



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Psalm 85: 1-13

Summer 2020

"Warming Cold Hearts"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth, and good morning. It's good to be back, and we're back in the Word of God. And next week I'm starting a series on 2 Thessalonians. This week I'm preaching a Psalm; Psalm 85, so turn with me to Psalm 85, and follow along as I read,

¹ O LORD, You showed favor to Your land;

You restored the captivity of Jacob,

² You forgave the iniquity of Your people;

You covered all their sin.

³ You withdrew all your fury;

You turned away from Your burning anger.

⁴ Restore us, O God of our salvation,

And cause Your indignation toward us to cease.

⁵ Will You be angry with us forever?

Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?

⁶ Will You not Yourself revive us again,

That Your people may rejoice in You?

⁷ Show us Your lovingkindness, O LORD,

And grant us Your salvation.

⁸ I will hear what God the LORD will say;
For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones;
But let them not turn back to folly.

⁹ Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ Lovingkindness and truth have met together.
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹ Truth springs from the earth,
And righteousness looks down from heaven.

¹² Indeed, the LORD will give what is good,
And our land will yield its produce.

¹³ Righteousness will go before Him
And will make His footsteps into a way.

Psalm 85: 1-13

May the Lord bless this reading of His word and bless our time in it together.
Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, what a blessing it is to be with Your people on a Sunday morning, and it's good to be regathering here in the way we're doing. It's sort of small steps right now, but we thank you that we have this beginning, and we're coming together, and thank you for that, and pray You would bless us this morning—those here and those who are watching on the live feed, that You would minister to each one of us.

We begin with praise for You as the sovereign God who is seated on His throne. We praise You for that and know that we can turn to You at any time with our requests and our needs and our words of praise. And we do so at this time, in a difficult time in our history. There's a plague on the land. There is disturbance around us, and yet You are in control, and we can look to You to bless. And we pray Your blessing upon us that

You would bless our health and protect us. And we think of some in particular who have health issues. Protect them during this time.

And we pray, Lord, that during these turbulent times You bless our leaders with wisdom, and we pray that You would bless our land with peace. This is something that You can do, and we know that everything that unfolds before us fits within Your perfect plan and Your will. But Lord we pray that You might bring about peace in this land, and understanding and wisdom. And yet, Lord, we know the problems that we face are not political, they're not social, they're spiritual. And so, Lord, we pray that You would deal with that root problem, and that through the ministry of the Gospel You would bless this land. And not only this land, but the world with a great turning to You—a revival.

And so Lord, we pray that You'd use us to that end, and we pray that in our time together this morning, You might equip us for that, and equip us for the week to come. But certainly equip us now with the issues that we have, and the needs that we have. And I pray that You would equip us to go out and be lights in the midst of darkness.

So we look to You to bless. Give us a good time of worship and study together, and we thank You for the possibility of it, and the reason for it, which is found in Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for His death for us and pray that He will be exalted in all that we do this morning.

So bless us, Lord, now, as we look to Your Word. And then bless us at the end of the hour as we take the Lord's Supper and remember our Lord's coming, His first coming; and also His second coming—that He will return. We give You praise and thanks for that. Bless us now, Lord, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

It has been called the most famous passage in Methodist literature, the account in John Wesley's journal of his conversion. It happened on a Wednesday evening of May 24, 1738, at a meeting in Aldersgate Street in London. A man was reading Martin Luther's preface to the Book of Romans. Wesley wrote, "At about a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation."

Now a "heart strangely warmed" is a wonderful experience. Spurgeon had a similar one when he was converted as a boy in a primitive Methodist chapel. He wrote, "I thought I could dance all the way home." What's discouraging is when life becomes a grind, and the joy or warmth we had early in life is missing. Fortunately, feelings aren't the test of true conversion. Even Wesley later wrote the question, "Where is the joy I knew when first I saw the Lord?"

A spiritually cold heart is not an uncommon experience in the Christian life. We all go through it. Still, the Holy Spirit who appeared as fire on the day of Pentecost, does warm hearts. He's the source of that. But what can we do? How do we regain spiritual vitality, warm hearts? Psalm 85 gives guidance. It is about that very problem of people who were discouraged and asking God to revive them. The Psalm divides into four parts: Verses 1-3 recalls past mercies; verses 4-7 are a prayer for renewal; verses 8 and 9 are about waiting for God to speak; and verses 10 – 13 anticipate blessing.

