

Guest Preacher - Rev. Innes Macsween

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Preacher: Rev. Innes Macsween

[0 : 00] Turn with me. Then back to the passage that we had there in Joshua chapter 7, page 182-183. Keep it open if you can as we work through this chapter.

Now a few years ago I was in Berlin and we came upon a memorial that drew us all. We were on a stag do but we were in Berlin and we weren't your stereotypical stag do.

We were there for the history and the sights and the sort of things that we wanted to see. And we came upon a memorial that drew us to a hush silence.

There are 2,711 standing concrete slabs of varying heights. And as you walk through the narrow alleys, you feel a solemn glimmer.

Just a glimmer of the scale of the Holocaust. And these monuments that are there in Berlin, these cold, hauntingly beautiful concrete slabs, they're not simply there for tourists.

[1 : 21] They're meant to make us stop and remember and reflect.

And they're also warnings because the slabs there whisper across generations, never forget. Don't let this happen again.

Now in Joshua 7, God's people, what we're left with at the end of the chapter is that they have built a very different kind of memorial.

It is a heap of stones piled over Achan and everything that he had in the valley of Ahor.

You can imagine in years after that parents could point to that huge heap of stones and say to their children, remember Achan.

[2 : 19] Remember what sin does. Don't turn away from the Lord. And just like these modern memorials, this ancient one here that we read about, it warns us with a sobering truth.

Sin is deadly serious. But warnings exist. So that you will run for shelter. So that we might not find a valley of trouble, but a door of hope.

Let me start off by saying our first point this evening is just simply that point, warning, sin is serious. And so Joshua 7 starts straight out of the gate with a shocking reversal in verse 1.

Because in chapter 6, Israel had just seen this impenetrable city of Jericho fall in a mighty display of God's power. The people just walked around with trumpets for seven days.

And on the last day, God pulled down the walls. And as they then conquer the city, we also see the careful rescue of a prostitute from Jericho called Rahab.

[3 : 38] She didn't grow up with God. And yet by her simple faith and her trust, she found salvation. And now in chapter 7, we meet Achan.

Someone who did grow up with God. Who turned away from that privilege. Choosing to ignore and reject God.

And we're immediately told in chapter 7 that something went wrong. This man, Achan, took items from Jericho that had been meant to be given over to God, devoted to God.

Things that were never meant to be kept for personal gain. And he hid them in his tent, thinking, no one would know. What's the harm? No one's going to know.

It's not a big deal. But God knew. And Israel soon discovered the cost. When they moved to attack that small city of, I don't even know if it's pronounced I or A-I.

[4 : 49] A-I now takes on a whole different meaning in today's world. But let's call it A-I. The city of A-I. An insignificant city. A nothing city in comparison to Jericho.

And yet they were humiliated and defeated by this tiny town. Considering how many, how few of them went to take the city, 36 of them died.

It was a disaster. A terrible battle. A terrible campaign to take over this tiny town. And so panic began to spread. And Joshua, the courageous leader, he tore his clothes.

He fell on his face and he cries out, Why, Lord? Why bring us here? Only to destroy us. Why do all this great stuff? Why do this powerful thing?

Why this amazing work that you've done here with us? Why have you given us such an amazing story? This is just so fresh in our memory. This happened as if yesterday.

[5 : 52] You've done this amazing miracle among us. Why bring us here now? Why now? Why are we being destroyed? Why is it all falling apart?

Why are we being destroyed? And God reveals that someone's sin is risking destruction for them all. I've got three questions for us here that I think any of us should be asking.

You might be used to this story. You might be well read on this story. You might have heard a sermon on Joshua chapter 7 many the time over the years. Some of you though, it might be brand new.

Some of the younger ones here. This is not the kind of, you'll get the city of Jericho. The walls falling down. That's in all the story books. That's the kind of stuff we do in Sunday school. The next chapter, I very much doubt a lot of this is getting done.

And you know, you have to be wise and careful how you tell a story like this to kids. Because you have to be wise and careful how you tell a story like this to adults. I've got three questions that all of us should ask.

[6 : 59] Why was all of Israel held accountable for one person's sin? I want to talk about the covenant-breaking Israel.

Because here is the part that can often jar with our modern ears. And let's say you've got people who have never been to church before, don't know anything about the gospel, don't have a scooby about any of it.

