

Be Still

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[0 : 0 0] Over the past weeks, we looked at two of the many women in the Bible who are part of God's redemptive story. You know, Robert Rowe, he preached for us a few weeks ago, and he showed us Jesus' compassion for the widow of Nain.

You remember whose son he raised from the dead and gave back to her. And we also looked at Jesus' interaction with the sinful woman who worshipped at his feet in Simon's home.

And the Lord led me back to 1 Samuel, where there's another woman who plays a very important part in the good providence of God that we've been talking about and singing about today in his redemptive story.

So we'll look at Hannah's story in 1 Samuel as we go along this morning. But let's just read a few verses from Isaiah 45 that just remind us of the gracious providence of God in our lives.

Isaiah 45, 5-7 I am the Lord, and there is no other. Besides me, there is no God. I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me.

[1 : 1 2] I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things.

Amen. The word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your blessing. Thank you for the worship this morning that you have drawn us to yourself.

Thank you for bringing us here, each one. Help us to delight in your word and your commandments. To seek you with our whole being, our whole hearts. To store up your truths in our hearts so that we won't sin against you in unbelief.

Teach us all you want us to know today from your word, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. So 1 Samuel begins with the account of Hannah, who is from the hill country of Ephraim, and she's troubled in her spirit with a heart that is very sad.

And she's crying out to God to remember her. You know, God, do you see me? Do you understand my need? Will you take compassion on me? And will you give me a child?

[2 : 3 6] And God is watching over Hannah with fatherly care and in his sovereign grace. He does have a good plan for her and for Israel through her godly faith. Little did Hannah realize, but her son would actually become the kingmaker in Israel because her son Samuel was the one who anointed both King Saul and King David. And from the line of David comes the King of Kings, right?

Jesus, who we've been worshiping and who we adore and who we long to come back. We sing about him in the providence of God and through the simple faith of a godly woman.

Hannah plays a very important part in God's rescue plan that brings rescue to you through your faith in Christ. So let's look at the first few verses of Samuel and we'll try to read through this chapter as we go along. From the first eight verses, there was a certain man of Ramatham Zophim of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zoph, and Ephrathite. He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.

And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons? You know, we could wonder why God chose to begin his books about King Saul and King David with Hannah and Elkanah and this terrible person, Peninnah. You know, Hannah is a godly woman of faith who's crying out to God for help. And well, there are some themes in 1 and 2 Samuel that Hannah's story helped to introduce. First of all, God gives more grace to the humble. Do you know that? God resists the proud, but he gives more grace to the humble.

And his tendency is to make your inability the place where he begins his best work. Hannah's done all she can do in her ability, and now she can only turn to God's ability, God's undeserved favor. And for the person who gets to the end of their rope, for the Christian, right, who gets to the end of their rope, that's a good place to be when we have nowhere else to turn but to turn to God. Another theme that we see in Hannah's story and throughout the books of Samuel is that despite suffering, suffered by the fall, there's great hope, right, because God is graciously guiding the history of his people as the Belgic Confession encourages us, right? He's not abandoned you to chance or to fortune, but he leads and governs us all according to his holy will in such a way that nothing in this world happens without his orderly arrangement. So God is the king. He's the king of the universe, right? And as Isaiah reminds us, there's no other king. We have no one else to turn to. All of human history intends to point us to the one perfect king, Jesus, who we are united to by faith, right?

[7 : 07] That's our identity as a Christian, that we are united. We are in union with Christ. God rules the universe and everything in it, so you can rest in his good providence, you can trust him with your whole heart, and you can recognize that you're a steward of his gifts.

You're not an owner, all right? So that's where we're going this morning as we try to unpack this story, this in the redemption story, Hannah's Place. God rules the universe, everything in it. You can rest in God's good providence, and you can trust him with your whole heart and your whole being, and you can recognize that you're a steward of the gifts that God has given to you, not really an owner.

God rules, so we need to rest in his good providence, not in self-determination. You know, the scriptures teach us that we're not to be overly dependent on others. Instead, we're to work so we can help others who may be in need. The Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, he says that you should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders, and so that you'll not be dependent on anybody. Paul says, don't be lazy, right? Your effort, your effort is important. Work with your hands. But the problem is when, when humans cancel God's good providence and his fatherly care, and they embrace self-determination, then they give themselves the credit instead of giving glory to God. You know, instead of resting in his control, we tend to put ourselves in the driver's seat. Self-determination wants us to believe that we and our efforts are responsible for the outcomes, whatever happens. But Hannah, she understood inability. She understood her weakness. She wasn't trying to be in the driver's seat. She had a personal faith and a personal God who she knew could see her and could have compassion and could act on her behalf. You know, of all the characters in 1 and 2 Samuel, no one has greater faith than Hannah. She is a godly woman of faith. She's a model of our need to rest in God's good providence and not in ourselves. You know, being a childless woman carried a stigma in that culture to the point that it was thought, if you couldn't have children, that that was a curse, that that was God.

