

# Entertaining Angels

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Let me add my welcome to what Roy's already said. It's great to be here with you and to look at God's Word together. In the New Testament, Christians are commanded repeatedly to be hospitable.
- So in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 9, show hospitality to one another without grumbling. Or in 1 Timothy and Titus, overseers and widows are expected to be hospitable.
- The word actually means that we are to show love to strangers. Show love to strangers. So you might know in English, xenophobia, sort of synonymous for racism. Xenophobia is fear of strangers.
- Well, the Greek word for hospitality is xenophilos. Xenophilos, like love of strangers. So it's more than just entertaining, right, or providing dinner. It's about loving people. And it's not about loving your friends or your relatives. It's about loving strangers. People who, in a sense, owe you nothing, you have little connection with, you might not expect anything back from, and so on.
- The New Testament says Christians are to pursue opportunities to love strangers. Why do you think that's so important? Well, of course, it's because we have a God who loves strangers.
- [ 1 : 3 1 ]     In fact, we estranged ourselves from Him, didn't we? Which is even worse. And He could have just written us off. You know, fine, if you don't want to have anything to do with me, I don't want to know you.
- But He doesn't. He pursued us. He went out of His way to love us, even though He owed us nothing, even though there's nothing we can kind of give Him back or anything for what He's done for us.
- In other words, at one level, the whole story of the Bible is a story of hospitality, God's hospitality. The gospel is God graciously welcoming people who used to live as strangers.
- And when you understand that, when you've experienced God's love for yourself, you can't help but love others in the same way. Hebrews chapter 13 is one of my favorite verses on hospitality.
- The preacher of the Hebrews, to the Hebrews, writes, Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.
- [ 2 : 4 2 ]     It just actually uses the word hospitality there. Do not neglect to show love to strangers. For thereby, some have entertained angels unawares.
- It's a very exciting prospect for all of us, isn't it? And it brings us to our passage this morning, which I take it is the passage that Hebrews is referring to.
- In verse 1, The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. You'll notice that Lord is spelt with all capital letters in verse 1, which means that the Hebrew word there is Yahweh, God's personal name.
- And this is not the first time Yahweh has appeared to Abraham. We've seen that several times before in preceding chapters. But because of the form of Yahweh's appearance seems to change a little bit, it seems that Abraham didn't recognize him at first.

So verse 2 describes how it kind of felt from Abraham's point of view. Now there are some different theories about what's happening here, but I take it that the leader of the three is the angel of the Lord, the angel of Yahweh, who we've seen appear to Hagar earlier, and will later wrestle with Jacob.

[ 4 : 08 ] And then there are two more angels alongside him. If you can imagine, it's sort of siesta time. So Abraham is snoozing in the shade of his tent, trying to catch a breeze.

And when he lifts up his eyes, he didn't know, you see, that they were angels at first, messengers sent from heaven. But when Abraham looked up, he just sees three men, three random strangers.

And so, unawares, he's about to entertain strangers, as Hebrews puts it. Immediately, he jumps into action, right? When he saw them, he ran to meet them.

When he got to them, he bowed down, a way of showing his respect, and he is eager to serve them. And he says to the leader of the three, literally, my Lord, my Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.

Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. Now, notice, Lord, this time is not in capital letters, because it's not the name Yahweh there.

[ 5 : 22 ] Abraham doesn't know that yet. It's just the word Adonai, which is a fairly normal way of showing respect to a superior, a bit like sir, or something like that.

Abraham is presenting himself as a humble servant. The point is not that there was anything special about these men that Abraham recognized. It's just the opposite, that this is how Abraham always treated strangers, just like the Son of Man, our Lord.

He's ready to wash feet, and serve his guests. And notice how Abraham appeals to the generosity of his three guests, when he asks them to stay.

If I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Abraham considers it a great privilege to serve them. They'd be doing him a favor, by sticking around.

Now, as readers, we know a little bit more than Abraham, of course. We know that he is speaking to Yahweh, or to Yahweh's representative. And the last time someone found favor in God's sight was Noah in Genesis chapter 6.

[ 6 : 34 ] You might just like to go back there, actually. Genesis chapter 6. I'll pick it up in verse 5. Verse 5.

But, crucially, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. So then, I take it this is a really significant question that Abraham is asking his visitors.

Has Abraham found favor in Yahweh's sight? With Genesis chapter 6 ringing in our ears, we ought to know how serious this question is.

Again, we've been hoping, haven't we, that Abraham might be a new and better Noah, to give humanity a fresh start and a clean heart.

But if Abraham has not found favor in the eyes of the Lord, then perhaps this is the time that God has come down to wipe out humanity once and for all, to wipe him off the map, just like the men of Noah's generation.

