



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 5: 1-18

Spring 2022

"Help For The Helpless"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in the Gospel of John, and we are beginning this morning chapter 5. I'm going to look at quite a bit of the chapter, verses 1 through 18.

But just as a bit of review, in chapter 2 the Lord was in Jerusalem, and in chapter 3 He was in Jerusalem. That's when He had His visit with Nicodemus, who came to Him at night. Chapter 4, He left Jerusalem and He went north to Galilee, passing through Samaria. And so most of that chapter is about His visit with the woman at the well there at the town of Sychar in Samaria.

And then He moved on up to Cana of Galilee, (where He had done His first miracle), and there this official came up from Capernaum, his son was sick, 'Would You come down and heal him?' And He said, 'Go. Your son is healed.' And so that was His second miracle.

When we come to chapter 5, He's back in Jerusalem. And so now we read,

5 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda (*rather Bethesda ... I'm going to probably say that all the way through this sermon, (laughter), so when I say Bethsaida, say, 'No, no. he means*

Bethesda.'), having five porticoes. ³In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; ⁴for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

(Now some of you, if you're looking at the New American Standard Bible, probably have brackets around the last part of verse 3 and verse 4. And the reason for that is this text is not found in the original text. The best and the most ancient manuscripts omit it. So it's probably a scribal gloss that was added later. And nowhere in the passage, I would say, does John suggest that he believed there was any supernatural activity connected to the pool. Still, I think, (and many of the commentators think), this reflects the common thinking of that day, that the tradition that was connected to that pool, and verse 7 suggests that. So this is probably understood correctly as what the thinking was, but it was added later.)

⁵A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had already been a long time *in that condition*, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?" ⁷The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." ⁹Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. ¹⁰So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." ¹¹But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" ¹²They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up *your pallet* and walk'?" ¹³But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in *that* place. ¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." ¹⁵The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus,

because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

¹⁸ For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, *(and I would add little commentary here, He was breaking their interpretation of the Sabbath; actually He was fulfilling the Sabbath.)*, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 5: 1-18

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

(Message) The proverb, "God helps those who help themselves", is familiar to all of us. It's been called the most often quoted phrase not found in the Bible. It's been attributed to Benjamin Franklin, but I actually read it goes back to the Greeks. But it's about God, so people assume it's in the Bible. And like many biblical proverbs, it does encourage responsibility and self-reliance, which is good, but it is fundamentally unbiblical and contrary to God's terms of salvation.

Paul, for example, is very clear in that verse that was read by Seth earlier, Romans 5, verse 6, "While we were helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." It is basic Bible doctrine that God helps the helpless. Christ didn't come to heal the healthy, but the sick.

And John's chapter 5 is all about that when Jesus came to the pool of Bethesda and healed a lame man. But the Lord did challenge the man to be responsible, to act in faith and obedience. Grace never encourages laziness—just the opposite. Grace produces faith and fruit; grace produces effort.

And we see those in our text this morning. It's the third sign, or miracle, of Jesus that John recorded. It demonstrates again that He is no mere man but the Son of God, who came into this world to save sinners—to save the helpless.

Chapter 5 begins during a feast of the Jews. Jesus had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate it; He was a Jewish man and He was obedient to the Law. And one day He entered the city through the Sheep Gate, where just inside was a pool of water. Around it were five porticoes, (or covered colonnades), where invalids were laying. This pool has been excavated and it's located next to St. Anne's Church within the Old City of Jerusalem, just inside St. Stephen's Gate—also known as the Lion's Gate.

Sick people would gather around the pool on the five porticoes because there was a tradition that the waters had healing powers when an angel came down and stirred them up. And when that happened it was believed, as our text states, that the first person in the pool would be healed.

