

Zacharias' Song "The Benedictus"

Luke 1:57-80

Pastor John Miller

The Gospel of Luke has been called the singing gospel. And as we go through these songs on Sunday morning, we're not really even covering all the songs that are sung in Luke's gospel. We haven't looked at Elizabeth's song. We looked at Mary's song. We look at Zacharias' song today, and then there's Simeon's song. There's the song the angel sung in Luke 2 when Jesus was born. In light of that, Luke's gospel has been called the singing gospel. It's the gospel that sings. But I think that one of the chief characteristics of a true Christian is that they sing to the Lord. Amen. When you come to know Jesus Christ, God puts a new song in your hearts, especially when we find that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

I want you to see that this was Zacharias's case. Verse 67 of Luke 1, it says, "His father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying... " So this prophet is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He's filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, Zacharias, the Levitical priest, becomes a prophet as he foretells the coming of Messiah and the ministry and the message that his son, John the Baptist, would have. In Ephesians 5:18-19, it says, "Be not drunk on wine, wherein there's debauchery," good exultation for Christmastime, "but be filled with the... " What? "... the Spirit," which is the Holy Spirit. And then this is the result, listen carefully "... speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing, making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

You know what a Spirit-filled Christian is? A Spirit-filled Christian is a singing Christian. You say, "But Pastor John, I can't sing very good." It doesn't matter. The Bible says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." So make a noise, okay? Just don't make it too loud. But God isn't listening to the quality of our voice. God is looking to our hearts. Amen.

God doesn't matter if you've got a good voice or a bad voice, God's looking at your heart. And when you sing from your hearts to the Lord, that's all that matters. I believe that it blesses God and delights the heart of God. And so, Zacharias, verse 67, filled with the Holy Spirit begins to prophesy or sing. And so the song starts in verse 68. What he does with this is he starts by blessing the Lord God of Israel. This is where we get the word Benedictus. It's taken from the first word of verse 68 in the Latin translation, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel... " Why? "... for He has visited and redeemed His people." So it starts off with this Benedictus, this, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel."

Why did he bless God? Because God has visited us to redeem us. Christmas is all about God coming down from heaven and dwelling among us as men. And He came as a man with men to dwell. So this is the song of praise to God who always keeps His promises. All through this song of Zacharias, it's full of Old Testament Scriptures, quotations, and references. And pictures and being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures now burst forth in the song in the heart of Zacharias, and it was the last prophecy of the old dispensation and the first one of the new, that is the Old Testaments going away and the new is being introduced. We're going to see that he's

blessing God for His promise to David, for His promise to Abraham, and for the new covenant that He's made through Jesus the Messiah who died on the cross for our sins and rose again from the dead.

So this is a marvelous song that closes out the old and introduces the new. It's kind of like birds like to sing in the morning. You ever notice that? When we lived in Highland, we had a tree right outside our bedroom window, and in the springtime especially, the birds would fill this tree and they'd wake me up singing. That's fine if you want to get up when they're singing, but if you don't want to get up yet, it's kind of like, "Zip it bird." But birds like to sing in the dawn. Again, we live in a residential area in Marietta, and one of our neighbors, I don't know who they are, if you're here today, God bless you, but they have a rooster. It's got to be illegal, right? But I mean, does the pastor call the cops on the neighbor? It's kind of got a cool vibe, it makes you feel like you're on a farm. And that thing will go off at the dawn, it's like, "Okay, nice job Mr. Rooster. Now zip it. Just go back to bed." But then it'll go off again at nine o'clock and 10 o'clock and 11 o'clock and sometimes two in the afternoon. It's at that point where I feel like I need to call the rooster cops.

But birds like to sing at the dawning of a new day, and that's what Zacharias is doing. A new day is dawning, Christ the Savior is soon to be born. Now, if you're taking notes, there are three things he blesses God for in this song, I want you to notice them. The first is he blesses God for His keeping His promise to David. Zacharias the priest blesses the Lord because God has kept His promise to David. Notice that in verse 69 he makes reference to in the house of his servant David. Why? Because the Messiah, Jesus, was the son of David, the greater son of David.