And they might hear stories like this. Or maybe they've read of some of the sort of, the difficult questions of the Old Testament. And especially about things like the conquest, or the flood, where it is a cataclysmic disaster and judgment on everyone.

Not just the person that sinned, in that clear sense, but it's as if it's a sweeping hand of judgment. And it jars with modern ears, modern people.

One man sinned. One man did this. And yet, the entire nation suffers defeat at this town of Ai. Why?

[8 : 14] Because Israel lived in covenant with God. They were one people bound together by promises and laws.

There was a special relationship, a special covenant, a special agreement between Israel and God. Meaning, all of Israel bore Achan's guilt because they were all bound together as God's covenant people.

covenant is often the word that we use to describe the deepest type of affiliation, the deepest type of union that we can think of.

We talk about the covenant of marriage, this joined, united relationship. We find this harder to process because our culture is deeply individualistic.

[9 : 17] And we say, my life is mine. My choices are mine. My choices should only affect me. You should let me be. But that's actually just our own made-up theory of life.

It's neither biblical nor is it true of actually how we live life. Recently, my wife, Anna, has started taking to making and baking homemade fresh bread.

And it's amazing. She started to branch into extra ingredients. So she's made like a pesto bread, a cheddar and chorizo bread. She started to make brioche turtle bread, as in, it doesn't taste like turtle, it's shaped like a turtle.

Our boys love it. So on and so forth. She's made bread with bacon bits. It's amazing. It's great. And it's so fascinating to see just the process when she gets up in the morning, the yeast and the flour and it just you leave it to prove and it puffs up.

But bread is a weirdly simple thing. It's just bread flour and warm water, a little bit of sugar maybe, a little bit of salt, a little bit of yeast.

[10 : 37] That's amazing how the yeast works. I don't understand it. I watch Bake Off and I'm just like, what these guys can do is amazing. It's fascinating, just the incredible creations and the amount of proving.

I don't even know what that really means but they just make it and leave it and it rises beyond me in many ways but it's like seven grams of yeast to maybe 500 grams of flour and just like that it spreads throughout the whole thing and the whole thing is impacted and changed and it grows and

it grows.

And it's just like what the Bible says in Galatians chapter 5 a little leaven a little yeast leavens the whole lump. A little bit seven grams of yeast the whole 500 gram of flour is going to be changed. What does that mean? Well Paul uses that phrase in the New Testament to talk about the impact of sin. because sin is never an isolated event.

It impacts the entire batch. It's like yeast or it's like to change the metaphor if you're not a bread person it's like a virus.

[11 : 59] It spreads and it infects all the interconnected parts and we as human beings we are so much more fundamentally interconnected than we realize.

So parents and parents impact children for good and for bad. Friends impact friends for good and for bad. A community impacts one another.

God has put us in families and nations and churches and it has always been the case and it always will be the case that the actions of the one can sometimes have major consequences for the whole. We pass on our genes. We pass on our behaviors. You've got an anger problem? There's a chance that your children are going to pick it up both through your genes and through your behavior. Both a bit of nature and a bit of nurture. They're going to pick up the same habits the same problems as you. And we pass on our mindset.

[13 : 10] You're pessimistic? You can pass that on to your kids too. You gossip? A whole friendship group, the whole bunch of you can become gossips.

One person starts it and it spreads, it spreads, it spreads. And it's true spiritually with sin. It spreads. It becomes tolerated.

It becomes normal. It becomes celebrated. God is very, very patient.

He is slow to anger. But He won't tolerate sin forever. Now His judgment will be fair on a scale that is beyond our comprehension.

from our perspective, how God's scales balance out in the cosmic realm of just how is this thing fair and why do I have an answer to this unfair thing that happened to me and yet how it balances out the scale of how God works everything out is beyond our comprehension.

[14 : 22] But it will impact on how interconnected we are, man, woman, and child. And on that note, that's why this whole story, this whole episode was happening in the first place.

On a wider scale than just this man's family in its interconnectedness of Israel. It's also why they were even there in that nation at all.

Here's the second question when reading through a chapter like this. Why are they there? Why are they attacking this city? Why are they attacking Jericho? Why are they attacking Ai?

Why all this slaughtering? Why all this judgment? Why all this conquering and conquest? Why were they there?

The conquest of Canaan. Now the conquest of Canaan was not about Israel expanding its borders for power. It was about God fulfilling his promise to Abraham and also on top of that judging the wickedness of the nations.

