



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

James 3: 1-18

Fall 2021

"Tongues On Fire"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth and good morning. That is a good Scripture reading before the reading of our text this morning—about our words being acceptable to the LORD because we have an extensive text on both the ‘tongue’ and ‘wisdom’. I’m going to take the whole chapter because I think both those subjects, which are the subjects of this chapter 3 of James, go together. So it’s a lengthy text. I think we can cover it adequately though,

**3** Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. **2** For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. **3** Now if we put the bits into the horses’ mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. **4** Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. **5** So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and *yet* it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell. **7** For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is

tamed and has been tamed by the human race. <sup>8</sup> But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; <sup>10</sup> from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. <sup>11</sup> Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.

<sup>13</sup> Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup> And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

James 3: 1-18

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time in studying it together.

*(Message)* There's an old Jewish teaching that compares the tongue to an arrow. And one day a student asked his rabbi, "Why not another weapon?" The rabbi answered, "Because if a man unsheathes his sword to kill his friend, and his friend pleads with him and begs for mercy, the man may be moved and return the sword to its scabbard. But an arrow, once shot, cannot be returned."

The Bible has a lot to say about the power of speech, for good or evil; and James chapter 3 is the classic text on the subject of the tongue. Like the rabbis, James recognized its potential for evil, as well as good. What they called 'an arrow' he calls 'a fire' — "the very world of iniquity." (vs4).

That's his first subject in chapter 3, the tongue, followed by a second, which is wisdom. The need to control the tongue and practice wisdom. The two are related. That's why I'm taking this entire chapter. They relate together. The power of speech is one of the greatest gifts that God has given mankind; but it takes wisdom to use it for good. Without wisdom, the tongue is uncontrollable.

Now this applies to everyone but James first gives this instruction to teachers. That's understandable. Teaching is done primarily by means of the tongue, through speech. Knowing the responsibility of teaching and the danger of the tongue, James gives a warning. "Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." (vs1).

That statement reflects the nature, or maybe better, the structure of the meeting of the early church. It was open to men in the congregation to speak. And if you're familiar with the service that follows this one, then you know that's what we practice here. In fact, we see that very clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 26. "When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation...Let all things be done for edification." So if someone wanted to teach, he had the opportunity to do that.

And often people want to do that but sometimes it's not always from the purest motives. Sometimes from conceit, and a desire to be up front. (Now I want to say, I haven't noticed that in our congregation. In fact, it seems to me, since we've moved that service to the morning, I can say for myself, I've been blessed greatly by the older men who speak, and many of the younger men. All of the younger men that I've heard speak have done an excellent job.) But I think this was the case with the congregation James was correcting. They were men who were standing and teaching for improper reasons—so he warns them of a "stricter judgment" for teachers.

It's a great privilege to teach. But, 'Greater privilege carries greater responsibility.' Jesus said that. He said it in Luke 12, verse 48. "From everyone who has been given much, much shall be required." Truth is required of the teacher. And the behavior: 'Do as I say, not as I do'...'Won't do!' Consistency in conduct is necessary. All of this required diligence in the study and a watchful walk before others.

It's a good desire to be a teacher. James isn't disparaging that. He was a teacher. He understood the blessing of it—but he also knew that it's a serious responsibility. The person who takes on that responsibility is also put under a stricter judgment, for, as James explains in verse 2, we all stumble in many ways.

Now I'll pause here. There is a caveat here in the Book of James: It's major lesson is; 'Faith that saves is faith that works.' "Prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers..." Chapter 1, verse 22. Obedience is evidence of the new birth and it is the ground of assurance of our salvation—but that doesn't mean perfection. James's point is 'the bent' of saved person's life. That's how he's speaking here. It's the trajectory of a born-again life that he is describing here. Its trajectory is that of obedience.—And that is to be true of us. It's to be the characteristic thing. And there should be seen, as the characteristic feature, *righteousness*—not sin. Yet, we still sin. We sin every day. We sin every hour of the day, every minute of the day.

There's a confession or a prayer that I've quoted before and I'm not quite sure of the source of it. I originally heard it attributed to Robert Murray M'Cheyne. And I've read it as attributed to someone else, but it's very simple. It's, "I even repent of the tears of my repentance." In other words, 'The very best that I can offer and the greatest obedience I offer is still not perfect. There's sin in it'. And so it is in our life. Saints are, as the reformers put it, "righteous sinners." And we will be that till the day we die—and recognizing that as wisdom.