[ 8 : 03 ] So, thank God, the men agreed to stay with Abraham. Because, of course, as we know, the Lord has committed already to blessing Abraham no matter what.

The favor was guaranteed, as it were, by the promises that have gone before. So, in verses 6 to 8, Abraham and Sarah hurry to serve them.

Just look at the speed with which everything happens in this scene. Did you notice that? Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, Quick! Three seers of fine flour.

Knead it and make cakes. Stop! And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man who prepared it. Quickly! And he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared and set it before them and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Notice how lavishly Abraham provides for his guests as well. He doesn't just grab a packet of Tim Tams out of the cupboard and some instant coffee. In fact, I love how, back in verses 4 and 5, he totally undersells it.

[ 9 : 06 ] Yeah, I'll just get you a little water and a morsel of bread. Nothing fancy, not a bother. But then he goes back to the kitchen, he tells Sarah to make cakes. It's time for cakes.

Using three seers of fine flour. Now, a seer is generally considered to be about seven liters or so. Whoa!

Agreed. So, 21 liters of flour is what Abraham asks for. That's an enormous amount, isn't it? How big are these guests?

It's like an episode from Downton Abbey or something like that, I reckon. You know, in the dining room, everything's calm and refined. But downstairs, below the surface, everything's frenetic.

And Abraham and Sarah don't outsource their hospitality or don't just outsource their hospitality to all their servants. Right? They get them involved. But notice, they themselves are running around to put on this feast.

[ 10 : 06 ] Sarah bakes the cakes. Abraham grabs the calf. Right? The whole scene emphasizes how generous Abraham and Sarah are, how concerned they are for their guests, how eager to meet their needs and wants.

You can see that the whole house has become a hive of activity, all centered around looking after these guests. They've put on a feast in a flash. Now, this is a challenge for us, I think.

And I think too quickly sometimes we write this off as a kind of cultural thing. You know, in Middle Eastern culture, hospitality was very important, blah, blah, blah.

Well, that may be so, but I don't think that's the point at all. Thousands of years after Abraham, in the New Testament, Christians all over the ancient world are encouraged to be just like Abraham.

In Romans chapter 12, Paul says, let love be genuine, abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good, love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another in showing honor.

[ 11 : 15 ] Remember, this is all evidence of the transformed mind in light of the gospel. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer, contribute to the needs of the saints, and seek to show hospitality.

Or in Matthew chapter 25, Jesus divides humanity into two camps, and he divides humanity along these lines. On the one hand, there are those who will enter the kingdom, and Jesus says about them, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.

And on the other hand, those who didn't show hospitality, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, etc. Jesus says, and these will go away into eternal punishment. In other words, brothers and sisters, this ought to characterize Christian culture at all times and in all places.

And if our culture is not like this, then we ought to stand distinct from them, different. It's a litmus test which shows whether we have grasped the gospel. Does our hospitality look like Genesis 18 at home?

Are we stingy or are we ready to share our things with others and share ourselves and our lives? Particularly with the saints. At church, the people welcoming us this morning, or when you sit next to a new person or you're chatting over morning tea, you might never see them again, they might never be of any great benefit to you or it's not helpful networking or something like that.

[ 13 : 06 ] Network. Networking is totally inappropriate in the Christian community, isn't it? We're not here to network. So self-absorbed. We're here to love each other and love others and love whoever we come across and whoever we can.

I take it we ought to think about morning tea in this way. It's an opportunity to be hospitable, to love each other and to love the strangers who join us.

Our God is a generous God and God loves a cheerful giver. If we've understood God's generosity to us, we will be generous to other people. We will be eager to show love to all and sundry, whoever comes through our doors.

No agenda except to love them as God has loved us. Well, in verse 9, the men ask Abraham a question.

Where is Sarah, your wife? And he said, she is in the tent. The Lord said, I will surely return to you about this time next year and Sarah, your wife, shall have a son.

[ 14 : 15 ] And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.

So Sarah laughed to herself saying, after I am worn out and my Lord is old, shall I have pleasure? Now, you can imagine the scene, can't you? Abraham is sitting with the men.

Maybe he started to twig that these men are not quite his usual guests. Maybe not. Sarah is standing behind the Lord at the door of the tent as he makes this grand announcement.

She hears her name mentioned and she has a little chuckle to herself. She is now about 90, bless her. Abraham is about 100.

We can all see the funny side. And she has been subtle about it. She doesn't burst out laughing, but she is just sort of amused in her head.