[15 : 33] The Canaanites, these tribes were notorious for idolatry, for child sacrifice, for violence on an unprecedented scale. God had been patient for centuries and now judgment had come.

A similar thing happens to what goes on in the story of the conquest of Canaan and how God's judgment through his chosen means of a people in a time bearing an army and bearing the sword it's similar to what happened in the story of Noah where God uses the flood as the instrument of his justice and his wrath after long being patient with human sin from the very beginning from the garden.

Men, women, and children, the entire world is judged. Apart from eight people, everyone drowns.

Jesus himself references the story of Noah in Matthew 24 where he describes that the final judgment at the end of time for everyone, God judging everyone, is going to be like the story of Noah when he returns.

Now, we might resist the idea of God as judge, but without him, justice is just a matter of opinion.

You take away God from the equation, and justice becomes a matter of opinion.

There is no final standard. There is no real accountability, and yet, our hunger for justice, our anger at evil, it all points to something deeper, that there is a judge who sees all and will one day set every wrong right.

[17 : 31] Without God, justice is an illusion. a made-up thing that we as human beings collectively create, and it can shift and change. And you die, you got away with it.

And justice, in the end, is just an illusion we've made up. But with God, justice is a promise. All the evil that has been done will be answered. will be paid. What we're uncomfortable with is the thought that judgment might come our way.

What we're uncomfortable with is the idea that while we can be innocent in relative terms, the Bible uses the word innocent in very different ways, somebody can be relatively innocent at the scene of a crime, where they are innocent at the hands, they are the victim at the hands of the person that perpetrated the crime, you are the innocent party.

That is right and that is true. From our perspective and in the sense of what's going on in that crime, you can talk about people being innocent.

[18 : 50] You can rightly talk about children being innocent. innocent. But actually, on a cosmic scale before the Lord, no one is innocent.

On a relative scale between us, yeah, we have innocent parties. On a cosmic scale before the Lord, no one, man, woman, or child, sin, the bend away from God.

Sin, a rejection, and a rebellion, and an ignoring of God. It's in our very bones. It's in our very nature. It's in our soul. It's a similar story here.

Israel was being used in the conquest of Canaan as God's instrument of justice. And that means they were meant to be distinct. They were meant to be holy to the Lord.

Holiness here meaning they were meant to be set apart. They were meant to be as if pure and unique and different to the muck and to the mess and to the dirt and to the sin of the people that they were being used as God's justice towards.

[20 : 06] They were to mirror and echo the perfect standard of heaven. But Jericho was an awful place, death.

Which is why everything there was meant to be cleansed like a flood. If you've got a problem with the conquest and the fact that in your eyes those who are relatively innocent were judged and died, then you have a problem with the flood.

And you have a problem with the flood, you've got a problem with the final judgment of God, which will come to every single one of us, brought by God Himself.

These are pictures in the Bible of God's judgment on sin. It's always patient, it always comes after a long time, slow to anger, but it will come.

And today God is patient, He is slow to anger, you have time, but it will come.

[21 : 24] Meaning, Achan's sin was not just a small act of theft. Because he was meant to be an instrument of God's justice, because he was meant to be part of God's judgment on a wicked land, a wicked people whose time had run out according to the judgment of God.

His act of theft was an act of rebellion against God's holy purpose in that conquest. So instead of being used by God in a holy way, Achan was just like Jericho, greedy and selfish.

And God makes it clear that this sin of twisting what it means to be separate and what it means to be distinct, what it means to be holy in the hands of the Lord, the responsibility he had to realize how God was using them and in his heart being just as bad as the people they were meant to be judging.

He is the ultimate hypocrite. Oh, God is using me. God is using us in the world, but I'm just like them. Oh, those sinners out there.

And he has proven himself to be just like them. And this sin is so serious that it seems like Israel itself is going to face the same judgment of destruction that was meant to be for Canaan.

[23 : 17] it's starting to head the way towards Israel. So the third question, why was Achan and his whole family destroyed?

And here are the consequences of sin because notice when Achan ends up being exposed, it's not because he and his family came forward in repentance, but it's because God, as we saw when we get this whole interesting and strange story of the lots being taken and each tribe coming and each clan coming and everything and everything and everything, the whole process is so dragged out that it shows you that God is dragging his sin out into the light.

He only confessed when there was no escape left. God had so narrowed in, not just on the tribe, not just on the family, not just on the clan, not just on the man, on him.