It's wisdom on the one hand, I think, because if you have the perception that, 'I can be perfect; and I'm striving toward that; and will reach that goal', well, that's going to be a disappointing life. We should strive toward that, but we need to realize we will never be perfect in this life. And if we have that assumption, then we're going to be discouraged and disillusioned. No, we're sinners; and that is the reality that we will deal with till the day we die.

But another reason, and I think the real point that James is making here is, we need to realize, (and this is part of wisdom), that the world is full of temptations that are like stumbling blocks. And often, James says, "We stumble." We stumble over these stumbling blocks and into these pitfalls. That's true of all of us, but especially the teacher needs to know that; because the tongue is particularly prone to this kind of failure.

Now that's the tool of the trade of the teacher: To speak—but it is hard to manage. So James says, "If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle (*his*) whole body as well." (vs2b). But you say, 'Well, wait a minute. You just said you're perfect.' What he means by *perfect* there is not sinlessness—he means maturity, a complete person.

The tongue is a window on the soul. What we talk about and how we talk about others reveals a lot about a person; whether he or she is mature or immature; godly or worldly; trustworthy or two faced. In verses 3 and 4 James gives two illustrations from daily life to emphasize the importance of controlling the tongue. The first is from controlling a horse and the second is from navigating a ship. Verse 3, "Now if we put bits into horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct the entire body as well." A small thing like a bit can control the strength of a powerful animal like a horse.

It's the same with a ship. They could be large in ancient times. Merchant ships were capable of carrying 276 passengers besides a large cargo. And while they were propelled by "strong winds" filling their sails, still, James says they are "directed by a very small rudder." (vs4). A bit in a horse's mouth, a small blade in the water do big things. And James says in verse 5, "So also the tongue is a small part of a body, and *yet* it boasts of great things."

Now, the boasts are not all empty. The tongue is a great blessing. It's small, but it can direct crowds and nations in the right direction. We have a good example of that in Acts chapter 19, when the silversmiths of Ephesus became angry with Paul for ruining their business with the Gospel, (these are the men that made little silver shrines to the goddess Artemis or Diana). Paul comes to Ephesus and begins preaching and a revival spreads throughout the city—in fact throughout the entire province of Asia and the

great cities of that province. People were converted and they began to throw away their books and their amulets and idols. And it was affecting the trade of the silversmiths so that they made a great demonstration. They filled the theater, and they cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (vs28). And they were on the brink of rioting, destroying things and hurting people, when the town clerk diffused the situation with calm words of reason—brought order to everything.

Historians like to talk about Franklin Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats" and attributing that to reassuring the nation during a great depression. Winston Churchill, a master orator, inspired England, first Parliament and then the nation, with his speech about blood, toil, tears and sweat as they faced the Second World War.

And the tongue enables teachers to explain God's revelation and help His people understand what it means and how it applies, with sound counsel so that they may understand how they are to live in this world. For we learn that from the Word of God, and it needs to be explained. The tongue is a blessing.

But the tongue is a two-edged sword, and small as it is, it's "boast" can also be catastrophic. And that's more to the point that James is making here, "See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire." (vs5b).

There are plenty of examples of that in history. There are examples of it in church history. There was 'Peter the Hermit'. You've probably not heard of Peter the Hermit: That he was a fervent preacher in the Middle Ages and he stirred up the peasants to go to the first crusade. It's called the Pauper's Crusade. And they were to go out, go to the Holy Land, and they were to free it from the infidels.

Well, they weren't soldiers and they weren't prepared—but they headed off to do that and they were massacred by the Turks before they ever got there. But that fiery tongue of that preacher stirred them up to do that.

Or in modern times, we can think of someone like Hitler, (I suppose that's the obvious example), the opposite of Churchill, who set Germany on fire with his oratory—and ignited a world war; caused the Holocaust; and left his nation in ashes—literally. The

tongue is small, just like a spark is small. But a spark can set a large forest aflame. —And the tongue can kindle terrible trouble in the world and in the church. So, “be quick to hear, slow to speak.” (James 1:19).

James develops this in verse 6. "The tongue is a fire," he says. The Lutheran commentator, Lenski wrote, "Nothing stronger was ever said about the tongue. It inflames human passions like nothing else can. It is an instrument of destruction. Gossip and slander spread quickly; and the result is great hurt and shame. The tongue is a fire." And to that James adds, it is, "...the *very* world of iniquity..."; which may hyperbole, exaggeration, made in order to make the meaning clear: 'A great amount of evil is in it.'

But James may have meant it more literally than that. As one commentator put it, "It is as though all the wickedness of the whole world were wrapped up in that little piece of flesh." And that's hardly an exaggeration. There are few sins that people commit which don't involve the tongue.