John described the place in verse 3: In these five porches, "lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters." It's a pitiful scene but it's one that resembles very well the human race apart from grace. Ours is a race of spiritual invalids: People who are blind—unable to see the truth of God's revelation; to whom it is all "foolishness" as Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, in verse 14. The *lame* cannot walk—like the natural man who cannot come to God apart from His grace. The *withered* who are people without strength enough to hold on or grab onto someone's hand—and that is, of course, what the natural man is unable to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, they cannot grasp hold of Him. It's a picture of humanity gathered around a pool called Bethesda, which means "House of Mercy", and Jesus came there to make it a place of real mercy—which is help for the helpless.

When He arrived though, no one recognized Him. He'd been there before. He'd spent some time in Jerusalem doing miracles but He came to this place where miracles were desperately needed; and no one recognized Him. No one cried out to Him or

reached out to Him—a proof of the very thing I just said about the nature and condition of humanity—it cannot reach out or hold on to Him.

They didn't because they weren't looking for Him, they weren't looking to Him. What they were looking to was that pool, hoping for some bubbles, some movement on the surface of the water. That's where their hope was. The hope was in superstition.

But that's where grace occurs. That is where God's gift is seen, always—it is among the hopeless as well as among the helpless. Those who are blind to the truth and have absolutely no interest in the Savior.

As Jesus walked among the unwell He picked out one, the most hopeless there—a man who had been 38 years in his sickness. He was one of the “withered”. He was a man paralyzed, lying on a pallet, and the Lord knew the length of his infirmity. We don't know how He knew, that's not stated, but if you'll remember from chapter 2, verse 25, we're told at the end of that chapter that Jesus “Himself knew what was in man.” He knew the condition of the human heart in every individual. He knew the condition of one's history and physical condition.

So Jesus knew this man, knew what his condition was and the length of it—and He approached him. In all of this, He took the sovereign initiative; He didn't wait for the man to call out. Without explanation, Christ chose this man out of all of the sick and He asked him, "Do you wish to get well?" (vs6). Well that seems like an odd question for someone to ask a man who has been an invalid so long as this man had. But it was a question that probed at what may have been another problem in this man—did he really want to get well? It's possible for a person in that condition to get used to it and even prefer getting charity from people rather than face the challenge of helping himself and being self-reliant.

And so the Lord began by inquiring about the man's willingness to be healed; which also applies—and I think more importantly, and more significantly and intentionally applies to the question of salvation. Not everybody wants salvation. Some people, many people, want their life the way it is; to live their way—their head bloodied but unbowed. So it's a fair question to ask because salvation is not for those who don't

want it. And those who don't want it, who get it, only get it because of the sovereign grace of God. Well that's true of all of us.

The man answered in verse 7, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the water when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." And I think there, we have the answer to the question that he does indicate that he wanted to get well, he has a desire to do that; but also showed that all of his hope for a cure was in that pool—which had no healing powers.

But even if there was power in the pool, there was no power in the man. And if an angel really did come down and stir up the water, he had no ability to get there; and he had no one there to help him to get in, either. He was in a desperate situation and he didn't realize that the only one who could help him was standing before him, talking to him.

Years had passed and the pool had done nothing to change him. Now that's the world: It's got its pools; it's got its false hopes; it's trusting in religion; it trusts in rituals; it trusts in priests; it trusts in its good deeds. Or it's uncaring and unafraid of the darkness beyond death: ignorant of Christ without any interest in Christ, who is the only one who can cure the human condition and give the gift of eternal life. And every one of us would still be ignorant of that, and indifferent to that, and lost in sin and guilt, and doomed to an eternity of darkness and hell, save for the grace of God—the sovereign grace of God, the free grace of God.

And that's what's demonstrated next. The man rambles on about the pool and his misery when suddenly Jesus does something surprising. He commands the man to stand up, "Rise, take up your pallet and walk." (vs8). Now someone might say, (if we don't read any further), 'Wait a minute, wait a minute. That is completely illogical, and in fact, I think that's a little bit cruel! That's exactly what this man cannot do. It's the reason he was by the pool for those 38 years.'

But this was typical of Jesus. It happened in Mark chapter 3; He goes into the synagogue and there's a man with a withered hand—and Jesus healed him. The hand

was powerless. The hand was absolutely useless, and what did He do? He told him, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored." (vs5).