He only confessed when there was no escape left. Like many others in the Bible, I think of Judas in particular, he recognized his sin.

He knows that what he did was sin. He says it. He's sad he's been caught, but he never repents.

[24 : 45] Judas in the New Testament was sad, felt guilt at what he had done to Jesus. He kills himself, but he never repented.

Peter betrayed Jesus, but he did repent. Two people betrayed Jesus that night, not just Judas.

They are both a picture of the other.

One, both are sorry for what they did. Both feel guilty for what they did. Only one repents and turns back to Jesus. He never repented, this guy.

Whatever sorrow he feels didn't bring the humility in his heart to throw himself under God's mercy. Had he confessed his sin and come to God, here in this chapter, with a repenting heart, wanting to turn away from sin and to turn to God and depend on his grace and his mercy, then I'm sure things would have been different.

You think of Nineveh, a people who have been called out, you're going to be destroyed. Oh, and they could have been sad about it, they could have gone down one road or the other road about it and tried all this protesting, but what they did was repented.

[26 : 03] They turned to the Lord, and even though God had decreed, judgment is coming. it was as if, from our perspective, he changed his mind.

I'm sure things would have been different had this man repented. And there are many examples of severe and serious sin that are forgiven when the person repents.

Nothing you've done, nothing you've done, is outside of the scope of God's grace.

But he never did. And his behavior had the most serious consequences for him and his entire family. And this is the seriousness of unrepentant sin.

God is merciful to the broken and to the contrite, to the humble, but those who hide, those who have excuses, those who claim to send judgment, will come. And this is how interconnected our families are.

[27 : 10] And we think, why not? Why kill all of them? Why were all of them judged? Well, the implication would be that inside the tent, inside his tent, it's his family's tent.

They all knew what he had done. It was all, you know, digging into the middle of your tent to bury all of this stuff, not a small amount of stuff, a lot of it, and a heavy weight of it.

your family tent, imagine any of you for however long you need to digging out your kitchen and burying stuff under your kitchen, they're going to know.

Everyone knew in that family what went on. No one spoke up, no one said a word until they were exposed. They were all in on it. but not only that, the mentality that drives a person to make a decision like this, you end up passing on to your kids.

and not only is it your responsibility that you've passed on your habits, your thoughts, your beliefs, but then they themselves pick up the baton and choose for themselves those exact same things.

[28 : 24] They believe for themselves those exact same things. things. So not only have you tied a noose around their neck, but they tie it tighter around their own.

And the whole family is judged, not just for the sin of the one man. The Bible is clear that yes, God will punish the generations of sin for three or four generations after, but not directly because of the sin of the father, not because of the sin of the first generation, but because each subsequent generation does the sin for themselves too.

And Ezekiel is very clear that a child won't be held accountable for the sin of their father, not automatically, only if they go on to confirm it and do it themselves in that sort of interconnected way of, oh, he's just like a chip off the old block.

Yeah, because he sinned in exactly the same way that his parents did. That's a scenario whereby the child ends up being judged as well. But Ezekiel will say, if that child repented, then he's not going to be held accountable.

She's not going to be held accountable for the sins of their parents. You're not. You're not stuck in the cycle of, if your parents did X, Y, Z, and you turned to the Lord, you will not be held accountable for what they did.

[29 : 48] Now, you might suffer the consequences in the sense that if your parents were foolish, maybe you've lost your parents and you suffer the consequences of being alone, from having wise, loving parents, of course.

But you won't be held accountable for their sin. But here, the interconnected nature of family meant that the consequences of sin ran deep and the whole family is judged.

And Achan is stoned in the valley of Echor. And Echor means trouble. in the valley of trouble. He stoned along with his entire family, all his animals.

And so, that same widespread interconnected reality of judgment for sin that was meant to come to every man, woman, and child in Canaan, in the same way that that same interconnected reality of and widespread judgment that's going to come to every single man, woman, and child on earth through God.

Everything that's going to happen on a cosmic scale, we see it echoed here in the valley of Echor. Now, I recognize this passage is very hard.

[31 : 16] It's hard for many of us. And it is a little bit like walking through that Holocaust memorial in Berlin. It is solemn to walk through this passage.

It shouldn't be easy. It draws a silent hush. You don't even know what to do with a passage like this. It feels heavy. It's hard.

It's almost beyond our comprehension. If you find a passage like this easy, check your head. evil, it's evil, it's evil, it's impact on so many, on such a wide, interconnected scale.

