

Breaking Down the Door of Despair

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. How lovely to see you. And let me just extend my welcome. If this is your first time here at Brunsfield, it is lovely to have you with us. My name is Graham. I'm the pastor here of the church.

Here's what we normally do at this point in our service just for the next 25 minutes or so, he says confidently. We're just going to spend a bit of time looking at this passage together. So let me encourage you, if you have a Bible there, to turn back to the passage.

If not, the words will go on the screen or you can grab a Bible in front of you. But you know how we all have friends who don't do small talk, right?

And normally the golden rule is if you can't think of anyone, it's probably you, okay? Friends who don't do small talk. Well, here's a question that I remember a friend came straight up and asked me one day. They said, is there anything that if you found out it was or wasn't true, is there anything that would cause you to give up your Christian faith?

Which is a really good question if you think about it, isn't it? Is there anything that if you found out it was true or wasn't true would cause you to give up the Christian faith? And the answer to that question, of course, is yes. Absolutely, it's yes.

[1 : 0 8] The answer to that question is yes. You see, the central claim of Christianity is that there was a man who lived called Jesus. He was crucified on a cross and a few days later he verifiably rose from the dead.

Now, if that isn't true, right? If time team were to be able to do a Jerusalem special, go on an archaeological dig, uncover his bones, then let me just say Jesus isn't worth following on Twitter, let alone with your life.

I certainly wouldn't be here on a Sunday morning if this weren't true. The beaten heart of the Bible is that not only is the resurrection of Jesus the biggest fact in history, but also, and here's whoever you are here today, here's why I'd love you to listen to what this passage is saying to you.

It's the biggest fact in history, but this is God's solution. Jesus is God's solution to the two biggest issues that we've been wrestling with as a culture over the last two years.

Two issues I'm not sure we've got an answer to, and the two issues I think in light of this week are the two issues that are front and center of our minds. Do you know what they are?

[2 : 1 8] Death and discrimination slash division. And this is what God would say to both of them. And I was on Twitter the other day, I was seeing a guy who was talking about how, for him, the best thing about the return to life sport, to get back into a ground again, was the fact that for 90 minutes he can escape how hard his life is.

Right? The reason I saw it is because everybody's liking it, everyone's retweeting it, everyone's quoting it. Not because people really like football. You can substitute anything in there for what you're saying. But people understand it.

It's true, isn't it? These two things have just battered our minds and battered our hearts over the last couple of years. We're wrestling with it. How do we make sense of it all? Do you know, apparently, I learned this on Ant and Dec's Saturday night takeaway, apparently 7.26pm on a Saturday night is the happiest minute of the week.

Okay? Because what can we do on Saturday night? What do we love to do? Just get away from it all. Yeah? Flip that round. 7.29 on a Monday morning.

Generally, this is somebody's research. 7.29 on a Monday morning is the lowest point of the week when the waves of worry hit us and we turn back to reality. And we just find it really hard.

[3 : 43] And this is what this passage is saying today. The news of the crucified and risen Jesus is the news that smashes down the door of despair and offers hope to a dying and a fractured and a broken world.

And here's what I want us to see in the next 20 minutes or so. Two things I want us to see from this passage. Okay? Here's number one. This is what the gospel does. The gospel, the news about the Jesus who came, who lived, who died, who rose again.

What that means. That's what Christians call the gospel. Here's what it is. It does two things. Here's the first one. It raises up desperate people. So this section in the book of Acts, Luke focuses in on this man called Peter.

And this is where we jump into the passage today, if you've got it there. Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples who spent three years of his life watching, listening, and learning from Jesus.

And the risen Jesus has tasked Peter and the other disciples to take the gospel. So this good news, but who Jesus is, what he's done, take it to the ends of the earth.

[4 : 50] We jump into verse 32 of chapter 9. Jump into chapter 32.

And we find Peter going to two places. And he encounters in those two places two people. Those two people have two very different problems. Firstly, he goes to this place called Lydda, verse 32.

And he meets this man called Anias. That is his name. What's his problem? His problem, if you see it in the text, is that he is paralyzed. He has been bedridden for eight years.

That's the eyewitness details of who this man is. Now you've got to understand that every angle we look at this man from, it's heartbreaking, is it not? It's utterly heartbreaking. Had the people in Lydda completely forgotten about this man?