And here we read, in verse 9, "Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk." What all this shows is the power of Christ's Word, and how God's grace operates in the lives of people.

Notice the order here: When the Lord commanded, the man became well and then the man walked. It's an example of Augustin's prayer and his confessions, "Command what You will, but give what You command." And He does that. He did that.

So when a person acts in direct obedience to the command that Christ gives, responds to the Word of God as though he or she has the ability to do what the command that has been given, they discover that they can do it because God gives the power to do it.

He must. The Bible describes man's spiritual condition as desperate and uses some strong metaphors, in fact the strongest metaphors, to make that clear, like death. Paul described us as spiritually "dead" in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1. We are actually unable to respond to God: We're unable to perceive the significance of what He says and we're unable to believe in His Word and trust in the Gospel—just as this man at the pool was completely unable to walk.

But as Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield put it, and I love to quote him on this, "The doctrine of inability does not affirm that we cannot believe, but only that we cannot believe in our own strength." And here we see an illustration of that. The lame man was unable; but when Christ commanded, he responded. And all of this illustrates and applies to the spiritual life and eternal salvation.

Dr. Warfield wrote, "We are justified in saying to every distressed sinner, 'Act against sin in Christ's name as if you had strength—and you will find you have.' " Christ helps the helpless. He takes the initiative. He seeks them out, He finds them, and He supplies the strength for them to respond when He speaks.

Now that is an encouragement to us, as Christians, when we do evangelism and give the good news of salvation to people. We should do it clearly. We should never be

confusing about what we're saying. We should give a clear statement of the Gospel, and we should give it with conviction and concern. But it's not up to us to win souls. We can't do it—but the LORD can, and the LORD does. There is power in His Word. The Holy Spirit works through it to open, spiritually, eyes and move people to respond in faith spiritually, as this man did physically.

Now John said, "It was the Sabbath on that day." (vs9b). That sounds innocuous enough; all this happened on a Saturday. That's what John says, and so we might say, "All right, is that it? It happened on a Saturday." Well Saturday was not just a day to take off to watch football or mow the lawn or whatever they did in their leisure time—watch the Pharisees play against the Sadducees, or something like that. (*Laughter*) No, the Sabbath was the most important day of the week and it was a day of rest. A day given to the LORD, not, 'Just let's sleep in.'

Not at all. It was actually a day of activity in the sense that they worshiped the LORD. They spent their day reflecting. It's what the Sabbath was about: 'Remember that you were slaves in Egypt', they're told. That's what the Sabbath reminds them of, and other things as well. But it's the day of rest from the labors of the week.

It's found first in Genesis chapter 2, verses 2 and 3. God created the heavens and the earth and did it in six days. And then, on the seventh day, He rested, and "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (vs3). Then at Mt. Sinai, He made resting from all of their labors on the seventh day, (on the Sabbath), the fourth of the ten commandments for Israel. That's Exodus, chapter 20, (verses 8-10).

Before that, there is no record of the Sabbath being observed. Abraham, for example, built altars and called on the name of the LORD, but there's no record of him observing the Sabbath. It was peculiar to the Law of Moses. In Exodus chapter 31, verse 17 it is described as, "the sign" of the Mosaic covenant. It's one reason that I say that we're not under the Sabbath Law today. The Sabbath Law, as I'll say in a moment,

has been transmuted into something far more significant. But we're not under the Mosaic covenant and it's "the sign" of the Mosaic covenant.

But because it was that, it was so important that Israel keep it. In fact, it was to be kept on pain of death; it was a capital offense not to keep it. So knowing the seriousness of it, to insure that people kept it, the rabbis developed detailed rules to define what constitutes work and rest. They developed 39 categories of work that were prohibited on Saturday. Number 39 was 'Carrying from one domain into another' and they had some support for that from the prophets. In Jeremiah 17, verse 21 the LORD said, "Do not carry any load on the sabbath." Now it's clear that the LORD was referring to normal activity—the normal activity of work during the week that was done for the six days; that of labor, that of trade, that of commerce, whatever.