This is heavy, and it's hard for us from our limited perspective to see the whole picture. But, this heap of stones here, at the end of this valley of Achor, in this valley of trouble, it stands as a grim reminder of something true.

Whether you agree with it or not, whether you're struggling with it or not, whether you are in that harsh silence going, I can't even begin to sense the scale of this Holocaust. And you can't, you're sitting here reading about these stones, you're going, I can't even begin to really grasp.

[32 : 42] It might wash over you because you've heard it so many times, and you're used to sort of sermons on this, and you're just like, yeah, sure, human beings are awful, we're all sinners. Twist it a little bit, get back into the seat and just start thinking, this heap of stones is awful, this judgment is terrible, this is hard.

But it stands as a grim reminder. Sin leads. sin leads to death. Whether you fully get it or not, whether you get what God is doing here or not, whether you are getting the symbol of the echo of what's happening here, which is an echo of what God's going to do at the end of time, a judgment that's coming for everyone, glimpsed here in this valley of trouble, what do you do with it?

Well, my final thing this evening is, in event of an emergency, run for the door. Because this is emergency stuff, this is serious, this is heavy, this is hard, you want to run.

Good. Run for the door. Because God does not leave his people in the valley of trouble forever.

Turn with me to the book of Hosea, towards the end of the Old Testament.

Hosea chapter 2, it's on page 752. Page 752 is Hosea chapter 2 and verse 14.

[34 : 19] Honestly, what a fascinating book the book of Hosea is. Hosea chapter 2, page 752.

I think, if you have the same kind of ESV as I do here. Verse 14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her.

There I will give her her vineyards and I will make the valley of Echor a door of hope. What was once a place and a time of judgment is going to become a place of mercy and hope.

The location of judgment, the symbolism of judgment, this memorial of judgment is going to become the door for hope.

He's going to rekindle a relationship with people who have left him, ignored him, broken their covenant promises, whatever it is.

[35 : 44] And that is a promise that we see fulfilled in Jesus. Like Achan, Jesus was born from a tribe of Judah. Unlike Achan, Jesus was innocent of sin.

Like Achan, we have sinned. And we bear the consequences and the judgment of interconnected sin where we are carrying in us the sins of our family lines, the sins of our generations, the sins of our parents, the sins of our island, the sins of our community, the sins of Barvis impact you and not not not so that we might live.

At Calvary, that valley of trouble, this symbol of God's judgment, this place of horror and confusion and judgment, it opens up into a door of hope for you and me.

But it's still a good thing for us to walk through this valley slowly tonight. Because it warns us that sin can still have devastating consequences for God's people in the church.

In Hebrews chapter 10, it says, for if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the enemies.

[37 : 54] The writer in the book of Hebrews is addressing the problem that there are those who profess faith, but are in danger of deliberately abandoning Jesus.

So this isn't a warning here for just the stumbling believer. If you're a believer, but you're stumbling along, this isn't a warning for you. Don't worry about in that sense. It's a warning for the person who says, I know God's truth, but I'm going to choose sin.

I'm going to choose this over Jesus. Decisively and persistently, I'm going down this road. And if you say you're a Christian, but you love your sin more than you love wanting to please Jesus, then your profession might be false.

You might be in danger. And then in 1 Corinthians 5, we see the same warning about the yeast and the leaven, about how sin spreads, and it's got to be dealt with.

If you let sin spread, if you just ignore the fact that within your ranks, within your community, within your church, that there is a clear sin going on, you've got to deal with it.

[39 : 12] Now, Paul there in 1 Corinthians 5, he's writing to the church in Corinth. It's got a problem with sexual immorality. And instead of them grieving and repenting, with long history of perverted affairs and immorality going on, instead of dealing with it out in the open, the church shrugged.

No big deal. Sweep it under the carpet. We don't talk about that stuff. We just ignore it. We don't deal with it. And Paul urges the church leaders to intervene and remove from membership people who aren't willing to turn away from their sin.

They're not doing it out of cruelty, but out of love. For two reasons. To call that sinner back by making it clear what you've done is so serious.

You need to deal with this. You need to turn to the Lord again. You need to repent. Because the path you're on is a destruction path. Your profession might have always been fake.

False. But it has a second reason. It's to protect the body. To protect the flock. From becoming numb.