The title of the Psalm, (what is written above the Psalm), "For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah", doesn't give the historical setting for the Psalm, as those titles sometimes do. But in verse 1, the Psalm mentions being restored from captivity. And that suggests that the Psalm was about those Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity and that would put the Psalm in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Persian King Cyrus gave a decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. A remnant returned to their homeland. The work began with joy; 70 years of captivity had ended; the Lord had forgiven them and restored their fortunes.

But it wasn't long before they experienced opposition from enemies in the land. The temple was rebuilt, but with great difficulty. Then, only after the Lord sent Nehemiah were the walls rebuilt. There were decades of setbacks and discouragement. In chapter 1 of Nehemiah, men from Judah came to Susa in Persia, and they told Nehemiah, that the Jews in Jerusalem were in great trouble and disgrace. But through many dangers, toils, and snares, the people were corrected of their sins and failures. They were encouraged, and they finished their work. The temple and walls were rebuilt.

Now that gives something of a pattern of our lives. We begin our Christian lives forgiven and we have new life. But then begins the work of rebuilding, and we have opposition. Opposition from the world and from the devil. The flesh is an impediment. Temptations arise. Distractions surround us. We have peace with God, but war with the world—and within ourselves. And so what might have begun with a “heart strangely warmed” becomes a heart grown cold, worldly, and spiritually indifferent.

How do we recover? The psalmist has the answer. He begins the Psalm by remembering the former days, "O LORD, You showed favor to your land; You restored the captivity of Jacob." So it begins by remembering blessings of the past, the LORD's mercy. And from what follows in the next two verses indicates that the real blessing is not a return to the land, but forgiveness of sin. "You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin. You withdrew all your fury; You turned away from Your burning anger."

Now that's the blessing that the psalmist, and those on whose behalf he spoke, the blessing that they valued—Forgiveness. Because apart from that, nothing really matters. Material blessings are real blessings, and we praise God and thank God for them. But they're temporal blessings; they don't last. —It's the spiritual blessings that last. And the fundamental blessing of the spiritual blessings is forgiveness.

The language here is the language of atonement. In verse 2, the psalmist says, "The LORD forgave the iniquity." That's the idea, but it literally means something like “to lift” or “to carry away” their sin. That brings to mind Psalm 103, verse 12. The words are different, but the picture is similar, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Our sin is gone. Our sin has been carried away. Our sin has been covered, no longer seen by the Lord.

The reason is—it has been paid for. And in regard to their situation, that of the people of this Psalm, historically, it was because the 70 years of payment had been made. The Lord's justice had been met. It had been satisfied. His wrath, therefore, had been turned, removed, and He was free to bless them.

Now that gives us a picture of the cross and what Christ has done. By virtue of His death in our place, He carried away our sin. He has removed our sins from the Lord's sight, as it were, because He has paid for them. That's what His sacrificial death was. —It was the payment for our transgressions.

Now that is where we begin. The Lord has erased my past and made my future certain. Remembering that is the first step to being spiritually revitalized. It produces gratitude. It produces joy. The Lord has paid off all my debts. I'm free; the burden has been removed. We can't understand that and not rejoice. But remembering isn't the only means to spiritual recovery. I think it's the first step to that, but it's not the only step. Prayer is also essential.

That occurs in verses 4-7, where the problem of estrangement, separation is revealed. —And prayer for revival is made. "Restore us, O God of our salvation, And cause Your indignation toward us to cease." That first word, *restore*, is literally the word "*turn*". It's a common word. In fact, I've referred to it more than once in recent sermons and lessons. It's a word that's often used of repentance. —It's a great word for that. Repentance is a turning of the mind. It is turning from unbelief to belief. It's returning from sin to obedience.

But that's this word—*restore*. And it's used for example, (very significantly, I think, in terms of helping us understand its meaning), in Jeremiah 31, verse 18. "Bring me back that I may be restored." The King James version gives a more literal translation of that, "...turn thou me, and I shall be turned..." The idea is, "Give me repentance and I will repent". I think that may be the idea here. It suggests that sin may have been involved in causing their hearts to grow cold.