But the rabbis took it to an extreme. For example, since a tailor worked with a needle he could not go out of the house on the Sabbath with a needle in his pocket. That was "carrying a load". Scribes couldn't carry their pen...and so it went. Their religion became one of rule keeping that had little or nothing to do with the heart: That is with the real knowledge of God and a desire to obey Him; and what He has revealed and required of us.

The scribes and the Pharisees interpreted the Law as a system of 'works righteousness'. —It's the way to obtain God's favor and to maintain God's favor. And so through that, they lived their lives by these: The Law of Moses, but more importantly, the traditions that had grown up around them; what they called 'A fence around the Law that which would protect the Law itself.' And so their view was: 'To be righteous, you stay within the lines, you do all of these things.' And these things kept accumulating with the generations and the traditions and the new interpretations and applications.

But salvation is not, and never has been, by 'works of the Law' and certainly not by observing man-made regulations. It's a free gift. Abraham was saved through faith alone, Genesis 15:6. So the Lord now begins to challenge this whole legalistic system of

man-made rules and traditions that enslaved Israel. The challenge began when He healed the man on the Sabbath and told him to "Pick up his pallet and walk."

It didn't take long for the authorities to notice. They stopped him and they said, "It is the Sabbath, and it's not permissible for you to carry your pallet." (vs10). So to defend himself the man answered, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Take up your pallet and walk.' " (vs11). Well, the point of that statement is, 'The one who had the power to heal and overcome 38 years of paralysis, surely has the authority to give such a command, and it was right for me to follow.'

But you get the sense that his answer, while that is certainly a meaning of it, his answer had something a little more self-serving in it: That man is not so much defending Jesus as he is attempting to shift blame from himself. He doesn't come off as an especially heroic person in all of this. He even didn't know the Lord's name, the one who had healed him and done this great miracle.

But stranger than that, really, as you think about this, is the attitude of the authorities. They didn't ask, "Who healed you? Aren't you that guy that was by that pool? And I've seen you there all my life, and now you're walking. What happened? Who did this?" They didn't ask that question. They said, "...who said to you, 'Take up *your pallet* and walk?' " (vs12). They weren't interested in the miracle. They didn't care at all that the man was well after 38 years as an invalid. That didn't move them to compassion. They didn't care about him.

What moved them, what they cared about, was their rules—and someone broke them. That's what legalism produces. It blinds men to the truth; it makes them callous toward other people because all of their attention and all of their energy is directed to *self* and *rules*—not God and His revelation.

What the Lord showed by His actions in healing the man was the character of God: That people are far more important to Him than rules; that mercy is a greater obligation to Him and to us, (should be), than regulations. And when I say regulations, I mean man-made regulations. There's no suggestion in any of this that we can break the rules that God has set, the laws that God has given.

Christ wasn't 'breaking the Sabbath' in any of this. He was breaking the Pharisees' *interpretation* of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was never given to be a burden to human beings; but always a blessing. That's the reason the Lord healed on the Sabbath. He healed on the Sabbath because there was a man who needed healing and He healed him. And He healed him out of compassion. He could have healed on another day but this was the most appropriate way of keeping the Sabbath and to promote its purpose; which is to give relief, and to be a blessing. So the Lord actually fulfilled the Sabbath and He kept it holy. He restored the spirit of the Law that had been destroyed by these traditions and this attitude of the Pharisees.

But in doing that He set the stage for conflict. And that too, it seems, may at least have been part of the purpose of the healing—not to stir up controversy but to challenge the error that the authorities had about the Sabbath—in fact, this error that really held them so tightly in its grip.

The Lord wasn't being provocative. He wasn't that kind of person; He's the Prince of Peace. He did this to give light; He did this to bring correction. Really, it's another example of giving help to the helpless because these Pharisees were so enslaved to their traditions that they were helpless. And so He's giving light to them.