Either way, the tongue's potential for destruction is great and it's destructive, corrupting influence is indicated in the next two descriptions: It “defiles the entire body...”, (meaning the entire person), “...and sets on fire the course of *our* life.” (vs6b). By means of speech, evil thoughts and plots are communicated to others and that has a corrupting influence on a person—body and soul. As James puts it, “on the course of our life”—which literally is, ‘on the wheel of our life.’ The wheel was a symbol among the ancients for a person's life, which like a wheel, rolls on a course from birth to death and through various phases of life. And so it speaks of the whole sequence or path of a person's life. The tongue, speech, affects every part of it when it's uncontrolled.

Now, of course, James is personifying the tongue. I think you know that. He's attributing human characteristics to something that isn't human. It's the mind, really, behind the tongue that guides it and that is the source of evil. The tongue is a tool, no better, no worse than the person using it. It is the soul that corrupts the whole being. But it's use of the tongue, if not disciplined, will set aflame the whole course of a person's life.

This is true of social conversation, it's true of political rhetoric, and it's true of the preaching/teaching of theological and moral discourse. When false teachers come, and when false teaching occurs in the church, it affects the course of people's lives. When men who occupy seats of authority make false pronouncements, it has lifelong consequences.

Paul gives an example of that in Romans chapter 1 where he speaks of immorality among the Gentiles. It begins with apostasy and then it develops into moral chaos. And he explains this process and the individuals involved in it—and then he describes, toward the end of the chapter, the worst of all. He calls them, among other things, “inventors of evil” who not only practice the things that they know are “worthy of death”, (things they know are wrong), but they “also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” (Rom 1: 30-31). They are the enablers. They are the very worst in that whole chapter.

Often young people struggle with physical desires over spiritual issues—and these people use their power of persuasion, they use their position of authority to validate sin, deny what is right, and guide the naive into corruption. From the pulpit or the lecture hall, they encourage people to follow the zeitgeist, the spirit of the age, and take the easy path. They are corrupters and they do that largely through speech. They may sound reasonable; sound tolerant and compassionate; but James gives the source of their influence. The tongue, he says, "is set on fire by hell." (vs7b).

Now there are two kinds of fire—at least two kinds; fire that purifies and illuminates; and fire that destroys. It was fire from the altar that cleansed Isaiah's lips so that he could be God's prophet. The Holy Spirit came on the apostles at Pentecost with tongues of fire and enabled them to speak with purity and power. The eyes of Christ are described in Revelation chapter 1, verse 14 as being “like a flame of fire”; referring to the purity of His vision: That He sees clearly; He will judge perfectly; He will cleanse the world.

But the opposite fire, what James is referring to here, is impure and inflames passions. It is satanic, "set on fire by hell", meaning it permits itself to be influenced by evil. There's no greater example of that than the serpent in the garden whose tongue was used by Satan to soothingly, encouragingly, deceptively sway Eve against the LORD God—who loved her, cared deeply for her, infinitely for her, and had a glorious plan for her.

Well, that kind of twisted use of the tongue is developed by James in verse 7 where he describes its strength and how untamable the tongue is; "For every species of beast and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the seas is tamed and has been tamed by the human race." Now by taming animals he doesn't mean domesticating them, necessarily, but controlling them. Man's been able to master all of the animals of the world and use them for his good.

He can rule over nature but he can't rule over himself. He's fallen—and he can't master the tongue. We can tame lions, "But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison." (vs8). By the grace of God, all things are possible. But humanly speaking, by ourselves, no one can tame the tongue.

Some time or other, the best of us put our foot in our mouth. Well, I did. Sorry, I try—but it happens. Those are the unintended, embarrassing statements which show that we always need to be on guard.

But this is more nefarious, what James is speaking of here—more like 'the adulteress whose lips drip honey', according to Proverbs 5:3. It is a "restless evil", James says. It is constantly prone to break out in wicked words. It is pictured as an animal continually pacing; never resting. 'Full of poison', he says, like a serpent ready to strike. And so you get the impression he looks at the tongue as like a serpent in someone's mouth...and it's just ready to strike out.

Now again, it's not just poison in the tongue. Earlier James recognized the tongue's usefulness and he does that in verse 9; but it's inconsistent. It is double-

dealing, which show its perversity; "With it we bless our LORD and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God."

Now here James recognizes that the tongue is not the real culprit—it's only the instrument of sin. It's the tool of the heart or the mind and it reveals the real nature of the human condition, which is a kind of Jekyll and Hyde personality. A 'model'—and then a monster: Blessing God on the one hand, then cursing men on the other.