The thing we need to say from this text is that God hadn't forgotten about this man. God sees this man. God's sovereign. He's in control over all this. People bumping into each other. It's not coincidence.

[5 : 56] God is orchestrating all of this. So Peter bumps into this man and he says, Jesus Christ heals you. The man's healed. What's the result of that?

This man gets his life back. And people turned to the Lord. You see that description there? They turned to the Lord. I love that the Bible uses this word repentance.

It's what it means. It means to stop going your way. To repent. To turn around and start going God's way. That's what it means. I love it. At its heart it means to change your mind about who Jesus is.

Whereas before you looked at Jesus and his death on the cross and you thought to yourself victim and loser. Now you look at him on the cross and you say victor and Lord.

It's to turn your mind. To change your mind about who Jesus is. We'll rattle through this. Next person is this woman called Tabitha. She's just a little bit up the coast in this place called Joppa.

[6 : 59] We get a little bit more of a description of her. Verse 36. What is she doing? She's always doing good. She's giving to the poor. She's helping people.

She's making things. She's clearly skilled with her hands. She makes things like clothes and bags. But Tabitha, the distressing news, is that she becomes ill and dies.

Peter goes in. He gets down on his knees and he prays. And this dead woman comes back to life. Again, what's the pattern? This woman gets her life back.

And what do the people do? They believed in the Lord. Believed in the Lord. And I take it what's going on here is Luke is using these two words. The doctor-cum-historian who's written this.

He's helping us see that to turn and believe are two sides of the one coin. If you're here today, that is going to be the call of this passage. To change your mind about who Jesus is.

[8 : 01] Repentance coin. Turn and believe. And what's going on at this unique moment in history is that these things are happening to authenticate Peter in the eyes of the watching world.

Right? It's almost like God is shining a spotlight on this man. And he's declaring to the world that this man is no bogus gas man who's turned up at your door. Right? This man, his message are legit.

This is who he is. You can trust what he's saying. And I take it we're meant to respond in exactly the same way as we see what the risen Jesus is doing through Peter.

But more than that, we've got to see here that if our trust is in Jesus, then this might not be what happens to us now.

We need to be clear on that. I think this is unique for this time. But this will certainly be what happens to each and every one of us if our trust is in Jesus in heaven.

[9 : 03] We'll be greeted with those words. Jesus Christ heals you. And some of us just need to take that in like a sweet this morning.

Just take it in. Allow the sugar of that verse to hit your bloodstream. Jesus Christ heals you. It's our future. It might not be our present, but it's our future. And here's what I notice in the text.

I never noticed it before. We're doing this for years. I always love it in the Bible. You read this for years and you realize there's just oceans that you've not discovered here. Okay? Who is it that Peter particularly wants to see what Jesus has done in the life of Tabitha?

Who is it that he calls for? He calls for the widows. Now, the widows were the ones in the immediate context were the ones who were absolutely devastated about Tabitha's death.

Do you see it? They were absolutely devastated. They surrounded Peter, just showing him things, as if to say, do you see how much this has affected us? Now, what is a widow by definition?

[10 : 09] It's somebody whose husband has died. And perhaps Tabitha, I don't know, I'm just reading between the lines here. Perhaps Tabitha was a dear friend of all of these people.

And it's almost as if Peter understands that for these people, death has just stung them again. And they just cannot handle any more of it.

Each time it happens, it gets more painful. I remember speaking to a lady once, coming to her, I think, 80s. And just talking about how she just, what happened? I'm just losing my friends. That's really hard.

And if you're here today, and that's you, and I take it all of us, that is the case as we just look at what's going on in our world and our personal lives and on in the world. And we're just sick of death.

I take it God would particularly want you to know this. It's almost like he would seek you out today and say, see what happens to Tabitha. Right? It's not like she's turned into Wonder Woman here.

[11 : 12] She will die again. But people looking at this thinking, do you know what? Even if she dies, Jesus holds her life. Jesus can give her life back. And he'll do that to all of his people one day when he returns to make all things new.

This really is a message of hope. The gospel really does raise up desperate people. And I take it if you've seen it on your news screens recently, that is why so many Christians in Ukraine. I don't know if you saw the video of them in the metro station, just singing hymns.

Just singing hymns. Somebody translated it, just the death and resurrection of Jesus. Just singing hymns to their friends. Singing hymns to their culture. Because this is where hope is to be found in the darkest of moments.

The gospel raises up desperate people. It raises up desperate people. And secondly, the gospel smashes down dividing walls. And I think what happens next, I don't think it's any exaggeration to say, it's one of, it is the most significant moment in the book of Acts.

But it's one of the most significant moments in the entirety of the Bible, what happens here. And if we're to get it, why that's the case, I think we need to understand a nickname. It's one of these strange things that we do as human beings, isn't it?

[12 : 28] We all know people with good nicknames. But we all know people, I'm sure maybe some of us are here, that we suffer because of a bad nickname. You've got to understand here, the Jews have got a really bad nickname for the Gentiles.

They called them dogs. Right? You ever been to the third world? You're just dogs running about. Right? We're not talking about Butze the Chihuahua here when they called them dogs.

We're talking about street roaming, flea ridden, rabies carrying, undomesticated pest society. That you just need to put it down. And the Jews look at the Gentiles.

Gentiles just means non-Jews. Everyone else in the world and say, you guys are dogs. And do you know what? The hatred there, the Gentiles just sent it right back. The events in the hundred years prior to this have only irritated and inflamed the whole situation.

You have got two tribes here at each other's throats. And Peter's a Jew. So he's grown up with that mindset that there are only two tribes in the world.

[13 : 33] There are only two teams. There are us and them. There are Jews and non-Jews. Jews and Gentiles. And here's the thing I think to see in the context of the passage. There are clean and unclean.

Clean and unclean. And like water and oil, the two cannot mix. Jews and Gentiles cannot mix. And you ask yourself, where has Peter got that from?

The Old Testament, God has said to his people, I want you to live distinctly. As my people in the world. I want you to realize in your heads that you're different.

From the peoples of the world around about you who do their things, who worship their so-called gods. I want you to understand that you're different. You worship the living God who created the world.

And to get it into their heads that to be right with him, to be his people, they need to be clean. He's given them these lists of things that they had to consider unclean.

[14 : 33] And the point of it, I take it, was so that the Gentiles would look in at Israel and see that they do things different. And we might be at a different point in history to this, but we've got to understand that the overarching principle is kind of the same in a way.

The world would look in and say, they don't behave like us. They don't live like us. And they would look in and say, well, surely it shows us how great Israel's God is. And that he's made a way for us to be clean before him.

And all these laws were to get it in the minds of the peoples. So that when Jesus came in the scene, people would see that it's only him who can make us clean before this God.

It's only him and his work on the cross that can make us clean before him. But what had happened is that the Jews had taken all these Old Testament laws about how they are to live and about being clean and unclean.

And what they'd done is they'd twisted it and developed a pride-filled superiority complex when it comes to the rest of the world. Because, hey, hey, hey, God's chosen us. We're doing the thing.

[15 : 38] We're living the life. They're not. They're not. And so verse 1 of chapter 10, and you've got to see how big this is. This is huge. Enter stage right.

A dog. This Roman centurion, this soldier called Cornelius. Right? He lives up on the coast in this place called Caesarea.

Right? Caesar. You get what's going on here. He's a Roman soldier living in a kind of Roman place. He's a God-fearing man. Which I take it means that whilst he's not heard of Jesus, he believes in the gods that the Jews worship.

And an angel appears to him and says, go and find this man, Peter. And so he sends a little cohort to get the Jew who's at Joppa.

And it's interesting in the text. He sends, you see it. He sends two of his servants, which was fine. But he also sends one of his devout soldiers. Because I think even Cornelius at this point is perhaps hedging his bets.

[16 : 41] Is this really a thing? What's interesting is that centuries before, in a Bible story, there was another Jew at Joppa.

His name was Jonah. And God sent him to the Babylonians, to this enemy pagan people, to the Gentiles. Because the thing in that story is that God has compassion for people.

Loves people. The good news is to go to all nations. And Jonah had to run to them to tell them to repent and turn to God and be saved. But Jonah, so great was his hatred for the people outside.

So strong and deep was the prejudice in his heart that he got on a boat and got out of there because he just couldn't bring himself to go to a people who were non-Jewish. So here's the question then that hangs over Acts 10.

Will this Jew at Joppa do the same? Will he overcome the prejudice in his heart or is history just going to repeat itself? Is the gospel bigger than the hatred in humanity's heart?