But first, before the authorities found Jesus, Jesus found this man that He had healed. He found him in the temple and found him in order to give him some advice; some important counsel. "Behold," He said, "you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you." (vs14). Well that may indicate that his illness was the consequence of sin. What sin we don't know, and we can't really speculate on that, but the command indicates urgency; "Stop sinning" is the force of it.

What is clear from that is that this man wasn't chosen for healing because of everything good within himself, because of some kind of moral perfection or merit in him. Not at all. He was a sinner and he was healed by grace. But the Lord warned him to *repent*. (That word, by the way, is not used here. I'm using it myself as a suggestion of

what He's saying. The word repent doesn't appear in the Gospel of John.) But He warned him to not continue in his sin so that nothing worse may happen.

Ask yourself, "Well, what could be worse than what he'd already been through? What could be worse than 38 years of sickness?" Good question—and the very question answers itself: The judgment of God is worse. That's what he is to avoid; that's far worse, the final judgment that all sinners will face some day. So He's urging him, 'Look out for your soul.' He urged him to stop; turn from sin and to be reconciled to God; and live a life of obedience.

Now that is the right response to grace. Not spiritual apathy, but spiritual discipline and righteousness. And that's what grace produces in the life of the person that receives it. The Lord's counsel was good and kind. It was as good and kind to this man as the miracle that he had experienced earlier.

What's not clear is the man's response. The Gospels give examples of those who were healed physically but showed no change spiritually. So we're left to wonder about this man, somewhat. The Lord showed special attention to this man at the pool, selecting him alone for healing and then at the temple going as far as to search him out in order to follow up so that He could give him important advice. So we shouldn't miss the personal concern the Lord had for this man—and really that He has for all of us.

There's nothing mechanical or routine about what He has done in any of this. The Lord acted out of compassion for him, and continued to show compassion and concern for him. And His counsel here was given out of a genuine concern for this man's welfare—his *eternal* welfare. The man couldn't have missed that. And so I would think, hopefully, he does turn to the Lord.

But even so, the next step he took, at best, is thoughtless because having learned of the Lord's name he then ran off to tell the Pharisees, who were just spoiling for a fight. Spurgeon said, "This poor, paralyzed man, almost as paralyzed in his brains as he was in his body, was pitied by our gracious Lord." And that's true. That's true of all of us,

for the most part. That's the kind of people that the Lord pities. But, this led to a confrontation.

The Lord was ready for it. He was always prepared for every situation and every conflict. But here, it was not what we might have expected; that is, His response to these Pharisees. The Lord didn't correct their notion of *work* and *rest* on the Sabbath and that of 'carrying a pallet' as though to say 'That's not what the Law is about'—just as it's not about carrying a needle in your pocket, either. We might have thought that that's what He would do, He would correct their interpretation and application of the Law as not being consistent with what Moses wrote.

Instead though, He does something different: The Lord answered, in verse 17, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." That statement answered a question that the rabbis discussed; and that is, "Does God keep the Sabbath?" Or, "Does He work on the Sabbath?" Genesis chapter 2, verse 2 states that, 'He rested from all His work.'

But that was His work of creation. His work of providence had to go on: That He never stopped caring for His creation; He never stopped maintaining its existence. That had particular relevance for Israel, Psalm 121, (verse 5), states, "He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." He who keeps Israel doesn't rest on the Sabbath in that regard; He's always watching and protecting His people and that is unceasing.

So clearly God does work on the Sabbath, He does good on the Sabbath. And Jesus' point was, 'Because God worked on the Sabbath to preserve life, He too, worked on the Sabbath to bless life.' He justified Himself on the ground that He was following God's example. And in doing that, He put Himself on God's level, He called Himself the Son of God...well, He called Himself that indirectly. He called God, "My Father."

Now the Jews, in their synagogue service of prayer and thanksgiving, would address God as "our Father" but they never, personally, spoke of Him as "my Father." So Jesus' words were highly unusual and the Jews recognized in them the claim of being equal with God—to having a unique Father/Son relationship with God. Because of that

John wrote, "...the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." (vs18).

