

# Theology of Sex: The Fall

## By Mike Erre

[Band plays worship song]

Ron Hafer:

Mike has said to me a couple of times this week already, thank you for inviting me. Thank you for taking the risk. I said to him, and I mean it with all my heart, we-we are at risk before God when He has a message that he wants us to hear and we're not open to hearing it. So thank you, preacher, for your willingness to deliver the hard message right from the word of God. Brian's on staff, and I thought what a nice touch to have one of his buddies lead us in prayer. And after that, Mike will come and preach the word.

Brian:

Thanks Ron. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just ask that as Mike comes in and teaches this morning that You would give him clarity and that You would just clear our minds. You are a merciful God and You have given us this gift of sexuality and we have abused it and Satan has stolen it. But You desire to show us ways to have it redeemed. And I just pray that as Mike speaks, that Your clear message would be brought forth of what Your design is for our lives in this area. We thank You for a place that we can do this, where we can speak openly about Your truth, and I just pray that You're with us this morning and give Mike the right words to say. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Mike Erre:

Alright, thank you guys. Hey, good morning. Sweet, my peeps up in the back, good morning.

[Audience cheers]

Mike Erre:

Hey, all right, just checking. Just checking. Hey, good morning. Let's go to Genesis three, if you've got a Bible. We're looking at theology of sex and we're not doing it to be cute or inappropriate or because it's like a relevant topic, although it is a relevant topic. We're doing it because our theology of sex is tied directly to our theology of God. What do we think He is? Is He good, is He capricious? Is He arbitrary? Is He unjust? And um, just on a personal note--

[Feedback from microphone]

Mike Erre:

Hello. I want to thank you for, um, I had an inbox full of emails from you guys when I got home last night and the stuff you were sharing was pretty, pretty brutal and pretty intense and, there's been a weight to my soul, and I'm just very grateful that you're willing to listen and engage in the conversation, and I'm just really proud and privileged to, to be helpful in whatever way God would choose to do that. But thank you for those of you that just wrote and shared the stuff that God was stirring up, that's really, praise Him, that's cool to hear. We're going to--we looked yesterday at His design and there were two just primary things I wanted you to kind of come away with. One was just that it's good, sexuality is a good gift of a good God. It really is. It is good and it's worth enjoying. And it's one of the ways that we've bring glory and honor to His name by just being human people, living in human bodies with human desires. All of that was declared good.

Second thing I wanted you to hear big time was that it's just powerful, and we know that I mean, we know that sex is powerful, but there's powerful in a way that they just don't, our biology classes just don't ever tell us. You two become one flesh. It's just more than the joining of bodies. The joining of selves is the joining of life, the joining of souls. There's something really important that happens there. But I just wanted us to come away with the huge yes, this is a good gift of a good God. And I just want to apologize on behalf of the Church of Jesus that we just don't lead with that because the scriptures do. The scriptures lead with it is good. It is good. It leads with the thou shalt. Now, this morning, we want to look at how we descend from God's ideal into the reality, within which many of us find ourselves and again, we're going to just use the real words and the hope is not to offend in any way, shape or form, the hope is just to be real. And scripture talks so really about it, that we just want to do that, too.

So we're going to start by just taking a moment before we get to Genesis to just kind of clearly say what God's standard for sexuality is. Admitting ahead of time that none of us will be able to stand and boast of our own righteousness once we-once we kind of hear this. All right, God's standard for sexuality, if you want it biblically as clear as you can say, ready, it's all sex, and it's all reserved for marriage. Marriage defined as one man, one woman, one lifetime. A covenant before God. It's all sex, all reserved for marriage. If you're like me, that sounds horrible. Again, puberty at 12, marriage at 29, 17 long years in the desert wilderness going.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

It's all sex that it's all reserved for marriage. Right, I didn't even hear that part. We have this convenient way of distinguishing between different kinds of sex. Right. There's intercourse which is like the real one. That one really counts. I've got a guy standing right here waving and pointing.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I was just--I didn't know if that was to me, sir. I just wanted to say hello. Good morning to you. I'm glad. I hope--