And the passage does say twice, right, that we read that God closed her womb. But it wasn't because of any sin that Hannah had committed that God closed her womb. God in his providence, he was working his plan. And to make matters worse, Penina, the other wife, you know, she was acting like a self-righteous bully. But even in her sin, even in the sin, God was using Penina. You know, that's what God does.

He uses our sin, he uses the sin of others. And Penina was really driving Hannah closer to God. You remember how God used the sin of Joseph's brothers, right, and what Joseph said to them after all those years and all the treachery that they had done against Joseph? He said, what did he say? You meant it for evil, but God, God meant it for good, right? He recognized the providence of God that you see so clearly in the life of Joseph, in the story of Joseph.

[11 : 04] God rules so we can rest in his good and gracious providence. And there are many examples of God's providence in scripture. And one that comes to mind is the death of Ahab of Israel in 1 Kings 22.

In chapter 21, it says that there was no one who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel, his wife, incited. So he was not one of the good kings in Israel, right? And his wife was probably worse. You know, it's a terrible thing when, you know, an evil woman incites an evil man to do more evil. And this was the story of Ahab and Jezebel. And God was going to do something about Ahab's leading God's people astray. And King Ahab wants to take Israel to war.

And he inquires of God's prophet, Micaiah, his faithful prophet, whether he should go to war. Now, he had already inquired of 400 other prophets, 400 false prophets, who all in unison told him the same thing. They said, you should go. You're going to be victorious. Go to war against your enemies.

Ahab. But Ahab's not completely satisfied with that. He wants to hear one more affirmation from Micaiah, the prophet. And he complains that Micaiah, you know, Micaiah is the guy that never gives me a good report. He never tells me what I want to hear. And they go to, you know, somebody, messenger goes to Micaiah, the prophet, and he says, now, these, all these prophets have given a good report. Now, you need to give a good report too. And he says, no, I'm only going to say what God tells me to say. And so he comes before the king and he says, go, go to war, you know, you will be victorious. But Ahab doesn't believe him because, you know, he's always had this reputation of giving him a bad report. He said, how many times have I told you I want the truth? And so Micaiah, the prophet says, okay, this is the truth. You're going to die in that battle. And, you know, you tell the king something like that. You can imagine he flew into a rage and somebody comes and slaps Micaiah around and the king has him thrown in prison. He says, put him in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water until I return in peace. And Micaiah says, you're not going to return. So all these false prophets, you know, God, had actually, the scripture says, had sent a lying spirit to all of these prophets so that they would in unison tell Ahab what he should do, what God wanted him to do, what God had planned for him to entice him. Micaiah says, I see the people scattered like sheep without a shepherd.

But he's thrown in prison and Ahab goes ahead with his plan. You know, he says, I'm going to deal with you when I get back. Well, on the day of battle, one of the enemy soldiers shot an arrow. The text says at random, an arrow was shot, not really aiming at anything in particular, but guess where the arrow ended up? You know, it somehow flew right to Ahab. And even though Ahab was wearing body armor, he had this, like a chain mail armor with, also had a breastplate, so scale armor and a breastplate covering the armor. So he had two means of defense against the enemy arrows. Somehow the arrow went through between the breastplate and the scale armor. And maybe where the scale armor was tied up, you know, there was an opening. The arrow went right into Ahab. And he didn't die immediately.

[15 : 00] They propped him up so he could watch the battle, watch the failure of the battle, and he died. So imagine what a coincidence, you know, what a chance that this arrow was shot at random.

You know, do you believe that? Do you believe in chance or is it God arranging and doing his work very well unjustly? You know, even when the devils and wicked men act unjustly, God rules his world very well so we can rest. We can rest in his good providence. And even when people are carrying out all kinds of wickedness, that God is not out of control. He hasn't, you know, left. He hasn't wound up the clock and he's letting it wind down and he's turned his back. So we can let go of trying to determine outcomes all by ourselves. Think about this. You know, if God is good and he's in control of even an arrow that flies through the air, and Jesus said he's in control of even the sparrow that flies through the air or falls to the ground, and if you're more value than sparrows, as Jesus said, and you're a lot more value than arrows, then why should he leave you to chance, right? Why would he leave your life to chance? Hannah believed that God was in control of even a pregnancy. You know, that God was in control of the reproductive system. He's the one who forms every life in the womb.

