—from gardens, to jobs, to way of life—to distancing from having to see things like poverty. To elevate the ultimate pleasure while minimizing any pain, any discomfort. So anything that brought you discomfort, anything that brought you pain, you should distance yourself from while always pursuing the things that made you feel good.

Can I just tell you that's what most podcasts are? A mixture somewhere between stoicism and epicureanism. That's much of what we are drinking today as a culture. Things haven't changed too much in the last 2000 years. There's this constant rhetoric that we're hearing that we ought to be able to be in complete control of our own minds—to control our own emotions and our own thoughts. It's all about self-mastery. And we would never say, "Oh, I'm an epicurean in my thinking." No, we just say, "I just want life to be good. I just want life to be easy. I just want it to be pleasurable and, and not too hard." And that's how we orient ourselves.

But notice that when Paul steps in, he counters both of those because what he doesn't say is that I can do all things, period. That's stoicism. He doesn't step in and say that I know no pain. That's epicureanism. He steps in, in this reality of sometimes "I'm well fed, sometimes I'm hungry. Sometimes I have plenty, sometimes I don't have much. But I've learned this secret to contentment. I can do all things through Christ (external) who strengthens me. I have to be acted on by Christ." In other words, he's admitting before everybody, "I'm weak. I'm weak." He's admitting to everybody, "I go through highs and lows." He's admitting to everyone there are external forces operating on him. "I can't control

whether I'll have plenty of food or not. I can't control whether I'll be safe or in danger. I can't control these things." And just like you and I, he's identifying that we are not in control of all of these things, nor are we in perfect control over this body of emotions, this body of up and down.

But there is One who is. There is One who is able to calm the storm, both within and the one on the waters. There is One who is able to satisfy needs without material provision. There is One who's able to bring joy in the midst of sorrow. There is One who is able to give peace that surpasses understanding of my situation. He is pointing them to knowing the One who is strength. He is strength. It's not just that He gives it. He himself is it. And He invades our lives, and He comes in, and He gives us the strength and the power that we need in the most difficult and darker moments.

I won't ever forget the moment after Hurricane Katrina. Some of you still remember those days. I was a member of Edgewater Baptist Church, and after the storm, we had a tent that we put up in the parking lot. And for two years, while our building was destroyed, we met in the parking lot every Sunday morning. In fact, we became a destination on one of the tour routes. So on Sundays, a tour bus would roll up while we're having church, and everybody queued up to the window taking pictures, and they keep on rolling. Some of you guys remember those days, those post-Katrina days. People just came here to see how bad it was.

And so we're gathering, and we're worshiping, and we're doing all these things. And one year after the storm, we had this really special service of just acknowledging God's faithfulness in the midst of the difficulty. All of these things of loss. And I'll never forget this moment because it just humbled me to the core. There was an elderly widow in our church. Her name was Herme King. Miss Herme. A German by birth. She had a thick accent and had been living in New Orleans for over 40 years. She lost everything. She lost everything. She was not well-insured to where it just all worked out. Her story was one of those of trying to figure out how to begin to put the pieces together and was never able to come back to the city. But she came back to that special one-year worship service. And she got up, and she began to give testimony to the goodness of God. And then she said these words, and this is just one of those moments that just broke through my heart. She said, in her thick accent, "the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

This is a woman who lost everything. A woman who was not just resigned to the fact that "God gives, and God takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." But A woman who was celebrating the fact that "God gives, God takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And it changed this guy. It did something for me, in that moment. Teaching me what it meant to have contentment in Christ. Of what it was have a beautiful home, to be in a community, and then to lose it all in a moment and be displaced for the rest of her life. To not be back in the city she loved. The Lord gives, and He takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Notice his strength comes from Christ. Strength of contentment in little, and strength of contentment and a lot. Can I just tell you, brothers and sisters, that in our day in America in 2023, it is important for us to know that we will need the strength of the Lord to resist the temptation to love the things of the world.

Affluence is a great test of your faith in mind. Affluence. Because we can so easily become lovers of pleasure, lovers of self, whose God becomes our stomach. These are the very things that he's warned this church about in these couple of chapters. Brothers and sisters, we need strength there. And then there are others that in this room right now are saying, "Pastor, I wish that was my test. I wish I had the test of affluence. I think I'd pass that one. I'm on the other end of the scale, the test of poverty." See, it's always the thought that "if I could just have more..." It is the test that causes those on the other end with affluence to say, "if I just had a little more..." And you see it's a common orientation if I just had more rather than contentment.

And Paul is saying that there are different seasons that we go through, and God brings us into those seasons, but his strength is efficient in our weakness. Some of you need to hear that this morning. His strength is efficient in your weakness. Right now, what you're going through, His strength is efficient in your weakness. Or as Paul says that I'm able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.