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I hope whoever you were looking for finds you, because this--he was excited for you in the yellow to join him up there.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

All right, where were we, what were we talking about? Sex? Oh, thank you, I appreciate that.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

All sex is reserved for marriage, all of it. Now. Don't we make these interesting and convenient distinctions? Right. So we'll call oral sex like a different kind of sex or, you know, we think

there's this big gray area out there or something. And none of these distinctions are biblical to the Hebrew mind. Kissing with sex, and everything that led to intercourse was sex. All of that is an expression of sexuality. The hypocrisy of us saying that I can lay naked with somebody, engage in oral sex with them, and somehow we haven't been intimate and I've held to some technical standard of virginity is ridiculous. We just-we just want to, listen, this isn't about a guilt thing. This is just, let's just-let's just go to war against some of the lies. Now, what do you do if it's up to you? But let's not, let's not pretend that it's okay. I mean, if we're going to step out in rebellion, let's just call it rebellion. And not play the game that simply says, okay, God, You're really concerned about the technical definition of intercourse when the rest of it is just fine.

The scriptures just don't say that, it's all sex. The whole thing is sex. We know that. We know that if we're real honest, and the whole thing's reserved for marriage, one man, one woman, one covenant, one lifetime, and I know how it sounds, believe me, I've had to carry the reality of that. And I know it's such a struggle in a sexualized culture. And I know the urges and the desires. I mean, I get it. But if that's the standard, how should we respond? And the Bible doesn't mince any words. I mean, I wish Paul Paul were, like, subtle about some of the stuff. Here's what he says in Ephesians, "But among you, the church, there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity." I mean, is he pretty subtle there, or would you say it's pretty clear? How about this one? First Thessalonians, "Many of you will ask, what's God's will for my life? It is God's will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality." There you go. Let's start there, and then we'll worry about a job.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

"That each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable."

Whoa. That would be revolutionary for a lot of us, wouldn't it, that-that our bodies don't control us. Hebrews, "Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure for God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral." There's this word that keeps popping up that we don't like very much. Sexual morality is how we translate the Greek word. You guys probably know pornia from whence we get pornography, and it just means any sexual activity outside of marriage. But what about the gray area? Right? I mean, and this was awful. I get bitter at the church sometimes for how they did this with me because I never heard a sermon on sex ever growing up in the church, except when I turned 13. I sat down with a guy I didn't know and he led me through something called the biological hand grenade ladder. First of all, how awful is that name?

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And the metaphor that goes with it? But it just went through the steps of-of-of hand holding, and then kissing, and then French kissing. And I didn't, I didn't know what this was yet. And-and then there was petting and heavy petting. And I'm just going, what is heavy petting? I don't even understand.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

And I'm asking him, what is it? He's going, you just stay away from it. Well, I don't even know what to stay away from.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Can you just-can you just tell me a little bit. Come on. And-and all that did, I mean, what's that teaching do to you? All it did is make me wonder, well, if it's that much fun, right, I need to go check this thing out for myself. I mean, all it did was arouse my curiosity. That's all I heard from the church was this. Thou shalt not. We recognize it's all sex and it's all reserved for marriage, but I wondered, you know, and this is a question that junior high students and college students ask a lot, how far can I go? Like, where's the line? It's all sex, but if you want a line, here it is. Ready? To not arouse or awaken love until until it can be fulfilled in a holy way. There's your line. For me, when I was dating my wife, we could hold hands sometimes, sometimes we could kiss. Sometimes we can even be in the same room together because she could not keep her hands.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Off me. Brother, can you blame her? I mean, the Pillsbury Doughboy has always been a very attractive guy.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

So-so for, well, you know, maybe I'm exaggerating a little bit about that point, but-but, you know, here's the deal. I mean, if you're really interested in the standard, it's that clear and that simple. All sex, do not arouse or awaken love until it can be fulfilled. And it's all reserved for marriage. And the story, I mean, that's what it is. We might not like it, but what we can't say is that scripture is not clear on it. Now, what do we do with this? I want to paint a case that our view of sex stems directly from our view of God, and that you can't change your view of sex until you change your view of what God is like, and we're going to talk about the descent from how we change our view of God to our view of sex, and then we're going to work our way, excuse me, back up. So Genesis 3, Adam and Eve, we would agree we would never have made that choice. Can we agree about that? They were-they were dumb. We are much more sophisticated in our faith. The enemy, he doesn't use the same tricks anymore because we would never fall for those.