[ 15 : 18 ] You might remember last week in chapter 17 when Abraham was told the news that Sarah would have a son. His response was pretty much exactly the same, but more extreme in verse 17. Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, shall a child be born to a man who is 100 years old?

Shall Sarah, who is 90 years old, bear a child? I mean, it's just hilarious. The problem with laughter, though, is that it's ambiguous. You can laugh in derision or you can laugh in delight.

Is Sarah laughing at God's word or because of the wonderfulness of God's word? Does she think the promise is laughable or is it a cause for great joy?

And remember, God has already told Abraham back in chapter 17 to call his son Isaac and Isaac, the name Isaac means laughter.

So kind of the key point of this boy that defines him as it were, that is always going to be a reminder to those who meet him, he's always going to be a reminder of God's remarkable promises.

[ 16 : 31 ] Sneered at by some, mocked, thought ridiculous by some, but in the end, wonderful, a source of joy for those who believe.

And so in verse 13, the Lord confronts Sarah. The Lord said to, well, the Lord said to Abraham, why did Sarah laugh? Again, that's the question, you see.

Why did Sarah laugh? And say, shall I indeed bear a child now that I am old? Is she astonished, Abraham, by the greatness of God's promises to her?

Or does she think it's impossible? The Lord presses the matter further. Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time, I will return to you about this time next year.

And Sarah shall have a son. But Sarah denied it, saying, I didn't laugh, for she was afraid. He said, no, but you did laugh.

[ 17 : 41 ] Now remember, Sarah was behind this man. And she just laughs in herself, is literally what the Hebrew says. Right?

In her own heart. In fact, I wonder if in verse 15, maybe she's trying to hide behind that little technicality. You know, she didn't laugh out loud. She just sort of was amused.

But of course, we know she's been caught. She knows she's been caught. Must have been such an uncomfortable and awkward moment for her, right? somehow this man knows exactly what she did and what she was thinking.

And he kind of continues the interrogation until she's exposed. Talk about a response to hospitality.

His insights are clearly supernatural and he calls around on it. No, but you did laugh. And while that must have been an awkward moment at the dinner table, I wonder if upon reflection, if Sarah put two and two together, that it's also a rather reassuring moment, isn't it?

[ 19 : 00 ] I mean, if this man has supernatural insight into what's happening behind him, inside someone else's own head, then actually Sarah can trust him about what's happening in the future.

And the Jews did think of the future as in that direction behind them. It's where you can't see. Verse 14, the crucial question, is anything too hard for the Lord?

Of course, the answer is no. No. The time has already been appointed. God has his plans and purposes already laid out. He is working to a schedule, not just vaguely, generally influencing the affairs of men, but directly controlling and supervising every moment of history, right down to that moment when Abraham's seed is going to fertilize Sarah's egg.

And at just the right time, after decades of waiting, God promises Sarah she will have a son. All right, but now let's turn to the second half of this chapter.

after an awkward silence, I imagine, and the men set out from there while Sarah was pondering whether that went well.

[ 20 : 26 ] They left and they looked down towards Sodom and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. Now remember, the last time Abraham looked down from this vantage point was back in chapter 13 when he was standing with his nephew Lot.

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar. This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. Abraham settled in the land of Canaan while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord. Okay, so that was chapter 13 verses 10 to 13. And we'll see Abraham stand at this point again in chapter 19 which you might like to go there with me.

Just chapter 19 verse 27. After Sodom and Gomorrah have been destroyed, Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley and he looked and behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

[ 22 : 03 ] So it was that when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

You see, so Abraham returns to the same place and just pay attention to that little comment in verse 29. Did you notice when God destroyed the cities of the valley, he remembered Abraham.

He remembered Abraham and sent Lot out. And I take it that what God remembers there is the conversation that we're reading together in our chapter back in chapter 18 that we're about to go through.

So in verse 17 as they walk together towards Sodom, the Lord speaks again, has this conversation back in chapter 18 verse 17. It may be that this is just an internal dialogue just going on inside his head or it may be that the three angels are talking together.

Either way, we're seeing a little glimpse into the mind of God and his reasoning goes like this. First, the question. Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

[ 23 : 26 ] What an interesting question. Now there's a question behind the question I think. If you bear in mind the scene that's just gone before as well.

I tell you that the question behind the question is this. Is Abraham God's servant or God's friend? Is Abraham God's servant or God's friend?

Remember how Jesus talks to his disciples in John chapter 15. He says, Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Now that's John 15, 13 to 15. In other words, you see how Jesus sums up the difference between servants and friends. Servants don't know what their master is doing but friends get informed.