Remember when Jesus was on earth sometimes they would say, "Jesus, thou son of..." What? "... David. Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." And so many times He was referred to as the son of David. It is a messianic title for Jesus who came as the Savior, the Messiah. Now, that's because God made a covenant with David, theologians call it the Davidic Covenant, and is taken from 2 Samuel 7 in the Old Testament. And there David is sitting in his palace, beautiful palace that is lined with cedar wood, beautiful palace, and he says, "It's not right that I live in this beautiful house and God is still living in a tent."

So the tabernacle where the presence of the Lord was, was still a tent. And so David told the prophet Nathan, "I want to build God a house. I want to build this beautiful tabernacle for God." Nathan just said, "Okay, great, go for it." He didn't pray about it, didn't to seek the Lord's counsel, "Just go for it, David. That's a great idea." And then Nathan turned to walk out of the king's palace and God spoke to Nathan and said, "Nathan, you need to go back and tell David he can't build me a palace. He can't build me a tabernacle. He can't build me a house for two reasons. Number one, he's a man of war. Number two, he's got blood on his hands, and he can't build me. But his son, who would be Solomon, he will build me a temple." So it was known as Solomon's temple.

But that's the bad news Nathan had. The Lord told Nathan to tell David another good thing. He said, "Now, but God said He would build you a house," this is the Davidic covenant, "and that

your son would sit upon the throne forever and ever and ever and ever." That goes beyond Solomon, and it goes all the way down to Jesus, who would be the son of David, the Messiah, and that one day Jesus would sit upon the throne of David and He would reign forever and ever.

Now, one of the reasons for the incarnation, that God became a man in the person of Christ, is for this reason, so that He could sit on the throne of David and that He could keep His promise made to David of the Messiah being through his lineage. So when you think of Christmas, you think of the Davidic covenant, that God promised David he would have a son. In Isaiah 9:6-7, the prophet Isaiah said, "For unto as a child is born, unto as a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace. And of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. For the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this."

So all the way back when the prophet Isaiah spoke, he said that He will sit upon the throne of David. When Jesus was born, the angel Gabriel told Mary that He shall be great. Luke 1:32-33, "He shall be great. He shall be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Now, in order to understand this Davidic covenant and the promise of the Messiah on the throne of David forever and ever, you need to make some distinctions here. And that is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant won't be complete until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus came the first time to die upon the cross, and He would die for the sins of the world, be buried and resurrected. He would ascend back into heaven 40 days later, and we are awaiting the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We live between the two advents, the first advent of Christ, which is Christmas, and the second advent of Christ, which is the Second Coming when He comes in power and glory and splendor as the king of kings and the lord of lords. He will come to Jerusalem, and guess where He will sit down? On the throne of David. And guess what He will do? He will bring peace on earth. Amen.

There will not be peace on earth until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. I mean vote your conscience for the next president of the United States, but no president is going to bring peace on earth. I vote for Jesus, and until He comes and He sets on David's throne, there will be no peace on earth. What a glorious prospect that is, what a glorious hope that is. I never think about Christmas, but what I also project to the Second Coming of Christ when He will reign forever and ever, and in Handel's Messiah, "And He shall reign forever and ever and ever," and there'll be no end to His kingdom. That's that anticipation.

So when Zacharias realized that he and Elizabeth would have a son, that he would be the forerunner of Messiah, he realized that this coming would bring the future kingdom. But being a Jew, he was looking for an immediate deliverance from his enemies, an immediate coming of the kingdom. We know that it's been postponed now for 2,000 years, and it is going to get

darker before the kingdom comes, that thousand-year reign. And that will usher into the eternal state. What a glorious prospect and hope that is.