"Now, the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" And you guys know the story, right? Eden, the Hebrew word means the light. So how cool do you think Eden was? You're naked and unashamed. You don't even know there's another option other than being naked. Your command is to be fruitful and multiply, right? I mean, that's the command you have from God. You have all that you want to enjoy. You have perfect intimacy with each other, perfect harmony with God, no guilt, no shame, no calories, no disease. Right. Nothing bad except one thing. You can't go eating the fruit of a specific tree. So the enemy, what's the first thing the enemy does? Don't worry about all the yes's God has given you, focus on the one no. Did God really say that? "The woman said to the serpent, 'Well, we may eat fruit from the trees

in the garden, but God did say you must not eat fruit from the tree that's in the middle and you must not touch it," Now she's added something to it, "Or you will die." Next up, deny the consequences. "You will not die. Come on. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open."

He's holding out on you. He's that good. You'll be like Him knowing good and evil. The woman ate it. Gave it to the guy. Guy ate it. God calls him out. Guy says it was the girl you gave me, her fault. Woman says, no, it was the snake. And then here we are, however many thousands of years later. I'm so glad the enemy does not have to reinvent his tricks. Did you throw that awful slide up on the-on the thing? This is-I'm not a PowerPoint guy.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

So the squiggle, quit it! You're not--I mean, you're lucky you got anything, okay, so just be grateful.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

The squiggle is a downward spiral. Okay? Okay, just laugh for a while and then we can get we can move on.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

I know, I know. make fun, best fun. I'm old. They didn't have the Internet when I was in high school, so I learned late. Okay. Um, and then I want you to see the descent from ingratitude, idolatry, to immorality, to imprisonment. And this is the picture of Genesis 3. I mean, just think about it. It starts with ingratitude, right? You've got a garden full of yes's, and what's the enemy do? First, focus you on the no. So what the enemy wants for us is to adopt a posture of ingratitude. Does it matter how much I have? What I'm always focused on is what I lack. Now, that turns quickly into idolatry. Idolatry in the following respect: idolatry in that my desires now become my God. God doesn't know what's best for me, right? It becomes idolatry. And now because there is a no, He must not be good, because we all know if God was really good, He'd give us just permissive yes's everywhere we wanted. Right? So all of a sudden the ingratitude of the no causes us to question the character of God. And instead of trusting Him, who do we trust? Us. Our desires. I know best, which leads, of course, to denying the consequences and stepping out in sin and immorality.

Right? So-so Satan, ingratitude, did God really say that? Idolatry. He's holding out on you. He knows you'll be like Him. Immorality, deny the consequences. I mean, in order to sin, we really do have to deny the consequences, don't we? We're too smart for that, or I'm not hurting anybody else, or we're not having sex, or that's just bodies, or whatever it is that we use to rationalize. We step out, deny the consequences, and then we find ourselves in prison. Now, men and women, one of the things we misunderstand about the way God allows us to be imprisoned is this. We think that God locks us into what is bad. I tell you that God's prison is often locking us out from what is good. So Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, God's best for them was now denied them because of their sin. Do you see the difference? Know the earth is under pain,

suffering, death, sin. You following this point so far? I know the PowerPoint is awful, but do you see kind of the deep, wonderful theology behind it? Go to Romans 1. Genesis 3 is called the Fall, Romans 1 is called the falling. Genesis 3 is past tense, Romans 1 is present tense, Genesis 3, it was the fall of Adam and Eve, Romans 1 is the fall of each and every human person outside of the Lord Jesus.