That was a problem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. There had been intermarriage between Jews and the Gentiles of the land. In fact, some of the priests and Levites were among the offenders. So Ezra went to the temple, and he prayed about that issue, that problem, and then he came and corrected the people—severely. And the people responded. They responded with weeping and repentance. So in this Psalm, maybe that is the background for this, or something like it.

Forgiveness doesn't mean we become sinless. Sin in God's people results in spiritual estrangement and coldness. And also, coldness of heart results in sin. We need daily repentance. So the psalmist prays for the people, "Restore us. Turn us. Give us repentance so that we will repent, and Your indignation toward us will cease."

Restoration is the desire.

But it's all predicated on grace—sovereign grace. Why pray otherwise? We pray because we know that we can't do it. We need help. We need God's sovereign grace to work within us—and then we will work. So we see the problem and we look to the Lord for the solution. That's the essence of prayer.

And this prayer, you can tell, is earnest prayer. The psalmist's prayer isn't a mere formality. It's not like reading some liturgy. This is heartfelt prayer—a desperate prayer. Verses 5 and 6, "Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? Will You not Yourself revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?" It's what they want, what the psalmist wants, and he's speaking for the people rejoicing in the Lord.

Derek Kidner wrote that, "The questions asked here virtually answer themselves. And the answers are, You won't be angry forever, and You will revive us." The psalmist knew that, and he spoke it with confidence, (or there's confidence suggested in his questions), because he knew the Lord's character. He knew, as Kidner stated, that, "Judgment is God's strange and alien work, in which He takes no pleasure." Well that's what the Lord said in Ezekiel 18, verse 32, "He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He would rather the wicked repent and live." We see that in the prophecy of Joel, chapter 2, verse 25. "I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locusts have eaten."

We were talking before the service, and you may have read this, that there's a plague of locusts that has been in Western Asia, sweeping through East Africa. It is a vast number of locusts that just come down and eat all of the crops. Well, it was a common thing in the ancient Near East. Today we have means of controlling them, but those means broke down, evidently, in this particular plague. But they didn't have those

means then, and it was a great scourge in ancient times. And so this was quite a beautiful prophecy, a significant, vivid prophecy of the things that have been wasted in life. It's like locust eating them up. But the prophecy that's given here is one that God is going to restore what has been lost. The Sovereign God is going to restore blessing to these people.

James Boice wrote, "Sin causes us to lose many blessings. These cannot be recovered. They're gone. But God can give new opportunities and new blessings." If you turn back to the Lord, the Lord will turn to you and restore what the locusts have eaten. That's the nature and the character of the Lord God.

The psalmist knew that. He may even have known Joel's prophecy. And so, based on that knowledge of the Lord, the psalmist confidently makes another request in verse 7. "Show us Your lovingkindness, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation."

Lovingkindness is a great word. It's the word "*chechid*". I say that because I think many of you are familiar with that word. It's sometimes translated "loyal love"; it is "covenantal love". It is the love that the Lord has for His people. It is unconditional love. It is unfailing love. This is what the psalmist pleads for before the Lord. He didn't recall or claim the people's goodness or their resolve to reform their lives. Man's best intentions are weak and prone to fail. In fact, they always fail, when done in man's own strength. But the Lord's lovingkindness never fails. That's what the psalmist seeks.

It's the prayer of the tax collector in the temple in Luke, chapter 18, where he beats his breast and he says, "O God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" "I deserve nothing", is what he's saying, "I plead for mercy." And that's what we need. He hears that prayer, because He is merciful and loves to act in lovingkindness.

That's how we are to pray, like this psalmist prays, reminding God of His character, reminding Him of His glorious attributes, His grace and promises. He doesn't need to be reminded because He forgets. He knows it all, but He wants to hear it from us. And as we pray that and we recall these things about Him, He acts upon them. Well, that's what the psalmist has done.

So what now? He has recalled God's past blessings, and he has prayed. He asked God for more mercy and help. What more can he do?

He can wait on the Lord, and that's what he does next, in verses 8 and 9, "I will hear what God the LORD will say; For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones;" Waiting is hard to do. It's a test. It tries our patience. And we can only guess at how the Lord's answer would have come to the psalmist. Maybe through a prophet or direct revelation.

The Lord doesn't speak to us that way today. He speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, through the Scriptures—as we read them and study them. And also He speaks to us, He answers us, through providence when circumstances or difficulties are removed. The Lord has countless ways of doing that. We need to pray, and we need to wait on Him. That applies to this specific issue of revival and regaining fervency for the Lord.

We find this all through the Psalms, this longing for a renewed relationship with the Lord, which doesn't happen immediately. For example, in Psalm 6:2, David prayed, "Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away." And he had been pining away for some time. He'd been seeking the Lord's blessing for some time. He was weary with sighing, and spoke of making his bed swim, and dissolving his couch with tears.

So this is a protracted problem. This is an issue that's been going on. And we learn from the Psalm that the problem was sin. It was only after a period of time, of crying out to the Lord in his distress and waiting, that the answer came; the relationship was renewed, and vitality restored. So, this is not something that always occurs immediately. It may, but it doesn't always occur immediately. It involves prayer and patience and persistence.

And maybe sometimes the delay occurs for the purpose of trying our patience. We're strengthened through the trials that we go through. And that happens, sometimes, in order to teach us something, that we might know how vitally important a relationship with the Lord really is. And we learn that by being in the wilderness for awhile—by going through distress for awhile. And it strengthens our faith as we

continue to come before the Lord. And then, when we see His hand of blessing, we rejoice all the more and know the great blessing of it all the more clearly.

But the psalmist knew the Lord would answer—that the Lord will speak peace to His godly ones. He says in verse 9, "Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land." If we're correct in understanding the historical situation then, the temple had been rebuilt, but the presence of the Lord wasn't experienced as it was in, say, the days of Solomon. —When the Shekhinah glory filled the temple and they had a visual understanding of the Lord's presence.

Still, the psalmist expressed confidence that the Lord would answer his prayer, that His glory would dwell among them. And as he prayed that, he may not have known how the Lord would do that and how that would occur. But perhaps in this is the suggestion of the Lord's incarnation, and Christ dwelling in the land and bringing salvation to Israel when He came. John, chapter 1, verse 14, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

What applies to us is the psalmist's confidence that it will happen. However it happens, however this dwelling and this blessing occurs, it will happen. And we should have that confidence as well. We need to learn to wait on the Lord, to patiently petition Him. He always answers. He always answers His people. But He answers them, and He answers us in His time and in His way. Well, that takes patience, it takes waiting on the Lord.

Now that confidence that he had leads him to look ahead in verse 10 with anticipation to a glorious age, promised by the prophets, in which all his concerns will be answered and met, "Lovingkindness and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth springs from the earth. And righteousness looks down from heaven."

That's a description of a future time, when all will be well between heaven and earth. But verse 10 is often quoted in reference to the cross, and what happened through Christ's sacrifice. I'm not sure that that is the specific reference the psalmist was making here, but it does state well what happened at the cross. And this does fit,

I think, the context because the peace to come that he anticipates, (and that I think occupies the thought of the psalmist in the last verses of this Psalm), that peace comes based on what Christ did on the cross.

This is the only reason that we can have a relationship with the Lord God and have peace with the Lord God. It's what John wrote about in 1 John, chapter 4, verse 10. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins." Propitiation simply means "turning away wrath by an offering." So Christ's offering turned away the Father's wrath from us because His death satisfied God's justice fully, which then freed His love to forgive us of our sins, and make us His children.

In the cross of Christ, Justice and Mercy met. Or as the psalmist put it, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." We have God's peace because Christ suffered God's righteous justice for us. Now at the moment of faith, every believer in Christ has peace with God. He's no longer our judge. He's our Father. And a result of that, we have the peace *of* God. And that's our daily relationship with others, and fundamentally with the Lord Himself. We have inner peace. Now we can never lose our peace *with* God. But we can lose the peace *of* God because of sin, or distractions, or the encroachment of the world into our lives.

That's what happened to Israel and is what the psalmist sought to have restored: The peace, the joy, the spiritual vitality they once had known. What gives him hope, at least what gives him hope here at this point in the Psalm that it will be restored, is his knowledge of the future. That God's plan for the world is to fill it with truth and righteousness. Then there will be no disruption in our relationship.

The Psalm concludes, "Indeed, the LORD will give what is good, And our land will yield its produce. Righteousness will go before Him And will make His footsteps into a way." And we will follow in His footsteps. He will guide us at every moment of our existence. That's the future.

So it's the promise of complete harmony between God and man. A state of both material and spiritual prosperity. It's what Peter promised the people in Acts, chapter 3,

verses 19-21. He told them to repent so "that times of refreshing may come, when the Lord will send Christ, and there will be the period of restoration of all things, which the prophets spoke of from ancient times."

Now that's Israel's kingdom which we are a part of as co-heirs, equal partners with them, since we have been grafted into Israel's olive tree. That's Romans 11, verse 17. That's our hope, the kingdom to come, glory and blessing and uninterrupted fellowship with the Lord. And an ever-growing relationship with Him without hindrance in a world without end. And that may have given the psalmist reason to expect the Lord's blessing now, and the answer to his prayer in this experience, in this life.

Since fellowship with us is God's purpose for the future, it is certainly His desire for us in the present. But also the certainty of the kingdom to come is reason for joy in the Lord. He has a glorious future planned for the faithful, for those who love Him. That should give us excitement for Him, excitement about Him, excitement in our relationship with Him, and excitement about our future. All of this Psalm gives us a pattern, or prescription, for restoration to joy and spiritual vitality.

We see it in the four parts of the Psalm. It begins with reflection on the Lord's past mercies—His faithfulness. Then prayer for restoration. Thirdly, waiting on the Lord, listening for His answer to us. And finally thinking about our future; the glory to come, world without end. The basis for all of this, especially reflecting on the Lord's past blessings, and hoping in the future promises, the basis for all of that, for our present blessing, our condition, our union with Christ, our relationship with Him and our glorious future, the basis is Scripture. It's knowing and thinking about God's Word.

That's really what brings about a revitalized life. The only way we will ever regain lost joy and vitality in our spiritual life is through reading and meditating on the Word of God. I know that sounds basic, and it's probably something I repeat often. I know I repeat Romans 10, verse 17 frequently. But it applies, "Faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Do you want a stronger faith? Do you want a more knowledgeable and wise life? Read the Word of God. Study it. It comes from hearing the Word of Christ.

And we can add to our faith being strengthened, joy, —all of the fruit of the Spirit for that matter—it all comes from hearing the Word of Christ. Think of the two disciples on the Emmaus road in Luke 24. They were returning home from Jerusalem following the Sabbath after the crucifixion. They were hopeless and depressed. Christ was dead. All they'd hoped for was gone.

That's when Christ, unknown to them, came to them and spoke to them as they walked together. And this stranger, to them, began to explain to them the Scriptures. And from the Scriptures He explained to them the necessity of the crucifixion and resurrection, (something they should have known, because Christ had repeated it throughout His ministry to His disciples). So He unfolds the Scriptures to them. And when He did reveal Himself to them, and then disappeared, they said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

This is why from the very beginning, Satan, the great disruptor of faith and life, questioned the integrity of God's Word. With his first appearance in the Bible in Genesis 3, that's what he does. He did that in the garden. "Indeed, has God said?" he asked Eve. He was telling her, "Don't believe it. It's not true. God's intentions toward you are not good. They're selfish." And his attack on divine revelation, on Scripture, has continued to this very day. He wants to keep us out of the Bible because in it are the seeds of life. It nourishes our souls and transforms our lives "from glory to glory". That's how Paul described it in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18.

As we read the Word of God, the Spirit of God applies it to us. We don't feel it, we don't sense it, but it happens. Just as we nourish our body physically, materially, with food, we don't experience the change that takes place, but it's going on. And so it is with the Word of God and the Spirit ministering together and applying the Scriptures to us. Knowing Scripture is vital for the Christian life. I know I don't need to repeat that to you or say that to you.

Now there's something else here. It's not actually said but seen—and it's the example of the psalmist. He was ministering to Israel through the Psalm, giving

instruction, counsel, and encouragement. That's what all of this is, for God's people. And that's what we're to be doing. That's the fellowship we give one another in times of discouragement, to help rekindle spiritual vitality, to warm hearts that have grown cold.

One of the great examples of that in the church is John Newton and the help he gave to his friend William Cowper. Cowper was a man with a fragile disposition, prone to bouts of depression. As a young man he attempted suicide. He failed, only because the rope broke. He was institutionalized. And in God's providence, that is where he met a minister who led him to Christ and salvation.

Still, he was a sensitive soul, and he struggled the rest of his life. That's just the reality. Sometimes the Christian has a burden, like a thorn in the flesh, and he or she has to deal with these burdens for a long time. And so it was with William Cowper. But again, in the providence of God, he met John Newton, who ministered to him. Both were hymn writers. Newton gave us *Amazing Grace*, and Cowper wrote *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*, and *There is a Fountain Filled with Blood*. They were part of a collection of hymns called *The Olney Hymns*, O-L-N-E-Y, written in the town of Olney, where Newton was the minister, and where Cowper moved to be near him. And he lived as his neighbor, lived right next door.

Their time of hymn writing was a great blessing to Cowper and his mental stability. They would go on daily walks and talk about the Lord. But after about ten years, Cowper suffered a major breakdown. He again attempted suicide. Newton was there to help him. The Newtons took him into their home, and they cared for him daily. Even after moving to London for a new ministry, Newton kept in touch. They exchanged letters for the next 20 years, and Cowper poured out his heart to Newton, who never stopped being William Cowper's friend, and helper, and counselor.

Another of the hymns John Newton wrote, and that we sing, is *Pensive, Doubting Fearful Heart*. I can't but wonder if he wrote that to encourage Cowper, because it fits his condition and met his need. The first verse is,

"Pensive, doubting fearful heart,
Hear what Christ the Savior says.

Every word should joy impart,
Change they mourning into praise.
Yes, He speaks, and speaks to thee
May He help thee to believe!
Then thou presently wilt see
Thou hast little cause to grieve."

What does He say to us? He speaks to us in Psalm 85, and He says, *"Your sins have all been covered, and My burning anger has been turned away forever. At the cross, lovingkindness and truth have met. Justice and mercy have kissed. I have a glorious future for you forever. And now, in the present, I am with you, always with you, and always want fellowship with you. So thou hast little cause to grieve."* Knowing that, understanding God's lovingkindness and grace, His forgiveness, should cause a heart to be "strangely warmed."

If you're here without Christ, it cannot be said, "Thou hast little cause to grieve." You have every reason to grieve. You have unforgiven sin to grieve over, and an eternal future of paying for it. These are serious words. This is your condition outside of Christ. And so the counsel that I give to you is, "Escape! Live!" Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. He receives everyone who turns to Him, who comes to Him.

And may God help all of us to consider the Psalm we've read and the counsel of the psalmist: To remember what the Lord has done for us; the mercy that He has shown to us; to pray for revival within us; and wait for the Lord; and anticipate the blessings that are coming, in this life, and throughout all eternity. May God help us to do that.

Let's bow in a word of prayer, and as I pray, I'm going to ask the Lord to prepare our hearts for the Lord's Supper as well. So, let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for Your goodness to us, and we thank you for this Psalm and the counsel that it gives us. We confess that so often our hearts do grow cold for various reasons: Maybe that the routine of life gets to us, but so often it's because we somehow move away from Your Word or from the fellowship of the saints, (and we're in a time where that could be easily done with this assembly, this church). I pray that You would keep us all in fellowship with one another, and most importantly in Your Word, studying it, reflecting upon You, and in prayer and walking with You. So bless us, Lord.

And when we have a sense that there's some distance, that is a warning sign. That's a red flag. Help us to respond to it, and to look to You, and to seek Your blessing, Your help, Your revival, as the psalmist did, and wait upon You, and know that You're faithful to us. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for what He's done for us, how justice and mercy kissed in the cross, and that we have forgiveness through His work on our behalf. And life, eternal life, thank you for that.

Lord, as we prepare our hearts for taking the Lord's Supper, and remembering Him, pray that the Spirit of God would minister to us and that He would prepare us, and cause us to reflect deeply upon who Your Son is, what He's done for us, and remember that it's all out of Your great love for us, that He came and did His work. We thank you for Him, and it's in His name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)