Maybe there's a sermon from Hannah there on Sanctity of Life Sunday for another time, but, you know, maybe God has you experiencing a real sense of your own weakness or your own inability in some circumstance right now, and you just need a reminder, you know, that God is in control.

Maybe it's some conflict or trouble in your spirit. He wants you to rest in his good and his gracious providence. Maybe it's your health, and we know there are ways that we can control our health, right? We can improve our health. We can keep the aging process somewhat at bay, but not completely, right? None of us are in complete control of any of that. Maybe you're experiencing a conflict in a relationship, and there are things we can do in a conflict in a relationship and things we should do to try to bring peace, but we're only in control of our own hearts, right?

We're not in control of someone else's heart. Only God, only God by faith can bring about change in someone's heart, in our own hearts. God is your Father who cares for you, so you can rest in his good providence. Don't think you can crowd him out of the driver's seat, right? He's firmly in the driver's seat. He has control, and he wants you to trust in him with your whole heart that he sees you and that he hears you, and he's at work in your life and in the world. Reading on from verse 9, in 1 Samuel, after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. Hannah was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly, and she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head. And she continued praying before the Lord. As she continued praying before the Lord,

[19 : 02] Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart. Only her lips moved and her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And maybe there was some history there.

I don't know why he would assume that she was drunk. Maybe there are others who come to the sanctuary. I've had too much wine. And Eli said to her, How long will you go on being drunk?

Put your wine away from you. But Hannah answered, No, my Lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I've drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord.

Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman. For all along I've been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation. Then Eli answered, Go in peace. And the God of Israel grants your petition that you have made to him. And she said, Let your servant find favor in your eyes.

Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord. Then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son.

[20 : 13] And she called his name Samuel. For she said, I have asked for him from the Lord. You know, Samuel, the name Samuel means name of God or offspring of God. So think about your children.

You could name them offspring of God. And by faith, right, we're all offspring of God. We are his children. We are sons and daughters of the King. I think it was John Piper, Pastor John Piper, who said that the reason God gives us real life stories of real people in the Bible, people like Hannah and Elkanah and Peninnah, is to help us feel in our bones, not just know in our heads that God is for us.

Often when we think, you know, God is far from us or he's maybe even abandoned us, the truth is that he's right there. He's right there laying a foundation for our greater happiness, for his greater glory and for our good. When we think all is lost and, you know, trouble and God, where are you? You know, that's when he's doing his best work. Many times. Hannah could have thought that God had abandoned her, but her troubled spirit actually made her draw closer to the Lord. And in her great anxiety, she leaned in more. She leaned more on God and his favor. And she took Eli's words of blessing as encouragement that God had indeed heard and would answer her prayer in due time. And her whole countenance changed. Her face was no longer sad. She left Shiloh trusting by faith that God was at work in her life and in the world. You know, faith can be stronger or weaker at times. We want a strong faith. We don't want to have a weak faith, but oftentimes because of the nature of our human condition, it wavers back and forth, right? One time Jesus' disciples tried to heal a boy with epileptic seizures. He was suffering terribly and his father brought him to the disciples and he was falling into the fire and into water, but they couldn't heal the boy. And so the father, you know, brought him to Jesus and said, you know, your disciples, I brought this boy to your disciples. They couldn't heal. Could you heal him? And in chapter 17 of Matthew, he writes that Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of the boy and he was healed instantly. And of course, the disciples, they later came to Jesus privately and asked him, you know, what was, what's wrong with us? Why couldn't we cast out the demon? And

Jesus said to them, you know, in compassion, he said, it's because you had little faith. You know, it's not that they had no faith because they were following Jesus, right? It's just that they need a little stronger faith. They need a little more faith in God to do his work. And it was a teachable moment for Jesus where he says, if you have faith like the grain of a mustard seed, that's pretty small. The grain of a mustard seed, what did he say you could do? You could move mountains, right? In other words, you could do what seems impossible if you just have the faith of a mustard seed. And we know the faith of the disciples did grow stronger and stronger the more they followed Jesus. Certainly, their faith was very strong after the resurrection where they ended up turning the world upside down.

Think about the degree of faith of the two thieves being crucified on either side of Jesus when he was on the cross. You know, one of them had zero faith because all he was doing was provoking and he was cursing Jesus. And the other had enough faith to simply ask Jesus, will you remember me?