And I'm so glad we don't fall for the same tricks, I am so glad. You know, you can go ahead and keep that up there, it is so worth looking at. Thank you. Yeah, don't show that guy. There you go. We're going to see Genesis 3 right now in Romans 1, certain verse 18. The wrath of God is being, present tense, revealed from heaven. We think God's wrath was a past thing poured out on Jesus or His judgments of future things, right, when we're held accountable for how we live. There's also a present tenseness to it. Paul says it's being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them, for since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, eternal power, divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that all of us are without excuse. In other words, no one's born an atheist. Right, we have an instinctive and soulful awareness that there's just something bigger, and for proof of that, we look outside the window and see what God has made.

But in order to rebel against Him and because we're born now oriented away from Him, what? We have to suppress that truth within us. So all of us are really without excuse for, it continues, for although they knew God, they neither glorified Him nor gave thanks to Him, but their

thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claim to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal men, and birds, and animals, and reptiles. Therefore, 24, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity. And this is the first time you mentioned sex. What's he been talking about until then? Their view of God got the struggles we have with our sexuality. They don't start with our bodies and our desires, they literally start with our theology. What do we do now? What do we say? Not one creed we mentally agree to, but deeply, what do we think God is like? We're going to come back to this point in a moment. They exchanged, verse 25, the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator who is forever, praised a man. Because of this, God gave them over a second time to shamefulness, even the women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

In the same way, the men were also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the death penalty for their perversion. This is a really happy passage, I know. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over yet again. Brothers and sisters, I want you to see buried in here is that same descent. What is Paul beginning with? They neither glorified Him nor gave Him thanks. What does it start with? This gratitude ingratitude thing. I mean, I love that it's all eyes and I love the squiggle, but I think it's really true. I mean, think about it. Most of you are single and you have good and full lives. You have deep friendships, most of you. Hopefully a good relationship with your family, you have a full life of study and learning, you are challenged, you have healthy bodies, you have a vibrant relationship with Christ.

I mean, I'm assuming that some or all of these things are true of you. You have much, but where exactly does the enemy want to point you? I can't have sex, I can't have sex, I have this great life over here, but I can't have sex, again, I can't He's unfair. He's-He set us up, right? I mean, seriously, where do we-where do we want to focus immediately on now? We've got a world full of yes's and he directs us to the no's in our lives. It's just, this is what he does. Worked on Adam and Eve, works on us. And so many of us, instead of walking around, just thanking God for the ability to breathe, and walk, and having air, and all of those sorts of things, we walk around with kind of entitled chips on our shoulders. And I only know this because I have friends who struggle with this. I would never have struggled with this myself, ever.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

Of course. God, come on. And then you get married and you think marriage, if I could just hold out till I'm married, we'll have sex all the time. My wife and I took a premarital questionnaire. It said, how many times a week do you think you'll have sex? I put 15. She put two.

[Audience laughs]

Mike Erre:

She was closer to the truth, much more than I was. I thought marriage would solve lust, right. I never had sex before. Now I'm having sex. So why should I still struggle with lust? But isn't there a no in marriage? Yeah, you have to be faithful to one person. So guess what, the battle became instead of the no being, I can't have sex now, the no is I can't have sex with anybody

else. I mean, it's just-it's just staggering how easy we fall for this. I have a gorgeous wife. I have a wonderful relationship with her, but where is the evil one in my worst moments when it direct me? She's the last naked body you're ever going to see. I mean, sex with the same person for 40 years, how boring. Those are the lies. So if you think marriage is going to solve it, you don't give the human heart enough credit for its wickedness, and the enemy, and of credit for his ingenuity. Because lust just changes, it doesn't go away. I thought it would and it didn't. So it starts, men and women, your sexual problems, my sexual issues start with my view of God truly.

Do I walk around with an entitlement and then I play sexuality into that, and if I do, then no wonder I struggle. Or do I walk around thankful and then play sexuality into that? Of course, ingratitude then leads to idolatry. I mean, what's Paul say after this? They didn't glorify Him or give thanks. What happens? They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images. What's pornography? Images. I mean, that's all it is. These images that aren't even real images. He goes on in verse 25, they exchange the truth of God for lies and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator. Men and women, what is one of the clearest idols of Orange in L.A. County, Southern California? It's sex, right? I mean, money is the other one, but it's sex. Paul is saying that sex worship is built on self-worship. When you focus on the no, guess what you want to make God? Your desires. Have you ever heard somebody say, or have you ever said, well, I just-I just can't say no. Well, then, guess who your God is? Your desires. I mean, is it not-is that not true, that instead if I'm walking around kind of focusing on the no's, who's my idol then? Me. Right, I deserve it. I can't say no, I just can't stop. I'm worshipping what I want. And that, of course, leads to immorality, denying the consequences.