God should be blessed and praised—and blessed as 'LORD' and 'Father'. The two titles are glorious; they speak of God's majesty and His love. They speak of His sovereignty and His grace. And we should be praising Him in that way all the time.

It was customary for pious Jews to do that, when speaking of God, to add the words, "Blessed be He", after they had made reference to Him. And James would have seen a lot of that in Jerusalem. But he also witnessed, in those same people, a different personality when they came to people whom they didn't respect, they didn't like, whom they cursed in a moment of anger or disrespect.

He wasn't referring to Paul pronouncing an 'anathema' on men who perverted the Gospel. We read about that in our earlier studies in Galatians: in Galatians chapter 1, verses 6 through 9. He's not referring to that. James was referring to people who cursed others out of prejudice and bitterness. The contradiction is that those who curse people are cursing people created in the image of God. —And so to treat man with disrespect or to belittle him, who is in the image of God, is in a sense to impute dishonor to God by dishonoring the image of God. In John 7, verse 49, the religious leaders slandered the crowd that was following Christ, describing them as 'ignorant of the Law' and "accursed"...And we have our own ways of doing that as well.

James rejects such behavior and in verse 10 says, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way." It's a gentle rebuke. He recognizes human frailty, and that, as he said in verse 2, "...we all stumble." Nobody's perfect. But still, it is wrong. He calls them brethren. He's talking to those he assumes and believes are genuine believers—and he's giving this correction, because we all fail in these ways.

But such conduct for a Christian is inconsistent with the life that the brethren have, that believers have—and that we possess. The life that we possess is different from that. When it happens it arises from the sin that is in us; what Paul speaks of in Romans chapter 7, that defeats him.

He speaks of it also in Galatians chapter 5, verse 7; the war between 'the flesh and the Spirit'. It is an inconsistency that is impossible from the Holy Spirit and the new nature that Christians have. And to make that point, that this is a gross inconsistency and shouldn't be in our lives, he illustrates it from nature, again, in verse 11 and 12: 'fresh water and salt water can't flow from the same source, from the same spring. Fig trees don't produce olives, vines don't produce figs.' Nature is completely consistent. It's governed by natural laws that prevent inconsistency. So how much more ought we, with a new nature, new hearts, possessed of the Holy Spirit, how much more ought we to be consistent with this new life that we have?

Well broadly, James was saying, "...prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers..." (1:22). And he is applying that narrowly here to the use of the tongue. Use it to honor the LORD God—not dishonor Him. But again, it's difficult, it's difficult to do. We all fail.

That's why James gives this next lesson; 'To speak well we need wisdom.' So James takes up the next part of chapter 3 and that subject of wisdom in verses 13 through 18. It's a logical development in his thought.

James began the chapter giving a counsel to teachers; they especially need wisdom. But like his instruction on the tongue, this instruction on wisdom applies to all Christians, as well. The tongue and the whole course of life can only be controlled, humanly speaking, by a wise mind. And James here contrasts two kinds of wisdom; Godly wisdom and worldly wisdom.

He begins in verse 13, "Who among you is wise and understanding?" It is essential that we be both wise and understanding. Wisdom can be defined very simply as 'skill in living'; while understanding is 'knowledge'—it's knowing the facts and the

truth of Scripture. It's knowing the meaning of Scripture. Whether it's a teacher or not, all of us need to possess those two things, wisdom and knowledge; knowing and understanding the meaning of Scripture; and how and when to apply it; and then do it. We're to strive for that.

James is laying down a challenge here. He asks, 'Who has it? Well, then do it, if you have it. It's not enough to possess it. We must practice wisdom. Otherwise it's as worthless as faith without works.' So he says to the one who professes to have wisdom, he tells them to 'Prove it!' — "Let him show it by his good behavior his deeds in gentleness of wisdom." (vs13).

Good behavior is governed by gentleness. This is the opposite of arrogance or self-assertiveness. It is not weakness.; it might seem to be that, but it's not weakness. It's been defined as 'power under control'. It's listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, verse 23. So the idea here of gentleness is, as one writer put it, "strength under the control of the Spirit of God." He doesn't feel the need to fight for recognition. That is, this wise person doesn't feel the need to do that. Instead, he's characterized by modesty. He or she may be aggressive in acquiring knowledge, may be aggressive and diligent in doing good deeds, but not aggressive in self-promotion. "Gentleness of wisdom" enables a person to lead a selfless life that uses the tongue for good and not evil. That's wisdom.