[17 : 51] Does the gospel have the power to break down the barriers that our world naturally puts up? Does it have the power to unite people from all around the world under the banner of Jesus? Peter has a vision.

Verse 12. This large sheet comes down from heaven containing all sorts of reptiles, four-footed animals and birds. And Peter's told to rise and eat. Right? Now we look at that and we see some kind of meat platter you would get at a restaurant, don't we?

Right? Like something, if you've ever been to that, is it Shebeen that's down the South African restaurant on Lothian Road? You can order just a bucket of meat. Right? But that's what's going on here.

It's just a meat in a sheet. But Peter looks at that and sees all kind of foods to be avoided. No wonder he had to see this thing three times to get his mind around it because it's just so countercultural to anything he's understood.

It goes against the grain of everything that he and his people stand for. But the key, verse 15. God says this in light, remember this is in light of Jesus coming.

[18 : 55] God says, do not call anything impure that God has made clean. And Peter goes with them to Caesarea, verse 24. And he enters Cornelius' house.

Now you know that feeling you get of nervousness when you go into someone's house for the first time. Right? Different smells. Different etiquette. I mean, is it shoes off? Is it shoes on?

Different people? Is it handshakes or is it hugs? That just feeling when you're going somewhere different for the first time. Multiply that by a hundred. I don't think you're even getting close to how Peter is feeling as the guest.

And Cornelius is feeling as the host in this moment. God understand it. This is one small step for Peter. But it's one giant leap for the church of Jesus Christ.

And that's why I think Luke makes such a big deal of it. He stepped into his house. Now we do something in our culture today, don't we? The people that we have in our homes.

[19 : 57] The people that we are associating with. The people that we want to welcome and love. In this day, a Jew would never step in a Gentile's house. And a Gentile would never step in a Jew's house.

So here is one small step for Peter. But one giant leap for the church of Jesus Christ. And Cornelius, do you see what he does? I take it this is just nerves. He doesn't know what to do. He falls at Peter's feet.

Right? Now the question is, what is Peter going to do here? If you think about it. One of your Gentile enemies, a Roman soldier, has just fallen at your feet. You're in his home.

What are you tempted to do? Everything that your history of your people has taught you to do. What would you do? Oh yeah, you know your place, son. You dog. That's right. You get down on your feet.

No, no, no. Peter says what? He says, stand up. Peter refused to be treated by Cornelius as if he were a god. And he also refused to treat Cornelius as if he were a dog.

[20 : 59] And the two speak. And you see how they speak. They speak what? Eye to eye. Eye to eye. Do you see how this is such a big moment here? Sometimes we can just skip this.

This is a huge moment. And Cornelius says, verse 32, tell us what God has told you to say. Now get this. I haven't seen this until this week. What's he doing? He said, tell us.

Right? We're all ears. All ears. Now the thing is, the last time Peter came face to face with a Roman soldier, he struck his ear off.

Defending Jesus. No way these gentiles are coming in and taking my Lord. Peter's ready with his sword. Takes off his ear. Now, as Cornelius says, tell us the news.

Peter speaks word into the ear of this Roman soldier proclaiming Jesus. Peter relays the vision and hears what it means.

[22 : 00] Verse 34. I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism. You see the barrier has been smashed down here? But he accepts from every nation the one who fears him and who does what is right.

Now here's where we need to do a little bit of work. It's not like God has changed his mind. He's always had this in his heart. This is the heart of the triune God of the Bible.

Ever since Genesis 12 and Abraham, God has said that through you I'm going to bless the nations of the world. So this God has not changed his mind. This God has always had a heart for the peoples of the world.

The question is, why did it take Peter so long to grasp it? He's been with Jesus for three years. It cannot be just the case, friends.

You know your own heart. How fickle we are. How slow we are to grasp at times God's heart for a world. Aren't we all just influenced by our culture in ways I think that we probably wouldn't even admit to?

[23 : 04] Aren't there depths in our own hearts? Like some kind of David Attenborough documentary exploring the deep. There's just someone comes up. Isn't there in each of us we looked hard enough dark areas of our hearts that we don't even realize are there until we're put in situations and we meet certain people.

And I take it this is what's going on in Peter's heart here. You know my kids often do that. They top the stairs and they chuck the slinky down.