Oh, my word, do we not do this? The world tells us here, here's what you have to be safe with your sexuality. You might get a disease. True. You might get pregnant. That does happen. But what they don't tell you is that you are shredding your soul. And you are shrinking your capacity to experience what God has for you. Brothers and sisters, I simply tell you the truth, if you are bonding and you are ripping and you are bonding and you are ripping and you were bonding and you are ripping, and leaving pieces of your soul attached to people that can't be-in ways that can't be undone and then wondering, well, why is it that I don't enjoy sex? I mean, this is why you- you've taken your soul and you've hollowed it out. Here's an example, take Hugh Hefner, right, he is the heterosexual, like, hero of men everywhere, right? The mansion, the girlfriends. All right, I read an article in Christianity Today, of all places, about Hugh Hefner, where two of his girlfriends were saying that sweet Hef is so hollowed out he can't enjoy having sex with a woman. He has to go into deeper and deeper places of depravity, he can't enjoy having sex with a woman. Because he's hollowed himself out for decades.

And this is called freedom. We believe that's what the sexual revolution brought us, the ability to not even be able to enjoy what God intended. Oh, but that won't happen to us. We're too smart, porn, that doesn't hurt anybody, right? I mean, it's just me and my computer in the dark. We're fooling around with that big old gray area that isn't so gray, that doesn't hurt anybody. I mean, we're not having sex. I mean, I'm going to give all of us to. This isn't a good thing, let's just expose for a moment the lies. That the enemy forces us to swallow and that we swallow sometimes willingly as we descend. So we just deny the consequences. It's not a big deal, it's just bodies, it's just biology. No, so much more than that, and we know it. Brothers and sisters, if you could just sit in my office and hear the shame and the guilt and the brokenness and the addiction

and the despair. Would that cause you to stop? I don't even know, it didn't me. We learned that in the prison. Brothers and sisters, here's a big point. We must take the nature of God's judgment.

We think that God judges us when we get caught or someone gets pregnant or we get a disease, I tell you that is His mercy. God's judgment is when He gives you over to what you want three times, here's what prison looks like. You want it. You got it. I'm hands off. He gave them over. He gave them over. He gave them over. That's prison. You want to know the definition of prison? I don't like it, but I can't stop it. And so God just says, you can have a kid, like that's His judgment. That's the present tense judgment of a holy God. That just that crushes me. And so my prayer has changed that God, don't give me what I want, you know, don't let go of me. I know you guys know-many of you know the story of Turkish Delight, right? So at the movie, it was a little in the book. It's great. From Narnia, Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Edmund love-Edmund can relate to-Edmund separates from his sisters, his brother, befriends the witch who isn't so friendly. What does he want? Turkish delight. I don't understand why he wanted that, but that's what he wanted, and so she bewitched Turkish Delight so that the following would happen. The more he ate, the hungrier he became. The more he indulged, the less satisfying it was.

And that, brothers and sisters, is the definition of sexual sin and imprisonment. The more that you indulge, the less satisfied, the more lonely, the more alienated you become. The more that you gorge, the hungrier you are. Nothing satisfies. You don't like it, but you can't stop it. Now, I know this prison and I share this in no way to be offensive or anything, but to say there's just hope, there's just hope, because I bet there are some of you here who are feeling so hopeless. You're damaged goods. The enemy tells you you've blown it big. There's no way you'll ever be

set free from porn and masturbation. There's no way you'll ever be restored so that somebody would delight in you the way the couple we looked at yesterday delighted in each other. And you guys look great, I mean, handsome, looks spiritual, you raise your arms and you sing praises and all of that is easy compared to digging into the deep pain and brokenness and darkness that we all carry. None of us can stand before God and say, yep, no lost here. Yeah. No immorality here. Yeah. No slavery or ingratitude here.