But there is a second kind of wisdom. It's the opposite of gentleness. It's 'false wisdom'. I think we could probably characterize it more as 'cunning'; it knows how to use things and maneuver through the world to gain personal advantage. And James describes that in verses 14 and 15. First it consists of wrong motives: in verse 14, "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth." These are the traits of a person who wants to build a kingdom for himself. He's motivated by pride and the desire to promote himself.

James may have been writing to people in these other churches with that kind of selfish ambition. If so, if these traits were in any would be teacher, then he should not

take on that responsibility. He called for self-reflection because he is not qualified, or she is not qualified, and the warning of verse 1 applies. Otherwise he will be 'lying against the truth', James says. He may teach the truth, but his life is a denial of it. His life, his actions, his motives repudiate the very truth that he's teaching. And in time, that becomes known; these things are revealed. James called this 'wisdom', but I think he's being charitable when he did that—or sarcastic. And while that probably goes without saying, he makes it clear in verse 15, where he identifies the origin of this wisdom and character, "This wisdom," he writes, "is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural..." It's not divine wisdom—it's worldly wisdom, natural wisdom. It's shortsighted; it's all about the temporal; not the eternal. It's all about self and not others—not about God. In fact, more than that, he says it's "demonic".

James saw the work of demons in that kind of wisdom because it was selfish and it was disruptive of the work of the church. And I think that's how it can be and will be known. Thoughts and motives are hidden. In fact, we're not even sometimes clear about our own thoughts and motives, but they can be identified by results, (by bad results).

As I said, these things, these motives, become known, "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing." (vs16). That word, *disorder*, was often used of anarchy and political turmoil. James was aware of that in the church. He saw it in the church of Jerusalem—the divisions that took place there over the Law. He experienced strife in that church and he saw ministries split because of jealousy among people and leaders.

In fact, you look at history, you look at the biblical history and you see kingdoms split over rivalry—personal rivalry. That was the cause of the separation between Saul and David. The fault wasn't on David's side, it was all on Saul's side because the women of Israel began to praise David for killing Goliath and other Philistines, and they sang, "Saul has killed his thousands, David his ten thousand." And that enraged Saul.

That may have been the problem in Philippi. And the reason Paul wrote that book to the Philippians, because there was a falling out between the two women, Euodia and Syntyche. Paul refers to it in Philippians 4:2. I had the sense that that was the

reason he wrote the book, because he has so much to say there about humility and denying self; and emptying one's self. There's always this danger of rivalry among us—among Christian workers and friends. It happens easily.

True wisdom doesn't have those consequences. In verse 17, James returns to that wisdom which he describes as “wisdom from above”, then describes it with seven characteristics. (*I'm*), Not going to develop these, just read them in verse 17, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy."

It “is first pure”: It's clean of all the vices in the previous verses. It's free of jealousy. That “is first”, James says, meaning it's basic to all that follows. Because the source is pure, the stream is good—so to speak. And the results of that are pleasant. James says they're “peaceable”. That's the result, peace. And that second characteristic of wisdom, that it is peaceable, is where James ends his lesson here in verse 18. "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." That's what real wisdom produces. So, if it rules the tongue, then the tongue will be controlled and won't be set on fire; and it won't divide.

That's important to have wisdom, isn't it? We all want wisdom. How do we get it? Very simple, I think. Very demanding, but very simple. We get it through *study*, we get it through *prayer*, we get it through *obedience*.

We get it through study. We get it by knowing Christ, knowing about Christ, and knowing Him personally. Isaiah described Him in Isaiah 9, verse 6, as the “Wonderful Counselor.” He's the wonderful counselor for you. We're to live in fellowship with Him. And as we do we find our model and our law. And as we see Him in Scripture and as we apply ourselves to Him we become like Him. We see Him and His image is imparted to us. It happens over time as we consistently study through the Scriptures, pray through the Scriptures, and act in obedience to the Scriptures.

So, we should make it our ambition to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering—being conformed to His death. That was Paul's goal. It should be ours as well.

But first you need to know Him as Savior. Have you trusted in Him? If not, look to Him; He is the eternal Son of God who became man in order to die in the place sinners. In doing that, He removed all the sin and all the guilt of all who believe in Him. Trust in Him and receive forgiveness and everlasting life. Nothing could be wiser than that. And that will begin you in the life of wisdom. And then, by God's grace, use your tongue to glorify your LORD and Father, who is the dispenser of great grace and mercy. May God help all of us to do that.

Father, what a great truth to be able to sing, "My debt is paid, The victory won." That's true. That's what Your Son has accomplished for us. We live in light of that. We live lives of faithful service to You—and to one another. Thank You for Your grace and the salvation we have in Your Son.

The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

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