[ 24 : 34 ] Friends get brought into the conversation to hear the intimate thoughts and plans of the master. Servants are just tools in the master's hand. They take orders.

They go this way and that. They don't need to understand the big picture. But friendship is about sharing a common mind. Knowing someone and being known by them.

Someone who understands you and who likes you. Well now that is the essence of God's question in verse 17 isn't it? Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

It's really a question about Abraham's relationship to God. Is Abraham God's servant or God's friend? And remember in the first half of the chapter Abraham has called himself a servant twice.

In verse 3 my Lord if I have found favor in your sight do not pass by your servant. And then again in verse 5 he calls himself a servant. But what we got to see before the end of the scene was Abraham sitting down enjoying a meal with the Lord like friends.

[ 25 : 39 ] I mean that's friendship territory isn't it? It's another case of God exalting the humble. the servant becomes the friend. And so God asked the question shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do?

He says seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

Now it's as the Lord reflects on the promises he's made to Abraham that he decides he must reveal his plans and purposes to him. He is determined to treat Abraham like a friend not merely as a servant.

Abraham is to become a great nation and a conduit of blessing to all nations. How is he going to do that unless he's invited in to hear God's thoughts and plans for the nations?

And Abraham is to keep the way of the Lord notice by doing righteousness and justice and he will need to teach his children to do the same. So as we approach the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah God decides to use this as an opportunity to teach Abraham about righteousness and justice.

[ 27 : 07 ] What does God think about sin? what is God going to do about the problem of sin in the human heart? And what about the righteous?

And of course these are all questions that we need to know the answers to as well. What does God think about sin? What is God going to do about the problem of sin in the human heart?

And what about the righteous? So in verse 20 the Lord turns to Abraham. Just as a father might turn to a son or a friend to his confidant and he begins to explain the situation to him.

And the Lord said because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me.

And if not I will know. Now obviously verse 21 is anthropomorphic language. God doesn't need to go down and find out.

[ 28 : 18 ] He already knows everything. But the point is I take it that he doesn't just go on hearsay. Remember he wants to teach Abraham about justice and righteousness. He wants to explain his judgments to Abraham.

And the first thing to know about God is he's not quick or hasty in his judgment, not unaware of what's happening. God does not delight in the death of any sinner so he's come down to carefully investigate.

He wants to include Abraham in the whole thing to reveal his plans and purposes to him. So that Abraham and his offspring understand the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Rather than just seeing it or thinking this was a natural event, chaos, things happen.

two of the angels keep moving.

We see them pop up again in chapter 19. But the leader of the three stays behind for this chat with Abraham. Now then in this section we see Abraham slowly but surely, cautiously, edge his way down from 50 to 45 to 40 and so on until in verse 32 he asks about 10 people.

[ 29 : 40 ] Oh let not the Lord be angry and I will speak again but this once suppose 10 are found there. He answered for the sake of 10 I will not destroy it.

And the Lord went on his way and when he had finished speaking to Abraham and Abraham returned to his place. Now I just want to mention six things quickly about this discussion. six things. Number one, notice how Abraham divides humanity.

Abraham divides humanity into two groups, there are the righteous and the wicked. This is what the Bible says consistently, that humanity can be divided along these same lines. We're not on a sliding scale, right?

On a bell curve or on a spectrum. There are only two ways to live, hence why there are only two eternal destinations. Christians. Secondly, notice Abraham's understanding of justice.

Justice means giving people what they deserve. Abraham knows that the wicked deserve to be swept away, they deserve death. But Abraham insists that God cannot treat the righteous the same as the unrighteous, it would be unjust to kill the righteous with the wicked, to treat the righteous and the wicked alike.

- [ 30 : 56 ] This is one of the key questions the passage raises. How is God going to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked? Abraham even seems to be suggesting that God should spare the whole city on account of the righteous people within it.

The Lord says in verse 26, if I find at Sodom 50 righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake. But then what would God then do about the wicked and the outcry that has come up from the city that he needs to meet obviously with justice?

Thirdly, did you notice what Abraham calls God? The judge of all the earth. Abraham knows that God is not just his God or the God of his household or even of a certain patch of land or whatever.

God is the judge of all the earth every land because as we saw in Genesis 1, he made the whole earth and everything in it. That's always the background for the rest of the Bible.

Fourth, notice how these verses emphasize just how few people in Sodom are actually righteous. Abraham doesn't stop until he gets down to 10.

- [ 32 : 18 ] He's not confident that there will be 50. He knows that there's not more than 10 people in the whole city who are righteous. In fact, in the next chapter, we'll find that 10 is an overestimation of the true number.

There's Lot. And maybe his daughters, and although that gets confusing, because they're pretty filthy as well once you get to know them.