Remember doing that as a kid? Chuck the slinky, chuck it down. Every so often they'll come through to me and just throw it at me. I say, Dad, can you fix it? Right? So I'm sitting there with this slinky. How on earth have you got it in this state?

Remember these slinkies? You just get tangled, tangled. And so you're looking at this thing. And just slowly, slowly, slowly, you're just untangling it.

Uncoiling it. Putting it back together again. And just takes you forever, forever, forever. But before you know it, here's how it was meant to be.

[24 : 07] And I take it that sin, our rebellion against God that deserves hell and judgment, the sin in our hearts that Jesus took on the cross. He's not just saved us.

He is transforming us. And I take it that's what is going on in our hearts. Is that Jesus is coming along, getting involved in our lives by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. And he's just uncoiling it.

As if to say, you were made in God's image. That image has been marred by sin at the fall. But I have come on and saved you. And to bear that image once again.

I'm doing that uncoiling work in your heart. That's what Peter needs Jesus to do. He needs him to uncoil his crooked heart. And so in this dog's house, Peter gets it.

One small step for Peter. But one giant leap for the church of Jesus. She goes on to tell him about him. Anointed by God. Crucified by man. Verse 39.

[25 : 11] On a tree. That's Old Testament language. Anyone who's hung in a tree is considered cursed by God. And that's the thing. Jesus doesn't deserve to be cursed. But I do.

He takes my place. He takes my curse. He takes the punishment. And the hell that I deserve for my sin against a righteous God on himself as he dies on the tree. Peter says God raised him.

And that's why they're getting into such trouble in the book of Acts. It's not so much the fact that Jesus died. Because everyone's saying, yes he did. And we killed him. No, no, no. God raised him again. And that means that everything that this Jesus said is true.

And God raised him and he appointed him to be judge of the living and the dead. Meaning that every single human being who's ever existed will one day have to give an account of their life to this Jesus.

And is that no good news in light of everything that we've seen over the last week? That God sees every single bullet. That God sees every single sword. That God sees every single death.

[26 : 10] That God sees every single birth. And no one is getting away with anything. And I take it that it's also news that should humble us.

Because if Jesus hasn't paid for our sin on the cross, friends, we'll have to pay for our sin on the cross when we come face to face with a holy God. And Cornelius and his companions hear the message.

And just like Aeneas and Tabitha, they believed it. And the Holy Spirit falls. And it's the same Holy Spirit. And again, we've got to see what's going on here. The very presence of Jesus that fell on the Jews back in chapter 2.

This visible representation that the Gentiles have received. The same spirit that the Jews have received. And Peter urges them to get baptized. And again, I take it that's what's going on.

Just this unity thing. Jews and Gentiles. Coming to faith in Jesus. In chapter 11, we didn't have time to read it.

[27 : 09] Peter gets criticized when he breaks this news of what God has done. And then he goes on to explain it. And he says, they have received the same gift.

Leading the Jews back in Jerusalem to exclaim verse 17 of chapter 11. So then even to the Gentiles, God has granted repentance that leads to life.

God is bringing the Jews and the Gentiles together here to form his church. Do you see this then? That's what this means. To be a Christian is not about your performance. It's not about place.

It's not about pedigree. It's about a person. It's about Jesus. It's about anyone from anywhere, from any time, coming to put their faith in this Jesus Christ.

What he's done on the cross. The fact that he's ridden and what he will one day do. This Jesus who offers life. So let me offer you two challenges just as we kind of bring this towards a close this morning.

[28 : 10] If you're here today and you're not a Christian, here's what I want you to see. It wasn't enough for Cornelius here to be a God-fearer. Right? Or to be a good person.

He needed to respond to the message of the crucified and the risen Jesus. Peter's not interested in Cornelius bowing before him. He said, get on your feet. I'm just a man. But he is interested in Cornelius bowing before Jesus.

What's on offer for you today? See that word at verse 36 of chapter 10. What is on offer? The good news of peace through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.

Peace is on offer to you today. The God who your sin has put you at odds with. Through Jesus, peace is offered to you today. And here's what this means in Second Challenge to the Church.

This passage, what it calls us to do is to go in an all-out search of our hearts. Is there any kind of prejudice, friends? Dear brothers and sisters, is there any kind of prejudice that's in our hearts today?