Which would do? For me, I found myself addicted to money. I graduated from college and was a stockbroker and it was pretty cool and I made more money than I'd ever made, which was even more cool. And I started dating a feminist, Democrat, liberal, everything that I just wasn't. And we got into this in this incredibly physical relationship. We didn't have sex. Deny, deny. We didn't have sex. Addicted to pornography, masturbation. And I broke up seven times with this young lady. Yeah, yeah, people tell you missionary dating works well, I gave it seven shots and seven times I was off. I'm just ashamed. I prefer still to this day that God would not only forgive me, but somehow allow her to see Jesus in spite of me. And one night, I don't know, God in His mercy intervened and the way of conviction was so bad, I called up the elders of my church and I confessed all of it. The next day, and it was awful, I was found out. And this happened to be man of grace and truth, and they they allowed me to experience the consequences, but they also said there was hope. And I went out into a cabin, they made me go to a cabin in the woods for seven days by myself.

Oh, man, I avoided Jesus by reading the Bible and by listening to praise music and doing other religious things, I'm good, because I knew it was coming and then the hammer dropped. And

God peeled away that whole spiral, all of the lies about that I loved her and this and that. And for the first time, I recognize the gospel was for me intellectually, I knew that, but I'd never seen how evil I was. And at the same moment of greatest despair was the moment of mercy and grace, and the battle just changed that day. It just did. And I began to see God as somebody who was good and had my best interests in mind, still struggle, still have accountability, still place guardrails, absolutely. I'm not going to be that foolish to think that I somehow conquered it. I'm still a work in progress. So I don't know how all of this hits you, brothers and sisters, for some of you, I really hope the ingratitude point hit. You know, maybe you're walking around as one of those entitled people and maybe what God would say to you is being focused on the yes's. Trust Me on the no's. Trust Me on those. I've demonstrated My faithfulness to you and goodness.

Maybe for some of you, your desires are your God this morning. If anybody resists your will, you're instantly angry. And maybe what God is saying is, why don't we confess a little of that and let's call it what it is? Maybe maybe you're just one of those folks that sleeping around or maybe your way into a physical relationship and justifying it, or maybe you're addicted. And you're somebody that recognizes prison quite well. And you don't like it, but you can't stop it. Tomorrow, we're going to spend much more time on this, but I know some of you won't be here, so let me just say this. I do believe there are ways out of this prison. One of the first comes from the ruthless acknowledgment of the depth of our sin. When scripture not only tells us to confess to God and He'll be faithful and just to forgive us. Yes. But there is a command, and people understand this different ways, I understand when James says confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you might be healed. I just take that at face value. And for me, freedom came from telling other people too, so. Brothers and sisters, the invitation for you this

morning is to take what is darkest about you, to prayerfully find somebody that you could tell. And that they may say to you, according to the authority of the scripture and the power of the sacrifice of Jesus, you are forgiven.

The secrecy is what gives all of this stuff its power. And I know you've got other people to listen to and other stuff to do, but maybe God would bring to mind somebody that you could tell.

Tomorrow, we're going to bring big things in here called hoopas, which represent the same kind of glory of God. And we're just going to have a big old time of ministry and we're going to talk first and then worship, and we're going to invite you to come under these things as a way of simply presenting yourself, including your sexuality before Him again. And no one's going to be watching and no one's going to be taking notes. We're just going to do this together as family and. And I'm just going to pray that God does big stuff. Because we need it, we need Him.

Lord Jesus, I can only imagine what's going on in the hearts and minds of Your kids right now. And Lord, as we prayed yesterday, so we pray today. Where there's conviction needed, would You bring it where there's hope needed? Would You bring that? Lord, we are sorry and messy people, and yet in Your magnificent glory and grace, You reach down to us. When we cry out for help, deliver us from being handed over to what we want. Lord would You deliver us from the prison that we so readily find ourselves in? And Lord, would You on the basis of Your love for Your name and Your love. For Your sons and daughters gathered here, would You just not leave us alone until we've done whatever it is that You would ask us to do that leads to freedom? Beloved Jesus, amen.