[40 : 30] To sin. You think of a loved one. You think of a family staging an intervention for a loved one who's spiraling into addiction. And they gather together.

Not to shame that person, but to plead with them. Don't you see what this is doing to you and to us? That's what church discipline is, ultimately. It is a loving warning to someone of the danger that they're in, even if they don't want to hear it.

When we were younger, we used to constantly play at the local river around the corner down at Cross Beach. It had a big pool. The river that took you down to the beach had a big pool around one big bend.

And so we used to throw stones in all the time. And we would watch the ripples. That was life before technology, okay? Our fun was throwing stones into rivers. But sometimes you would throw a massive stone and you would see the ripples just ripple out massively.

Sometimes you'd spray it with lots of little tiny stones and you'd see all the ripples hitting each other. But even if you threw a stone right into the little tiny corner, away from the deep section, out of the way from everybody, you'd still see the ripples.

[41 : 46] And maybe you think that your particular sin is hidden away. It's no big deal. It's just in the corner. Nobody knows. Do you know this? It still affects you.

It still affects the others in your life. People might not know about it on a wider scale, but the ripples are rippling through you. And it's absolutely having a negative impact on your soul and on your spiritual life.

porn, getting drunk, bitterness, gossip, greed, neglecting prayer, whatever. The truth is, we all stumble and fall.

We all do. But what are we going to do about it? Sin left hidden, undealt with, and the yeast spreading right through the hole will always lead us towards the valley of trouble.

As an island, we want to go towards the valley of trouble? Sweep it under the carpet, don't talk about it, don't deal with it. But when we bring it to the cross, Jesus opens the door of hope.

[43 : 04] And so here is the good news again for any one of us. In Jesus Christ, sin does not have the last word. Grace does.

Whatever you've been through, whatever interventions, whatever church discipline in your past, however severe, however serious your sin gone by, however many hard conversations and heart-to-hearts that you've had with those who love you and those who are concerned for you, when you confess, when we repent, turning away from our sin, turning to Him as the way, the truth, and the life, the door of hope is open wide.

Because Jesus bore the anger on the cross. All the trouble went on Him. Confess your sin openly to Jesus today.

Turn away from your sin and follow Jesus and you will be saved. That's the depth of His mercy and His grace.

The worst things that you have ever done on a scale beyond your imagination, all of it, at the cross, all your trouble can turn into a door towards hope.

[44 : 24] There was once a man who had never seen the sea. It was years before he had the chance to travel by boat to a far-off country and one day he goes up onto the deck and he's looking out over the ocean.

Never seen it before. And somebody else came out, stood beside him and they begin talking and the man says, I've never seen so much water in all my life.

And his friend goes, and you're only seeing the top of it. That's what God's grace is like. You think you've experienced His forgiveness, His help, His love, His grace towards all of your sin and your failures and the problems that run deep in your family, the problems that run deep between you, your friends, the people you've fallen out with, the things that nobody else might know.

And you bring it to the Lord. However much you've experienced of His forgiveness and grace, however often He has restored you 77 times, however faithful He is in walking with you through the valley of the shadow of death.

What you've tasted is only the surface of how deep His mercy, His love, His grace goes.

[46 : 02] So when you look back over Achan's stones and you hear the warning, you feel it, sin is deadly serious, I want you to look to the cross.

You hear the promise, His mercy, His grace is infinitely greater. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you bore our sin in the valley of trouble. You open the door for us for it to be a door of hope. Keep us hiding, keep us from hiding what you came to heal.

Give us hearts quick to repent and slow to wander away and let the warning of judgment drive us to the shelter of your cross.

Give us hope, give us peace, give us forgiveness, forgiveness, give us joy and may your mercy have the final word in our lives and in the lives of our families.

[47 : 12] Amen. We're going to sing in conclusion from Psalm 130 in the Sing Psalms. It's on page 173.

Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I, for mercy, cry. Let's stand and sing to God's praise. Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high and give attention and give attention to my voice when I, for mercy, cry.

Lord, in your presence through constant if you are sins report.

What can forgiveness The heaven is with you, that we may fear you, Lord.

I wait, my soul waits for the Lord, my hope is in His word.

[49 : 14] More than the watchman waits for dawn, my soul waits for the Lord.

O Israel, put your open heart, for mercy is with Him.

And full of attention from their sins, His people are waiting.

Lift up your head and receive the blessing of God, to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you before His glorious presence, without fault and with great joy.

To the only God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen.