

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that first portion of Scripture that we read in the book of Micah.
- The book of the prophet Micah, page 941, if you're using the Pew Bible. The book of the prophet Micah, chapter 5, and if we take as our text the words of verse 2.
- Micah 5 and verse 2. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.
- Now, I don't know about you, but I love meeting new people and getting to know them.
- Because I find people, well, people are very interesting, aren't they? And everyone is so different. Everyone has their own story. Everyone has their own background. Everyone has been through different experiences.
- [1 : 1 2] Everyone has seen different things. Everyone has a past that they can speak about. And maybe problems that they can share and talk about people whom they have met.
- And I always find it interesting just sitting down with people. Maybe you find it yourself. Just sitting down with people and listening to them speak about their life and what they've seen and the experiences that they've been through.
- whether these experiences have been good or bad. But often when we meet someone for the first time, one of the first questions we ask them, one of the first questions we ask them is, where are you from?
- And in our context and culture, the question that usually follows the question, where are you from, is, well, who are your people? Or who are your parents? And then they would say where they're from and who their parents are and who their relations are.
- And, well, the conversation would continue from there. But, you know, I was thinking that if people were to ask Jesus, as a man when Jesus was walking this earth, if they were to ask Jesus, where are you from and who are your people?
- [2 : 1 7] And, well, who are your parents? Jesus would have to explain to them that he was brought up in the town of Nazareth. His mother was Mary. His father was Joseph. His father was a local carpenter.
- And within his family circle, he had many brothers and sisters. But then Jesus would have to explain that he wasn't born in Nazareth. Even though he lived in Nazareth, he wasn't born in Nazareth.
- No, he was born in a tiny little village called Bethlehem. And the thing about Bethlehem is that if you ever mentioned Bethlehem to someone, they would say, well, where is that?
- And the thing about Bethlehem is that it was such a small village that you had to name the surrounding area to try and help people understand where Bethlehem really was.
- Because if Jesus had just said that he was born in Bethlehem and this place is so small, they would wonder, well, where is Bethlehem? And Jesus would have to say, as it is here in verse 2, it's in Bethlehem, Ephrathah.

[3 : 16] It's in Bethlehem, Ephrathah. And when Jesus would say that Bethlehem is in the region of Ephrathah, if I can pronounce it properly, people would know exactly where he's talking about or what he's talking about.

They would know where Bethlehem is. Now, an illustration I was thinking of this, well, I suppose it's similar to explaining where Melbost is. Not my Melbost, but the Melbost that's along the road up on the west side.

Melbost is, as you know, it's a small village. It's right on the west coast of Lewis and it's a wee bit off the main road if you're heading towards Ness. But in order to explain where Melbost is, everyone calls it Melbost Borv because the little village of Melbost is in the region of Borv or it's right beside the larger village of Borv.

And so by saying Melbost Borv, everyone might not know where the village of Melbost is, but everyone will know where the larger village of Borv is. And you know, that's what we see here in Micah chapter 5.

The prophet Micah, he's talking about this little insignificant village called Bethlehem. And in order that everyone knows exactly where Bethlehem is, he has to refer to it as Bethlehem Ephrathah.

[4 : 38] Bethlehem Ephrathah. And what Micah prophesies about this little village in the kingdom of Judah is that a ruler will come from this village and this ruler will reign in Israel.

And as we saw in our reading from Matthew's gospel, this promised ruler is a covenant king. He's the covenant king, Jesus Christ. And it's here that Micah prophesies that the Messiah will come from this tiny, little, insignificant and unknown village known as Bethlehem.

Now there are four things I just want to draw out from this prophetic message of Micah. And the first thing I want to draw attention to is the context of Micah's prophecy.

Because the kind of people to which Micah ministered, where he ministered God's word, the kind of people that he ministered to was a lax people. That's the first point.

A lax people. Because we're told in verse 1, it says, Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops. Siege is laid against us. With a rod, they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.

[5 : 48] Now the book of the prophet Micah, it's part of this section near the end of the Old Testament called the Minor Prophets. And there are 12 minor prophets. But they're known as minor prophets not because their ministry was minor or even insignificant.

But because, well they're known as minor prophets because of the length of the book. Their book is short in comparison to the long books of the major prophets which are Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And you know it's interesting that as one of the minor prophets, Micah's message and his ministry, it's often overshadowed by the message and ministry of his contemporary Isaiah.

Isaiah and Micah, they were prophets at the same time. They ministered together, you could say. Because they both prophesied, we're told, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah who were kings in the southern kingdom of Judah.

And both Micah and Isaiah, they were seeking to address the spiritual state that the kingdom was in. They were addressing this lax people. The nation of Israel, it was not only a divided nation, but the nation was walking in darkness.

[7 : 06] And we saw that last Lord's Day when we were looking at Isaiah chapter 9. We saw that the people were walking in darkness. They needed to see a great light. And they were walking in darkness because they had turned their backs upon the Lord to serve other gods.

And as a result, as a people, they had this outward appearance of religion. But they had no love for the Lord in their heart. The Israelites were paying lip service to the Lord.

But they weren't putting the Lord first in their lives. Their hearts were divided. Their commitment was half-hearted. Because they wanted, you could say, the best of both worlds.

They wanted to please the Lord outwardly. But they also wanted to please themselves and live lives that would please themselves. And you know, the situation in Micah's day can very easily be compared to our own day.

Because Micah's nation, they had abandoned their religious heritage. As a nation, we have abandoned our Christian heritage. As a nation, Israel had an outward appearance of religion.

[8 : 15] But they had hearts that were very far away from the Lord. And during his ministry, Micah addressed many issues that are actually prevalent in our own day.

Because the kingdom of Judah, it was in this advanced state of moral, social, and spiritual ruin. When you looked at the nation of Israel, you saw that there was violence, there was greed, there was inequality, there was the perversion of justice, there was commercial deceit, there was confusion and distortion of the structure of families, there was eviction and homelessness, there was the promotion of pagan practices, there was political complacency, and there was corruption at every level of society.

And you know, you look at it, and you listen to what's being said about the kingdom of Judah, and you just think, well, that's a mirror image of our own nation. And the root cause of Israel's problems, like it is the root cause of our nation's problems today, was that the people had ignored God's word, and they had turned their back on the Lord.

They were a lax people. And we, sadly, are a lax people. Because like the Israelites of old, our nation is careless, and our nation is Christless.

We're tolerant of sin. We're soft in immorality. We're accepting of ungodliness. We're permissive when it comes to wickedness and corruption. We're a lax people.

[9 : 48] And it's all heading towards ruin. And you know, that's where it was leading the lax people of Israel. Their lack of commitment, their double-mindedness, their divided hearts, it was leading them towards judgment and exile.

And that was the message that Micah and Isaiah had for the southern kingdom of Judah. They had a message of judgment. They were telling the people, pleading with the people, saying to them, judgment is coming.

You need to repent because judgment is coming. They preached to this lax people this message of judgment and exile. And that's what we read about in verse 1.

Micah says, Micah is calling the lax people of Israel to muster their troops, to marshal all their armies together because the Lord is going to bring judgment and exile upon the people.

And he says that it's going to begin in the city of Jerusalem. Because the city of Jerusalem is going to be invaded by a foreign king. And you know, Micah, he's pleading with the people.

[11 : 08] He's saying to them, strengthen your walls, prepare for battle. You're going to be surrounded. An invasion is coming. And Micah says, a siege is laid against us.

With a rod, they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. In other words, the Lord is going to bring judgment. He's going to strike them upon the cheek with a rod of his power for being a lax people.

And you know, that's what happened. The city of Jerusalem, it was surrounded, it was invaded, and it was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

The invasion of Jerusalem, it resulted in the destruction of the city and the ruin of the temple and then the exile of this lax people into Babylon. And it was in Babylon, thousands of miles away, where this lax people, they were made to live in this foreign land, they were made to worship foreign gods, and they were to bow down to a foreign king.

But you know, the Lord's purpose in it all was to teach Israel and to teach us that when it comes to the things of the Lord, the Lord doesn't like a lax people.

[12 : 22] The Lord doesn't like double-mindedness. The Lord doesn't promote a confused Christianity. The Lord doesn't advocate for a half-hearted commitment. And he certainly doesn't want his people to pay him lip service.

No, my friend, what the Lord wants, in fact, what the Lord demands is that he gets all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise. The Lord demands that his people live with the life song of Psalm 115.

Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take. And you know, even though judgment and exile seemed like such a dark day for this lax people of Israel, as we know from the history, the Lord wasn't finished with Israel.

Because to a lax people, Micah promises that there is a little place. A little place from which salvation will come.

And that's what I want us to consider secondly. A little place. So a lax people and a little place. A little place. Look at verse 2. But you, O Bethlehem, Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

[13 : 45] So despite the prophecy of judgment and exile to this lax people, the Lord turns this depressing prospect into what you could say is a delightful promise.

Because the Lord says, but you, and there's an emphasis there, but you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah. And you know, it's as if the Lord is actually turning his focus away from the city of Jerusalem towards this little village in Bethlehem.

And it's actually a very powerful statement. Because let's not forget that the city of Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem was the focal point for the Jews. Jerusalem was built upon this mountain called Mount Zion.

Jerusalem was the capital city of the nation of Israel. Jerusalem was where the palace was situated. Jerusalem was where the king of Israel dwelt. But more than that, it was upon Mount Zion and in the city of Jerusalem that the temple was situated.

The temple was built in Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant rested in Jerusalem. And the Lord promised to dwell amongst his people in Jerusalem. And you can see why Jerusalem was always the focal point of the Jews because they even ascended up to Jerusalem for all these annual festivals that were held there.

[15 : 08] Jerusalem was this place of prominence. It was a place of power. It was a place of prestige you could say. And yet you read here in Micah that the Lord turned away from Jerusalem and this city that was going to be destroyed and a temple that was going to be ruined.

The Lord turns his focus away from Jerusalem and he turns it to this little village called Bethlehem near Ephrathah. And as we said earlier Bethlehem was such a small village that you had to name the surrounding district and area to help people know where it was.

And yet the Lord he turns his focus towards this tiny little unknown and insignificant village near Ephrathah. And you know as we consider this little place we have to see that there's a beautiful contrast emerging between the city of Jerusalem and this tiny village of Bethlehem.

Because Jerusalem as we said it was grand and glorious. It was built on Mount Zion. It was surrounded by large walls. It had iron gates. They had watchtowers that watched for an enemy day and night.

It was the place where the king lived. It was where the temple was. It was where the Lord dwelt. Everyone went to Jerusalem. Jerusalem. No one went to Bethlehem.

[16 : 35] And yet the Lord is turning his focus away from that place of position and power and prestige. And he's turning to this tiny little unimportant unknown and insignificant little village of Bethlehem.

And you look at it and you think the Lord chose the weakest the smallest and the least of all places. And the Lord says to Bethlehem a ruler will come from Bethlehem Ephrathah and reign in Israel.

The Messiah the covenant king Jesus Christ he was to be born in this tiny little unknown and insignificant village. And you look at it and you listen to what the Lord is saying through his prophet and all that goes through my mind you know is what Paul affirmed to the Corinthians.

The Lord chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. The Lord chooses the weak things of this world to confound the strong. The Lord chooses the things that are low and despised in the world and are viewed as nothing and he makes them something.

And it's also that no one will steal the glory from the Lord. That's the Lord's purpose in it that he gets all the glory. And you know Paul even went on to say to the church he says to the church you are in Christ Jesus because God gave him for us that he might be for us wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption.

[18 : 12] Therefore says Paul he who glories let him glory in the Lord. And you know my friend that's what we're to do. We're to see that the Lord is able to use us.

Even though we may view ourselves like Bethlehem Ephrathah we may think of ourselves as this small weak unimportant unknown insignificant individual and yet the Lord is able to work in us and through us for the furtherance of his kingdom and the glory of his name.

And Paul says to us he who glories let him glory in the Lord. But you know what's incredible is that the Lord led a small unknown and insignificant group of individuals.

He led them to come and give glory to the royal son the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what I want us to think about thirdly. A led party. So a lax people a little place and a led party.

A led party. Look at verse 2 again. But you O Bethlehem Ephrathah who are too little to be among the clans of Judah from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel whose coming forth is from of old from ancient days.

[19 : 34] Then it says in verse 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth. Then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And so as Micah continues his prophecy about the birth of the Messiah, the royal son, this covenant king, the ruler in Israel, he says that when the mother of the Messiah has given birth, the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And you know what Bible commentators say is that when the Messiah is born, the nation will be united once more. Because at that time, the nation of Israel was fiercely divided into two kingdoms.

there was the northern kingdom of Israel and there was the southern kingdom of Judah. But what's amazing is that during the intertestamental period, which was that 400 year period between Malachi and Matthew, there's 400 years that takes place between those two books, the intertestamental period.

And during that time, in the wonderful providence of the Lord, those two kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah, they came together as one nation.

[20 : 50] And you know, this would make sense of what Micah is saying, that in the future there will be union, there will be a union in the nation and the rest of the brothers from the northern kingdom of Israel, they will return, there will be a union of the two kingdoms.

But you know, I was thinking that more is being said here, because when we consider what Matthew says in his gospel about Micah's prophecy, we read earlier that Matthew says that the wise men, they came from the east to Jerusalem.

Now we know very little about these wise men who came looking for the king of the Jews. We don't even know how many there were. Was it three? Was it two?

Was it more? We don't know much about these wise men who came looking for this covenant king. But what we do know is that they were wise men.

And they were wise not only because they were earnestly seeking Jesus. They were wise because they knew what they were looking for. And of course some have described the wise men as the Magi or the Magi because that's just the Greek word for wise men.

[22 : 03] Others have referred to these wise men as kings because they brought gifts fit for a king, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And still some, they regard the wise men as astrologers because they travelled from the east and they saw his star and they followed it right to where Jesus was laid in the manger.

They asked where is he who has been born king of the Jews for we saw his star and have come to worship him. But you know what's fascinating about this is that whoever these wise men were, we know that they came from the east.

They came from Persia. Babylon. They came from Babylon. And that's important because Babylon was the place where the Israelites had been exiled. They had been exiled to Babylon because of the Lord's judgment.

And there were many wise men in Babylon. In fact it was in Babylon that Daniel was a wise man. And Daniel the prophet, he received visions of the coming son of man.

And you know it seems to me that these wise men which were familiar with the writings of Daniel which were actually written in Hebrew. Now the point I'm getting at by saying all this, the point I'm getting at is that Micah's prophecy that the brothers will return, I believe that it was more than just the union of the two kingdoms.

[23 : 25] Because while I was reading and meditating on this part of the passage, part of me has a suspicion and it's only a suspicion so don't take my authority on it. But you can think about it for yourself.

Part of me has a suspicion that the wise men were actually Israelites. They were Jewish descendants. Jewish descendants that never returned after the exile.

Because even though there were many Israelites who returned after the exile, they returned to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, they returned to renovate and restore the temple, even though there were many that did return, there were many who didn't.

There were many Israelites who stayed in Babylon and many of them became wise men. Many of them just stayed in the region of Babylon. Even Daniel, he never returned. He died in Babylon.

And what makes me think this is that it's where the wise men came first. Their first port of call in search of the Messiah was in the city of Jerusalem.

[24 : 29] The wise men came to this city of prominence, power, and prestige because they knew that Jerusalem was the focal point of all of the Jews.

And all the Jews thought that the Messiah was going to be an earthly king with an earthly reign and an earthly kingdom. They thought that the Messiah was going to rule and reign in Jerusalem.

But it's when the chief priests, as we read in Matthew, when the chief priests and the scribes, when they actually searched the scriptures, when they actually read the Bible, they realised that the Christ wasn't going to be born in this city of prominence, power, and prestige.

They said that the Christ was going to be born in a stable, or born in a little insignificant village in Bethlehem. The Christ wasn't going to be born in a palace.

He was going to be born in this unknown tiny little village of Bethlehem, Ephrathah. And, well, the scribes, they found it out by reading the words of our text.

[25 : 34] But you, O Bethlehem, Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth, then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

You know, it's wonderful to see that these wise men, they came to Jerusalem. They came to Bethlehem. Well, they came to Jerusalem, then they came to Bethlehem. And Bethlehem, the name Bethlehem means house of bread.

So they came to the house of bread looking for the bread of life. And when they found him, when they found Jesus, they worshipped him. And, you know, just thinking about that, the wise men, whoever they really were, they really were wise men.

they were wise men. And, my unconverted friend, you will do well to imitate them. Because what can be said about these wise men is that they read and they believed God's word, they recognised the worth of Jesus Christ, they sought diligently for Jesus, they humbled themselves to worship Jesus, and from that point on, they desired to obey God rather than man.

[27 : 05] And is that not what a wise man should be? Someone who reads and believes God's word, recognise the worth of Christ, seek Christ with all their heart, humble themselves before Jesus Christ, and then from that point on, live in obedience to the Lord, instead of obedience to man.

And my unconverted friend, you will do well to imitate the wise men, because they were a led party. They were a led party, led all the way to Jesus. They were a led party, led to a loving person.

A loving person. And that's what I want us to consider in conclusion. A loving person. We've considered a lax people, a little place, a led party, and last of all, a loving person.

A loving person. Look at verse 4 of Micah chapter 5. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be their peace.

The name Micah means who is like the Lord. Who is like the Lord. And you know, that's certainly true when we consider the description Micah gives of the promised covenant king.

[28 : 29] Because he's described as being from God and for God. He's from God and he's for God. We're told in verse 2, you shall come forth for me.

One who is to be ruler in Israel. He's the royal son. He's the covenant king. He's Israel's ruler. He's the Messiah, Jesus Christ. But more than that, Micah says that Jesus is the shepherd of his flock.

Jesus is the shepherd of his flock. And we're familiar with the shepherd theme of scripture. We see it again and again in the Bible. But particularly we see it in the well-known psalm of Psalm 23, where King David, he confesses about a greater king, that the Lord is my shepherd.

And this is the thing, when you confess that the Lord is your shepherd, you're actually confessing that Jesus is your Lord and King. When you confess the Lord as your shepherd, you're confessing that Jesus is your Lord and King.

And that's what David was doing in Psalm 23. He was confessing Jesus Christ to be his Lord and his King. But here Micah describes the Messiah as a shepherd.

[29 : 47] A shepherd who will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord and in the majesty of the name of the Lord, his God. And Micah says that under the care of this messianic shepherd, he says that his flock, the Lord's flock, will dwell secure and he shall be their peace.

And you know, it's a beautiful description of the kind of shepherd the coming Messiah was to be. That he will be a caring and compassionate shepherd who will stand and shepherd over his flock.

He will watch over them. His eye will continually be upon them and they will dwell secure. He shall give them his peace. And you know, when you think about this description here of Jesus standing and shepherding the flock in the strength of the Lord, you know, that's how Matthew described Jesus.

In Matthew chapter 9, we're told that when Jesus saw the crowds, when he saw the crowds, we're told he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

They were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And this is what Micah is prophesying, that the Messiah Jesus Christ, he will be a caring and compassionate shepherd.

[31 : 11] In fact, he's telling us that Jesus or the Messiah will be the most loving person you will ever know or ever hear about because he moves with compassion.

And the gospel reminds us, doesn't it? The gospel reminds us that we are more sinful than we could ever realize. And yet the gospel says to us we are more loved than we could ever dream.

We are more sinful than we could ever realize and yet we're more loved than we could ever dream. And that's what John could see when he looked at Jesus. When John writes his gospel, he describes this shepherd as a loving shepherd.

He describes Jesus as one who's full of care and compassion. And he even writes down what Jesus said. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

I know my own and my own know me. And then what does Jesus say later on? My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

[32 : 14] And I give to them, eternal life and they will never perish. Neither shall they be plucked out of my hand. My sheep hear my voice.

My unconverted friend, have you heard the voice of the shepherd? Have you heard his voice? I've said it many times before and I'll say it again.

It's one thing knowing about this caring and compassionate shepherd, but it's another thing completely to confess the Lord as your shepherd.

It's one thing knowing about him. It's another thing confessing him. Because when you confess the Lord as your caring and compassionate shepherd, when you confess, I have heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

When you confess that he is your Lord and your king, when you confess him, that's when you know him, that's when you follow him, that's when you have peace with him.

[33 : 19] My friend, is the Lord your shepherd? Is the Lord your shepherd? You're reaching the end of another year in your life. And you know, I wonder, are you going to begin the next year, 2019, with the Lord still not as your shepherd?

Is the Lord your shepherd? Because what Micah is reminding us this evening is that this shepherd came to deal with the sin of a lax people.

The shepherd was born in a little place called Bethlehem, Ephrathah. And at his birth, there was a led party who came to worship him. But the wonderful thing about this Jesus is that he's a loving person.

He's more loving than you could ever dream. He's a loving person. He's the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. So a lax people, a little place, a led party, and a loving person.

And my friend, this Jesus, he's a loving person that we all need to get to know. We need to get to know him. We need to follow him. Whilst we're still on mercy's ground, you make sure you come and you follow this shepherd whilst you still have time.

[34 : 42] May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee that Jesus is the Lord, our shepherd.

Help us always to confess him. Help us to love him. Help us to follow him. Help us, Lord, to look to him day by day, knowing that he gives to us a wonderful promise, that goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

O Lord, we pray that thou wouldst bless thy truth to us. We thank thee that despite our sin and our fainting and our failing, that thou art the one who has provided for us a wonderful saviour.

Lord, bless us, we pray thee. Help us to see Jesus clearly, and to follow him more closely, and to love him more deeply. O Lord, keep us then, we ask.

Bless us, and go before us, and do us good for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we shall bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 80.

[35 : 58] Psalm 80 in the Scottish Psalter, page 332. Psalm 80 in the Psalm 80.

And we're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked 4. And Psalm 80, it begins with this plea to hear, to listen, hear Israel's shepherd.

And how are we to hear him? like a flock. We're to hear him like a flock, and we're to listen, and obey his voice, and follow him. Hear Israel's shepherd like a flock, thou that as Joseph guide.

Shine forth, O thou that dost abide between the cherubims abide. In Ephraim's and Benjamin's, and in Manasseh's sight, O come for our salvation, stir up thy strength and might.

So Psalm 80 from the beginning down to the verse marked 4 to God's praise. vers. lex God is ■ Ay Do O God, that does Josephine Shine forth, O God, that does between The general ends of life In Herodians and Benjamins And in monastic sight O come for our salvation

[37 : 56] Stir up Thy strength and might Turn us again, O Lord of God And upon us, but save Through it like our tenets to shine And so we shall be saved O Lord of hosts, almighty God Thou long shall kindled be Thy wrath against the prayer made

Thy life, Lord, fall to thee The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, now and forevermore Amen