Fifth, obviously the answer to Abraham's question in verse 25 is emphatically yes. Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?

Yes, of course he will. God will separate the righteous from the wicked. He will not let the wicked go unpunished, but he will not sweep away the righteous with them.

This is good news for all those crying out for justice. under the oppression of the wicked regimes of the earth, the losers of Sodom and Gomorrah and Brisbane.

- [ 33 : 31 ] And finally, notice what God has done here. By revealing his plans and purposes to Abraham, he's turned Abraham into a mediator. That is an advocate for the righteous.

Abraham, as it were, in this conversation with great respect and caution, and yet with boldness, takes his stand in between God and the righteous people of Sodom, pleading for their salvation.

Notice in verse 32, Abraham fears that God's anger might fall upon him if he presses the issue too far. God's God's God's God's God's God's anger.

He's our mediator, who interposed his precious blood. That is, he stepped in between us and the Father.

He didn't just risk God's anger. He didn't risk provoking God's anger. He deliberately bore it on our behalf, so that in the end, all those who share Abraham's faith and are therefore counted as righteous in God's sight, just like Abraham was, in the end, we're not swept away with the wicked, but graciously rescued by the precious mediation of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

- [ 35 : 00 ] Jesus. All right, so just a couple of comments to conclude with. First, about the glimpse of heaven that we get in this passage, the glimpse of heaven.

As the chapter begins, Abraham is clearly a loving, devoted servant of God, hurrying about, trying to please his guests. But by the end of the chapter, God is treating Abraham not as a servant, but as a friend.



And Abraham is described as God's friend on several occasions in the Bible. In 2 Chronicles chapter 20, verse 7, Jehoshaphat describes him that way. In Isaiah chapter 41, verse 8, God himself calls Abraham my friend.

And in James chapter 2, verse 23, James tells us, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God.

That is extraordinary, isn't it? But that is the glimpse of heaven in this passage, that one day, Abraham and his offspring will not just wait on God while he eats, but we will eat with him.

[ 36 : 24 ] Imagine having God pop round, pop by your tent. not to be served, but to feast with you. This is the hope of the Christian life.

We do not presume on intimacy with God. No, we are unworthy, humble servants. But God, in his lavish grace and kindness, invites us to be his friend.

God's plan has always been about inviting Abraham and his offspring into an intimate relationship with him. Remember last week, I will be their God.

This is the crucial tagline of the covenant all the way through the scriptures. Ultimately, what God is promising Abraham is himself. All of the other blessings, the land, the great name, etc., all of those things really find their center around one thing, that God is determined to be in relationship with Abraham and his offspring forever.

And that's why in Revelation 21, John sums up the final picture of life in the new creation with this tagline, God shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

[ 37 : 40 ] And that is a picture of fellowship, of friendship. That is heaven. That is true life. To know God and to be known by him, to feast with him in the great banquet of the new world.

bride and groom forever, friends forever. Secondly, though, of course, here we also get a glimpse of hell.

We'll see more of this in the next chapter. See, Genesis 18 speaks of a God who is not a distant God. He's not oblivious or inept, busy.

Now, this God, he is the poor and oppressed, crying out against the wickedness of Sodom. And will not the judge of all the earth do what is just?

Of course he will. That's wonderful news. But it's also terrible news. The Bible is clear about the punishment God will one day meet upon, meet out upon the wicked.

[ 38 : 47 ] An eternal fire. Sodom is just the kind of snapshot, an example. One day, anyone who continues in their rebellion and sin, God will give them what they deserve.

Judgment will not be by popular vote. God will be the judge, jury, and executioner. And so this passage is a warning to us.

God will be the Lord. And an encouragement to take refuge in the mediator, which is Abraham and ultimately his offspring, our Lord Jesus.

What our world needs is a mediator, an advocate, far better than Abraham. Abraham. So we call upon people now, and let me urge you now, if as it were, you are still living in Sodom and according to Sodom's ways, to seek refuge in the Lord Jesus, the one mediator between God and men, the only name under heaven given to us by which we must be saved.

We call upon him. We trust in him. We take shelter in Jesus. Because that is the only way to find safety on the day of God's wrath.

[ 40 : 19 ] Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. we do pray that you might give us all faith to believe in him, to run to him, that we might avoid this punishment that we see in these chapters and instead find the astonishing joy and the privilege, the glory of being considered your friends.

Of fellowship with you, of intimacy with you. That perfect picture of sitting near you and talking and needing.

We pray, Father, that you in our day-to-day would fill us with that vision and that hope would be on our horizon and we might live for that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.