And then he takes all of this ideology, this worldview, the way that he's orienting them by the gospel, and then he says, "brothers and sisters, the gospel will fuel your worship." The gospel fuels our worship. Look at verses 19 and 20. "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." It's important to see that he goes right into doxology, into worship. He's just oriented them by the gospel to this way of thinking about material possession or the lack thereof. But notice that verse 19 is another one that, if we take it out of its context, we can make it to mean many things. "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." This is not an epicurean promise. A promise that God will always give you more, and more, and more, and more, and more, and more stuff. That God will always just elevate your enjoyment, that you'll never go through hard stuff. That's the epicurean promise. That's a false ideology that always leaves people lacking. That when they get more and more stuff, there's still the emptiness of the soul. So don't believe that lie. Don't believe that that's the promise.

It's also not an insurance policy. This is not God inviting you to overextend yourself. To say, "I'm going to take on more debt than really I should, but God will supply all my needs, so if I have the need to meet this really large mortgage or this really big car payment or this really big loan that I've taken out, well then God will meet it. I'm just going to do this in faith." That's bad business. I hope you don't get the loan, if that's your thinking. "Well, you know, I just God'll make it all work out." Sometimes there are bad ideas that we pin on God, and then we come back to verses like this, and we say, "God, I thought you had me. I'm defaulting on my loan. The credit card company is calling."

Brothers and sisters, those are just signs that we've bought into the epicurean promise. That we needed more, and more, and more stuff in order for us to have happiness and joy in this life, and we need to return to Christ. We need to return to Christ. But notice it is a promise and one that we desperately need. You see, sometimes we throw the baby out with the bathwater on things like this. Sometimes when a pastor is trying so hard to help train a congregation to be on guard against the prosperity gospel of the "name it and claim it," "just believe in faith," "if you'll just sow a hundred dollars, you'll get a thousand dollars" kind of mindset that's so prevalent in our culture today that sometimes we throw out the promise that's clearly on the page. "And my God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Some of you need to cling to that promise in this moment, because you have been giving your life to Christ. You've been trusting Christ. You've been following Christ to the best of your knowledge and of your ability. You've been obedient to Christ, and in a moment right now, you're in a test. You need the promise that my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. And there's this future orientation that's taking place. But he is certainly meaning that in this life you will experience your needs met in Christ in ways that only God will get the glory, you'll see Him meet your needs as you look to His Son to be your provider.

Rightly understood, it results in worship. The way we can know if we're disoriented is we actually say, "I feel like I'm more away from God. The more that I've pursued this way of life, it's taking me further and further away." There is a way of looking to Christ rightly in light of promises like this that brings us closer and closer to God rather than further and further away from Him. Where we see, and we acknowledge, and we trust, that He was the one who was providing. That it was Him who provided in this moment. All of this takes place because of the gospel.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know about you, but this passage was one that was confronting me this week. It was confronting me over whether I'm truly looking to Christ to be my contentment in this life. Have I allowed myself, have you allowed yourself, to venture into that epicurean thought of elevating pleasure and minimizing pain? That that's the real secret to life? Have you bought into the notion of stoicism? That basically it's just you. You're an island, and nothing can touch you. You are strong and self-reliant. You don't need anyone. That also is a lie. Both can lead us further and further away from Christ, but those ideas are packaged differently. They get really attractive today, in our age, to lead us in a way of thinking and a way of living that takes us away from Christ.

And so what you may need to do today is to surrender again. To literally come and kneel at these steps and say, "Lord, my eyes have been on so many things, but not on Christ." And for some of you today, this may be the very first time that you're realizing "my eyes are on so many things, and my eyes have never been on Christ. The gospel's never been an orienting understanding. I have always thought God wanted me to be a good person and to do good things. That that was kind of the point." What this book teaches is that you and I are broken people. We're weak. We don't have control even over our own bodies to make right decisions. We give end into temptations. We gratify the flesh. We act in selfishness. Even though that wasn't God's design—that wasn't how he created us to be—that's where we are. And as much as we try to start good habits and start doing good things and have positive attitudes, none of those things really takes away our sin. None of those things really brings in peace. There is one who does, and his name is Jesus.

And many in this room, you've prayed and said, "I trust Jesus." "Jesus, I give you my life." "I surrender." But this also reminds us that we can be deceived. We can be led astray. We can begin to drift. We can make a shipwreck of our faith, as Paul says. And so, for all of us, this moment becomes the same moment. Looking to Christ. For you that have never looked to Christ, look to Christ. You that have said, "I look to Christ," look to Him again. Come back to Him again. The gospel gives orientation for all of our lives, all of the time. And so in this moment, I invite you who have not looked to Christ in a while and you have never looked to Him, to come here, eyes closed, and pray that you might see Christ.

Father, I pray that in this moment of response, that this will be a time when we, as your people, we who have come here seeking and looking for One who could save us and to give us hope, that we would all together look to Christ who is our hope. So God, as we sing songs of response, Lord, may we also humble ourselves and return to Christ in this moment. It's in His name, we pray.

I'm going to invite everyone to stand. We'll be singing, but I also want to invite those that need to bow before the Lord in prayer to come and respond during this time.