Now, why did He come though the first time? He came the first time, notice verse 68, to redeem us from sin. "Blessed to be the Lord God of Israel... " Why?... "... for... " so here's the rationale, the reason, "... He hath visited and redeemed His people." Jesus came to redeem man. He came to reveal God, and He came to reign on the throne of David forever and ever. So, He would set us free by paying a price. The imagery there is that we were slaves. Redemption means we were slaves, we were born in sin, and Jesus came to pay the price, to ransom us, to take us out of captivity, and to set us free. So we all were born in the slavery of sin, and our only hope of being freed is through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. He is our redeemer.

And so Zacharias is blessing God and praising God that at the first advent Christ would come to redeem us from the of sin. Now, notice He would do that through His own power. Notice in verse 69 he uses another imagery here. He moves from redemption from a slave market to the horn of an animal. "Jesus is our horn of salvation," verse 69. Now, it is referring to an animal's horn, and in that culture at that time, an animal's horn was a symbol of power and strength. If a bull's coming at you and it doesn't have horns, it's scary but not super scary. But if a bull's coming at you and it's got gnarly horns it's super scary, right? It's like those horns can do some damage big time. You'll see the bull throw his horns and take out the enemy.

And so the horn speaks of God's strength and God's power. When you think of Christmas, you think with God's power and God's strength and God's mighty arm He's come to redeem us from sin and to set us free. But at the Messiah's Second Coming, notice in verse 70 to 71, "He will save Israel," and I believe us, "from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us." Look at verse 70, "As he spoke by the mouth of the prophet... " So he's speaking of Him being the horn of salvation from the house of David. "As he spoke by the mouth of the prophets, which have been since the world began," then verse 71, "that we," meaning Israel, "should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us."

Now, that's going to happen at the Second Coming. When Christ returns, Israel is restored to its rightful place and Jesus reigns on earth forever and ever and ever and ever. "Nations of the earth will beat their swords in the plowshares and their spears into pruning hook." We're hearing so much in the news this Christmas about ISIS and the fight against terror and the world's struggle and the war and the fighting that's going on. Where is the peace on earth? Because of Christ's first advent, it's found in the hearts of those who have received Him as king. It's a spiritual kingdom. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

But then when He comes the second time, when He comes the second time, and let this truth fill your heart, just as sure as He came the first time to bring peace with God, He comes the second time to bring peace on earth. The Bible says that righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea. What a glorious time that will be when Jesus Christ reigns on the throne of David in Jerusalem and He puts an end to war. Notice in verse 71, "He will deliver us out of the hand of all our enemies." So Jesus came to set us free. That is something to sing about.

Amen. Is it any wonder Christians like to sing? We're going to sing tonight, but we sang this morning. We like to sing. Why? Because we have a song in our hearts. Amen. Even though the world is dark, we have a bright hope. Amen.

That hope is not in government, it's not in man, it's in Jesus Christ. That's why we sing. I'm going to give you the second thing he blesses God in this Benedictus for. In verse 72 to 75, Zacharias blesses God for keeping His promise to Abraham. So he blesses God, "You kept Your promise to David," Davidic covenant. He blesses God, "God, You kept Your promise to Abraham." Now, follow with me as I read verse 72 to 75. Zacharias sings to perform the mercy promise to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore unto our father Abraham," There it is, "that He should grant unto us that we should be delivered out of the hand of our enemies, that we might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all of the days of our life."

So first we have the Davidic covenant, God's promise to David. Now we have the Abrahamic covenant. Now, there are three places in the Book of Genesis we find this. The first is Genesis 12, where God tells at this time Abram, his name had not yet been changed to Abraham, to leave his father, leave his mother, journey into a strange land that God would show him of. And then God says this in Genesis 12:3 "In thee," speaking to Abraham, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Abrahamic covenant.

God was speaking of the Messiah, the savior of the world. And then again in Genesis 15 where Abraham had just returned from a battle, a fight, and he had rescued his nephew Lot. He was laying in his tent that night, he could still hear the sound of the swords and the shields. He'd taken the reward from the battle, spoils. God came to Abraham and said this, "Abraham... " Actually He said, "Abraham, Abraham." Whenever God says your name twice, you need to listen. "Abraham, Abraham." "Yes." "Don't be afraid." I love the fear-nots in the Bible. Run it through in your concord sometime, it will bless you, all the fear-nots. And God never says don't be afraid if you're not afraid.

"Fear not Abraham," god says, "I am your shield and I'm your exceeding great reward. I'm your shield, don't be afraid. I'm your reward. Not the spoils of the battle, I am your reward." Now, this is how Abraham responded, this is one of the greatest stories in the whole Bible, Abraham says, and I'm going to paraphrase it, Abraham says, "That's cool, Lord. That's awesome. That's great. But what does it mean? I have no one to give my inheritance to? You are my reward, but I have no child. I have no children to give my inheritance to." And so God actually tells Abraham to come out of his tent. He says, "Come on out of your tent," he gets out of his tent, and He says, "look up into the sky and check out the stars."

Now, in those days they didn't have street lights, they didn't have city lights, they didn't have smog. They could actually see stars. Abraham's looking at these billions of stars, beautiful, and God says to Abraham, "That's how many children you're going to have." Now, you're 90 years old and God says you're going to have a lot of kids, he goes like, "I'm going to go back and sit down in my tent for a minute. Whoa, what am I going to do? I'm going to have to put some

additions on my tent." "And as the sand which is upon the seashore, so shall your descendants be for multitude." And then He says this, He says, "and in your seed," singular, not seeds but seed, "all the nations of the earth will be blessed." That seed was Jesus Christ. God was promising Abraham, "You are going to have a son who will be the savior of the world."

And then the third time this Abrahamic covenant is mentioned in Genesis is Genesis 22, right after Abraham had offered Isaac. Now, he had a son, Isaac, but that wasn't the promised one. God tells him to offer him on a mountain. He lifts the knife, and God stops him from plunging it into his son. God tells him there's a ram in the thicket, and he takes it and he substitutes it for his son. What a picture that is of God who loved us, gave His only son to die for us. And then God said, "Abraham, because you love Me, because you have obeyed My voice, because you did what I told you," He says, "I will bless you and I will prosper you. And through your seed all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed." It would ultimately come through the promised seed, be Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. And so it's called the Abrahamic covenant.

Now, Jesus came to fulfill the promise to Abraham. What would He do? Write these down. Number one, He would deliver us. Look at verse 74, "That He would grant unto us that we would be delivered out of the hand of our enemies." This is a picture, by the way, of what Christ would do and also what He's done for us today. Christmas means that you can be delivered from the power of Satan, from the power of sin. Why does He deliver us? Verse 74, "So we can serve Him." God saves us so that we can serve Him. God doesn't save us to live selfish lives, He saves us to live lives of service to others. And then also, how do we serve Him? Verse 74, "Without fear. Without fear." Verse 75, "We serve Him in holiness and righteousness." For how long? "All the days of our life."

So this paints a picture of the Christian life. God came to deliver us so we could serve Him. We can serve Him without fear and holiness, righteousness all the days of our life. So God has delivered us from Satan's power and we are serving our Savior without fear and holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. Here's my question to you this morning: have you been delivered from Satan's power? Have you been redeemed? Have you been delivered? Are you serving the Lord or are you serving yourself? Are you serving the Lord without fear in holiness all the days of your life? That's why Jesus came at Christmas.

Now, there's a third thing that Zacharias blesses God for. He blessed God for the Davidic covenant, he blessed God for the Abrahamic covenant, and he now blesses God for the new covenant. Verse 76 to 79, follow with me as I read, "And thou child... " Zacharias is now speaking about his son John the Baptist. "Thou child shall be called the prophet of the highest. Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His way, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins through," verse 78, "the tender mercies of God."

This is how he described Christmas: "God's tender mercies whereby the day spring from on high has visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness in the shadow of death and to guide our feet unto the way of peace." Now, up to this point where Zacharias sings, his son John had been born. Remember that Zacharias didn't really believe the annunciation of the angel, "You're

going to have a son." And so he was struck with dumbness, he couldn't speak for nine months. Now, some guys would think that's a good thing when your wife's pregnant, you can't talk, right? She'd go talk to somebody else.

But it's not a good thing. Unbelief took his speech away. And so when John the Baptist was born, that's the child he's referring to, when John the Baptist was born, who would be the forerunner of Messiah, the family gathered around eight days after his birth, the circumcision of the son, and then they give him his name, Jewish custom. Everyone just believed he's going to be called Zacharias Jr., little Zach Jr. Zach Jr, that's his name. His mother Elizabeth said, "No, no, no, no, no." Don't mess with mom. His name is John. By the way, John is a beautiful name. It means God is gracious.

And certainly, God had been gracious to Zacharias and Elizabeth, and certainly God has been gracious to me, so gracious to me. And so they go to Zacharias and they say, "Hey, what's the deal here? Elizabeth said his name is John. There's no one in your family called John." Zacharias asked for a writing tablet. A writing tablet in those days was a little piece of wood with a thin layer of wax over it. They would take a little stick and they would make indentations in the wax to write on. Then they could rub it out and they could write again. It's like the first invention of an iPad, I guess it was.

What does Zacharias write? "His name is John." The minute he wrote that on that tablet, his mouth was open, and he began to bless God. He began to sing this song that we are reading. But it's not till we get down to verse 76 that he mentions John directly, "And thou child shall be called the prophet of the highest." So this is a reference to John the Baptist. He begins to speak about the message and the ministry that he would have.

Now, I want you to get into the emotion of what is going on here. John is the forerunner of Messiah, so his message is going to be about Jesus, preparing the way of the Lord and what Jesus would do when He comes. But the references here are to John the Baptist. It was the breaking of 400 silent years. From the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, to the first book of the New Testament, Matthew there's a 400-year gap where God had not spoken directly to the people of Israel by a prophet. Didn't mean God wasn't active, but God hadn't spoken by any revelation through a prophet. So 400 silent years are broken, and Zacharias, who's never had a child, and he's a priest, he's of the tribe of Levi, his wife is beyond the age of childbearing, God gives him a son, and not only a son, but the forerunner of Messiah.

Now, you dad's out there, you know were pretty stoked when your son was born, right, if you have a son. Now, I had three girls. My first three girls were born, and it's like, "Okay." I grew up in a family. I had all sisters, no brothers, I had all daughters, and I thought I was destined to live in a house full of women my whole life, which is not bad for the record. I ate well. House full of women, they fed me. My sisters all say I was spoiled. And then I have the girls in there a blessing, and I love my girls, but then God gave us number four. I remember this was way back when sonogram you couldn't tell what it was, right? Yet, man, when I looked at that sonogram, "It's a boy." I yelled out, "It's a boy," and the technician said, "Yeah, you're right."

I tell you, just such a joy filled my heart to think, "I'm going to have a son. I'm going to have a son." But can you imagine father Zacharias' heart and his joy, his the excitement? Not only that, "But my son is chosen by God to be a voice crying in the wilderness, prepare you the way of the Lord. God's going to use my son to prepare the coming of Messiah." Zacharias couldn't contain himself. No wonder. I think he was ecstatic when he's singing this song, he's like, "Blessed be the Lord." The guy was just going off. He was just so excited.

And then he turns to this little boy, John, "Thou art my son. Thou shalt be the prophet of the highest and shall be before the face of the Lord." Verse 76, "... to prepare His way." So he would come to prepare the way of the Lord. So this is what made possible the new covenant. Jesus Christ would come, and He would establish what is called the new covenant. Write this down, Jeremiah 31:31-34, it actually says, "'Behold the days come,' says the Lord, 'that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.'" There are four things in this new covenant. Number one, God would write His laws in our hearts. No longer would they be on tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments, But now God's law would be actually written in our hearts, and that we would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, we become God's people and He is our God. And then thirdly in this new covenant, we would know the Lord, everyone from the youngest until the eldest. You know in the new covenant, you can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ? Christianity isn't a right, it's not a ritual, it's not a religion, it's a relationship. The youngest children in our Sunday school who know the Lord, they know Him no better, no differently than the adults in our sanctuary. It's a personal relationship with Christ. Amen.

He walks with us and He talks with us and He tells us that we are His own. What a glorious thing to know that I am His and He is mine, and that He's dwelling in my heart.

And then fourthly, in this new covenant, God will forgive our sins and remember them no more. That's worth singing about. Amen.

God, through the death of Jesus Christ, through His resurrection or through His birth, incarnation, through His death, crucifixion, and through His resurrection, Jesus Christ would become the one who would establish this new covenant with man.

Now, what do we have in this new covenant? Let me show you in our text. In verse 77, we have the remission of our sins. He says, "The knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins." That means that we are forgiven of our sins. When the angel came to Mary... or to Joseph, excuse me, in Matthew 1, he said, "You shall have a son and you shall call his name Jesus, Yeshua, for He shall save His people from their sins." So John's name was given before his birth, Jesus' name was given before His birth. The name Jesus is the Hebrew Yeshua or Joshua, and it means Jehovah saves or God is salvation. That's what the name Jesus means. And that was the very purpose for which Jesus came. He came to save us from our sins.

John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the lamb of God," who does what? Carries away the

sin of the world. So we have remission of sins. Second thing we have in the new covenant, Zacharias mentions in verse 76, is we have the dawning of a new day, a dawning of a new day. He says there in verse, excuse me, 78, "Through the tender mercies," verse 78, "of our God, whereby the day spring from on high has visited us." In my King James translation, "Day spring from on high." Again, that's a word picture of the sunrise.

You know what the birth of Jesus Christ was, that first Christmas? It was the sunrise. The night of sin is passed, the night of darkness is passed. Men who are living in darkness have now seen the light of God. He came to redeem us. He came to forgive us, and He came to bring us light who lived in the darkness. And that's the third point, notice verse 79, he says, "For the light to those who lived in darkness." Verse 79, "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

So we have remission of sins, we have the dawning of a new day, and we have light for those who live in darkness and death. And then verse 79, last but not least, to guide our feet unto the way of what? "To guide our feet unto the way of peace." The angel sang in Luke 2 at his birth, "Glory to God in the highest. Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." You say, "But where is the peace on earth? Where is the goodwill toward men?" Literally in the Greek that would be rendered peace among men with whom God is well-pleased. Peace among men with whom God is well-pleased. You know where peace is found? Again, it's found in the heart of those who've crowned Him Lord of their life, who have trusted Him a Savior, who have turned from their sin and then said to Jesus, "I need you. I pray that You'll forgive me. Lord, please come into my heart. I believe You died for my sins, You rose from the dead. I trust You to save me."

These are the gifts that Jesus brings to us at Christmas: He can forgive our sins. He can bring us into His marvelous light, and He can fill your heart with peace. Amen. Those are the gifts that Jesus brings to you at Christmas. But those gifts must be received by faith. You must humbly and gratefully receive what God gave to you at Christmas. The hope of heaven, forgiveness of sins, eternal light, His love, His joy, His peace. They're only for those who trust in Christ and receive Him as their savior. This is the new covenant: God will write His laws on your hearts. God will make you His child and you will have a relationship with Jesus Christ. You'll know God and have the hope of heaven. The Bible says, "For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall never perish but have everlasting life."

To believe in Jesus Christ means that you admit, "I'm a sinner, and I need a savior. And Jesus, You died for me on the cross, You were buried and You rose again. I ask You to come into my heart and forgive my sins." You turn from your sin and you trust Jesus Christ as your savior. You don't become a Christian because you come to church. I'm glad that you're all here this morning, but coming to this church does not make you a Christian. Getting baptized doesn't make you a Christian. Getting a Christian haircut doesn't make you a Christian. Singing Christian songs, not even believing Christian truth. It has to be a commitment. It has to be a trust. It's not an intellectual ascent to some facts and information, it's a committal of your life, a trust in Christ who died and rose and can save you from your sins. That's something that we can bless God for. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.