[29 : 19] Is there any kind of hatred or envy of people who are different to us? All these barriers that we see wreaking havoc in our world today. Class, social status, race, gender, political leanings, education levels, postcode, where are you from?

All of these things that the world puts up, do you see how they're just not on in the Church of Jesus Christ? Here's the question, application. When was the last time you had someone into your home who's not just like you?

We've got a wonderful chance today at the church lunch upstairs or even just this morning in here. Go and speak to somebody who's different to you. Go and speak to somebody for whom the only explanation that you would be hanging out here today is Jesus.

And tell them how much you love them. You know, it's not fair to say that you will get ahead in our city and every city in the world, often not by your work ethic, but based on where you live, what you have, who you know.

And the Church of Jesus is to be different. Because grace has transformed how we do things. What a powerful witness to a world at a loss when it comes to understanding how to overcome divides.

[30 : 27] That people could look in here, just a little microcosm of what God is doing all over the world, and say, what is it that's brought those people together? You know, Mark Zuckerberg famously said his vision for Facebook was to bring the world closer together.

I'm very thankful for Zoom and for technology and everything that goes on. And I love keeping up with friends on the other side of the world. But as far as bringing the world closer together, I just don't see it.

I just don't see it. But here's what I do see. I'm going to close with this. I do see the Church. Okay, I was speaking through in Glasgow last Sunday, and a church some of you might know called Greenview in Glasgow.

And the day before, the pastor there call, and he sends me a text, and just says, mate, would you mind sending me your script? I just assumed, what you're probably assuming here, that he just wanted to check it for accuracy, right? Nothing like a vote of confidence on a Saturday night.

But he says, send me your script. But do you know why he wanted my script? Because he was going to spend a bit of time translating it into Farsi. Because that church they've been doing, they've connected with a number of Iranian folks in their community.

[31 : 40] Doing a Christianity Explorer course, just getting to know one another. And it's just thrilling to hear what God is doing. He said a few of them became Christians. I wasn't sure who.

Some of them were just thinking about it. It's lovely just to get to know people, particularly in that part of Glasgow. It was just so multicultural to connect with different people. But what happened is there was three Iranian guys that came up to me at the end.

And they just said, broken English, just thank you. I panicked. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what was cultural. So I kind of did it back. Inside I'm going, get here, mate. You know, come on.

It's amazing that you're here. And it's amazing that you and I would be able to look at each other and say, brother, I have a connection. You cannot explain that. How do you explain it?

Not by nationality, not by geography, not by language, not by hobbies, not by class, not by profession. How do you explain that? You explain it by the one thing at the beating heart of Christianity.

[32 : 39] The one thing that if it's not true, means that this whole church thing is just a waste of time. You explain it by the common faith that we both have in and the common forgiveness in life that we have experienced through the crucified and the risen Jesus.

Let me just say, I forgot to mention this earlier. Zoom prayer call tomorrow night. We're going to be particularly praying for the situation in Ukraine. So please do come to that tomorrow night. And it's a way of showing our solidarity, isn't it?

As people, someone described it, they just feel helpless. That's how I kind of feel. Well, we can pray. Solidarity with the church over there, brothers and sisters, but just praying for the whole situation.

But this is who brings us together. It's this Jesus. This is one small step for Peter, but it's one giant leap for the church of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray, shall we? And so, Heavenly Father, I just thank you for today.

[33 : 53] And I thank you for Jesus. And I thank you that he is the Savior, that you unites together every single person over the world who believes in him, unites us together in his church.

Lord, we recognize that at times we have not been good at just demonstrating the unity and diversity which he's brought about. And so, Father, I pray today that you would help us respond well, that you would help us just demonstrate this unity which he's brought about.

Father, would you convict us of areas where we need to change? Would you help us see opportunities to share the love of Jesus with the people, our neighbors, that we rub shoulders with every day?

And, Father, if we're here today and we don't know this Jesus, if we're here today and everything that's going on in the world is causing us to panic and fear and doubt and question, I pray that the same Jesus would walk off the pages of Scripture and into their hearts today.

And, Father, we just thank you for your great love for us that came seeking us out when we were running from you. And I pray you would help us to grasp that love even more today, at the darkest of times.

[35 : 12] Thank you that Jesus is the one who called himself the light of the world. And it's in his precious name that we pray. Amen. Amen.