[24 : 11] When you come into your kingdom, will you remember me? And Jesus said, truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise. That guy may have the shortest testimony of faith in Christ of anybody, you know, in the world. The guy may have, when he got to heaven, Pastor Alistair Begg gives an illustration about the thief on the cross. And he says, imagine if St. Peter met him at the gate and the thief comes in and he says, so what's your testimony? Tell us, you know, how did you come to faith in Christ? And he said, well, I don't know. You know, I just asked, the guy in the middle told me I could come. You know, I asked him if I could come and he said, sure, you can come. You can come with me today in paradise. So he, he had enough faith. The thief, uh, had enough faith for God to move a mountain, for God to do the impossible, to, to turn a thieving saint, a thieving sinner into a saint. You know, in the hour of his death, he recognized who Jesus was. And he cried out to

Jesus in faith to, to believe. You know, God wants your wholehearted faith and trust. He wants your faith in his unlimited love for you to grow stronger and stronger every day.

He wants you to trust in him when you're tempted to believe that he doesn't love you. He doesn't see you. He doesn't have compassion. He's somehow forgotten all about you. No, he wants you to turn away from that kind of sinful unbelief and self-reliance. That's really the definition of repentance, right? It's turning away from self-reliance. It's turning away from that sin of unbelief and turning to Christ and following him. He wants you to believe and obey.

Often we determine the strength or weakness of our faith. I think we can determine that by what it is that keeps us up at night, right? You wake up in the night. What is it, what is it that you're worrying about? I have to repent sometimes that I wake up and I'm carrying a burden that I don't have any business carrying, that I should have cast on the Lord Jesus and let him have it. He says, I'll give you rest. Cast your cares on me. And so I need to ask him for more faith, to strengthen my faith, to know that he's not left me without the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. He's here as the Comforter and an ever-present help. So think about right now the thing that keeps you awake at night.

You know, what is it that's got you all tied up in knots that you're worried about, that God is not really in control? I think also part of trusting him with our whole heart is also believing that we're stewards of his gifts, that we're not owners. Everything we have, everything you have comes to you as a gift from God.

[27 : 21] Your children are gifts from God. And Hannah vowed to give Samuel to the Lord all the days of his life to give back to the Lord what he had given to her. Verse 21 says, The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow.

But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, As soon as the child is weaned, I'll bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever.

Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Do what seems best to you. Wait until you've weaned him. Only may the Lord establish his word. So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flower, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young.

Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my Lord, as you live, my Lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him.

Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there. So Hannah had made a vow before the Lord, and by God's grace, she kept the vow. She took Samuel there, and that must have been a hard thing for her to say goodbye to this little boy. It says he was very young, probably around three years old, after he was weaned.

[29 : 03] And it says, Samuel worshipped the Lord there. Hannah gave up her most precious possession to the Lord. What God had entrusted to her, she gave back to him. And later we read that Hannah made Samuel a little robe, and every year she would travel to Shiloh, and she took it to him as he grew in service to the Lord and his people. And each year when she went, Eli would speak to her, and he would say a blessing over Hannah and her husband, and he would say to Elkanah, may the Lord give you children by this dear woman for the petition she asked of the Lord. And then they would return home. And guess what?

Hannah had three more sons and two daughters. So six children in all, right? Do you think she was ever tempted to say to Peninnah, do you see? Do you see what God did? I'm sure that was a temptation, but she didn't need to say anything, right? Because everybody could see what God had done. This great reversal, the barren woman has her quiver full. Another example of the great reversal in God's kingdom is the time when his disciples came to ask Jesus, you remember, who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And what did Jesus do? And Matthew 18 records, what did he do? He gave them an object lesson, right? He called a little child, maybe like a three-year-old child, and put him in the midst of them and said, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. So unless you experience a conversion, unless you turn, unless your heart is changed, where you can see that to become like a little child is how you enter the kingdom of heaven. If you believe that you're the proud owner of your life or you're the proud owner of your possessions because you have earned them, you're in control, basically, then Jesus is calling you to turn, to turn away, to repent from that sort of unbelief. To achieve greatness in God's kingdom requires the humility of a child. So childlike trust, how would we describe it? Well, it comes with a vulnerability, right? Children are vulnerable. It comes with an inability to advance their own cause without the help and the resources and the guidance of a loving parent. A three-year-old doesn't lay awake at night and worry about the college fund, right? They trust in their parent. There's a vulnerability and an inability of all the gifts God gives to us. You know, we value our children and our grandchildren as the greatest blessing next to the gospel. Found out a few weeks ago that we're going to be grandparents and we're really excited. You know, we're, we're, yeah. I understand it's a really cool thing, so I'm already making plans. My wife is already spending money. You know, we want what's best for our children and our grandchildren. We want what's best for them and we sometimes may think that that comes in our own strength, in our ability to provide for them our own resources. But the truth is, you know, from the time they're babies to the time they enter middle school, we may believe that we're truly in control because we might be able to control some things. We might be able to control some behavior. But at some point, we realize we're not in control of their hearts, right? Maybe it happens in middle school.

Those preteen years may be, we're not in control of their minds and their hearts. We may control behavior, yes, in the early years. But the best gift that we can give to our children is just a regular dose of the good news of God's grace for them in the gospel. At least Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson have written this book, Give Them Grace, Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus, that some of us have read together and really were blessed by. And that's kind of the theme throughout their book is, you know, give grace to your children. Give them the gospel. Remind them of the goodness of God and that he's in control. You're not in control. You can't change the heart of your child. And you don't just want compliant children. You don't just want them outwardly to be compliant. But you want to speak to the conscience because you want their heart to be for God. You want them to turn and not trust in themselves. So the best thing we can give to them is a reminder of the gospel that we as parents have a childlike vulnerability and inability and dependence on God just as they do. You know,

I'm sure Samuel grew up hearing the story often of how the Lord opened the womb of his mother so he could be born into the world. And I'm sure in his young mind he came to understand that God was the owner of my life. I was brought here for a purpose, raised in the temple and in the tabernacle with Eli.

Eli, his mother and father, he understood, were stewards. And Eli, the priest, was steward, not the owner. You know, if you're a parent, this is one of the hardest things, I think, of parents, and there are many parents I know at New City and parents we know of a wayward child. Someone who is seemingly straight away or maybe they're not yet a believer and we're praying for them, keep encouraging them. I think what Hannah would say to us is just keep reminding them of the good news of the gospel.

[35 : 25] You know, keep setting an example in your own life. God is faithful and he sees what you need and he will answer. We don't know what God knows. We don't know all the good that he is working in our lives for his glory. Hannah didn't know. In giving Samuel over to the Lord, she had no idea how influential her son would become in God's redemptive plan. And we have no idea the future holds for us or for our family. We don't know what our love and prayers will accomplish, but we can just be obedient in faith, right, and just do what we know we can do. And that's trust God and by faith believe that he is in control. He's listening. We just finished discussing this morning in a Sunday school class this book, *Come Back Barbara, Father's Pursuit of a Prodigal Daughter*.

Many of you have read it. And it's the story of Jack Miller and his daughter Barbara who kind of went astray. She wasn't a believer from 18 to about 28 for about 10 years, lived the prodigal life.

And we've been blessed. My wife and I have been blessed a lot just by hearing their story and applying it also to our own adult kids. And this is what he says in the last few pages of this book.

If you struggle with a rebellious child, ask God to show you his view of power, God's view of power in human relationships. From him you'll learn that the power of God does not consist in the capacity to control others or to get your way by playing games. Instead, it begins with the release of love. The power of God, he says, begins with the release of love as you forgive your erring child. It expresses itself in the capacity to endure when your love is ignored or even rejected. It is the power to mount a love offensive by doing good right on the heels of your being wrong. So they came to realize, Jack and Rosemary Miller came to realize that they were stewards. They were not owners. They didn't control Barbara's heart, but they learned a lot along the way. They did a lot of repenting themselves.

And God did his work. God brought her back. And now she's had an incredible influence through this book and through her ministry. And her husband became a pastor and just a great story of God's blessing, the faithfulness of his people. But we are recognizing that we are not the ones in control.

[38 : 11] God is in the driver's seat. God knows our situation. So may we at New City, may we be on a love offensive. I really like that, what he said, that we just love those. And it may not be your child. It may be somebody else's child or it may be another relationship in your life that you've given a lot of advice. And maybe you haven't listened a lot or you haven't loved a lot. He's saying this love offensive for our kids and other people's kids and other relationships, that's where the power of God comes and brings about change by his grace. So may we be content to follow Christ, to seek his will and his word, to rest in his good providence, to trust him with our whole heart, and to recognize that we are stewards of the gifts that God has given us. We are ambassadors of his grace, by grace. Amen? Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word again this morning. Thank you for the worship and thank you for the work that you're doing. 10,000 things all the time that we don't see.

The work that you're doing in the lives of these 30 or so kids that went to urban camp, calling them to greater faith in you, to trust in you, and in us as well as adults, that you're continually working in our lives, drawing us to you. Help us to model the gospel that you have given to us, that you model so well, Lord Jesus, that love offensive for those that need grace as we do. And we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.