And that's what He was doing. They were right about that. But you see, the blindness of man is not necessarily that he or she cannot understand the meaning of the words of Scripture, it's they cannot understand *that meaning* to be true—and they did not think that was true.

And so this conflict will continue all the way to the end of the Gospel until the Jews, these Jewish leaders, (and by the way, when he uses this term *Jews*, he's not speaking of the people generally, it's the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees in this case), and so it will continue until the end of the Gospel and they finally succeed in putting the Lord to death on Calvary. Now that would happen on a Friday afternoon. On Saturday, the Sabbath, His body rested in the tomb.

But that was not the end. On Sunday morning, the first day of the week, He rose from the dead. That was God's answer to the rejection of Jesus, the proof that God is His Father and that He is equal with God. He is His eternal Son. In that way, through the Lord's death and resurrection, God also ended the Old Covenant: The Mosaic covenant with its Sabbath observance and opened up the greatest sabbath rest for everyone who believes in Christ. It is rest from dead works; it is rest from guilt and from the futile effort to remove guilt and gain peace with God. It is rest of salvation for God's people, obtained for us, by Christ, on the cross.

That is what Jesus invited sinners to receive in Matthew 11, verse 28, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." You want rest? We cannot have it by our works. We cannot have it by our best effort. —It's only by faith. That's the great divide in mankind, between Law and grace. Not between morality and immorality. Grace is not antinomian: That is, it's not against the Law; it does not foster irresponsibility. Just the opposite; it encourages responsibility, moral integrity. In fact, only grace alone makes that possible and actual.

The New Testament's filled with principles of conduct, both negative and positive. But the only way that we can obey them, the only way we can begin with faith, is by God's grace and by the Spirit's enablement. In and of ourselves, we are all helpless—utterly powerless spiritually. Our new obedience is based on a new nature: God gives a new heart. He takes the initiative in that. He removes the heart of stone, and He replaces it with a heart of flesh; a living heart.

It is a free gift. And what grace produces, as we understand that, (and why it is so important to understand these things, and why I emphasize them, not just because they're all through the Word of God, but because we need to know them and reflect upon them), is because that produces what is the most powerful motive of all within us to do the things that we're told to do, and that is gratitude, thanksgiving. And as we think about these things, that should well up in our hearts.

But how can a person respond in faith when he or she is dead in sin; completely unable to believe, completely unable to perceive and understand? The answer is they say, 'The same way this man who was lame for 38 years did; he obeyed the Lord.' If you sense your need of salvation—if you want to be saved, then respond. As Warfield says, "The doctrine of inability doesn't mean we can't believe—only that we cannot believe on our own strength." So act against sin in Christ's name. Act against unbelief, as if you had strength, as if you had belief...and you'll find that you have; you will have it by God's free and sovereign grace.

So then, having believed, and having been justified at that very moment, live for Him. Live for Him out of gratitude for what He has done for you through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God help all of us to have a sense of who we were by nature—helpless; and for the greatness and the power of God's grace that has changed us. Let's pray.

Father, what a great hymn that is. It touches us deeply when we sing it, and when we think about it because when we understand your grace and what we were, and how we didn't deserve it, we couldn't earn it, You've given us everything, at Your own cost. Free to us, but it cost You everything. Cost You the life of Your own Son, we thank You. Thank You for the amazing grace that You've poured out on us and multitudes— multitudes throughout the ages and across the globe. We give You all the credit, all the praise. We thank You again for Your Son and what He's done for us.

And 10,000 years after we've been in heaven, and 10,000 more, and on and on, we'll never stop singing it, (about the amazing grace You've shown us), and we'll spend all eternity fathoming the depth and breadth of it all. Thank You for including us in Your great plan of salvation and in sending Your Son to die for us. And it's in His name we pray.

Now, 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. Amen.

(End of Audio)