

## Torrey 1987 Sense of His Smile: Psalm 147 By Ron Allen

I just wish to begin by saying how very privileged I feel to be here as a part of this Torrey conference. And I don't say those words lightly. I really mean them. Years ago when I was a college student and Biola was not a university, but was still housed in downtown Los Angeles at Church, the Open Door. I was going to Cal State, but I would come in on occasion to hear the Torrey speakers. And I had no idea, not a dream, not a glimmer, not even a hope that one day I would be a part of the Torrey conference, and it is a real privilege. And I mean that sincerely.

Dr. Radmacher, in speaking to you earlier, made an observation about misunderstanding or misperceptions that some people have of geography, and he spoke about being at Philadelphia College of the Bible, and people wondering if there were any good thing in California.

I was just in Boston myself two weeks ago at a Church North of Boston, in Andover, and the couple I stayed with told me as they were taking me to see some wonderful historic places that actually they were new to Massachusetts and New England and that these things that we were seeing, some were new to them. They said, actually, we're from the Midwest. And having a view of the United States that I have, I asked, and where in the Midwest were you from?

And they said, well, we're from Pennsylvania. I realized that people on the east do have a different approach to things than people in the--Midwest is Pennsylvania. And then I thought about there are lots of misapprehensions, not just about geography, but especially about the Bible. And because of my special interests, especially about the larger part of the Bible, the

Hebrew Scripture. I was on a plane this is now a couple of years ago, en route to Winnipeg via Chicago and on that flight to Chicago from Portland, I was preparing last minute preparation, reviewing for my series that was going to be on the Psalms.

And so I had my Hebrew Psalter open and there was an empty chair in the middle. And then at the window seat there was a woman who, as it turned out, a high placed executive and a multinational company, and she was pouring over some computer printouts and was also very, very busy. So aside from just saying Hello and we sat down together, we really hadn't talked at all.

And then came the brief intermission that the stewardess said without a smile on her face, is the meal, and it really should have been said with a smile because it wasn't that much of a meal, but nonetheless, that gave an opportunity for me to stop doing what I was doing, and this woman at the window seat to stop what she was doing. And then she asked the question, which I sort of expected she'd ask, because I've seen two or three times she kind of lean over and try to peek at the funny writing I was reading.

And she said, what is that? And I said, well, that's the Book of Psalms in Hebrew. And she said, well, I thought it was Hebrew, and that explains it. She says, You're a Rabbi, aren't you? And I said, no, I'm not. I said, I'm not even Jewish. Well, that got her really concerned. She says, well, now I don't understand this at all. She said, first I saw your beard, and then I saw the funny writing. And I just knew you had to be a Rabbi.

And I said, no, as a matter of fact, as far as the beard goes, I do have a close friend in Portland who is a Rabbi. And he's told me more than once, you know, Ron, even goats wear beards, but that doesn't make the goat a Rabbi. She says, well, then what are you? And I told her, Well, I'm an evangelical Christian. Well, it turns out so is she.

And she told me her testimony about how she'd come to Christ and how Christ had made her life new. And she's continuing in this work. And she gave me a wonderful story about her Salvation experience. And then she said, but I still don't understand. And I said, what is it you don't understand?

She says, Well, if you're a born-again kind of Christian, and if you really love Jesus, isn't there a New Testament that you could be reading? And she said that it turns out based on the assumption that if you really love God and you really know Jesus, then you would not be reading the Old Testament. This is something that I mentioned as an illustration of something I find very, very common. It's not always stated in the same way, but it is believed, and it is stated in fact, after that experience, I got to thinking about it.

And I wrote the Editors of Moody Monthly a suggestion for an opinion page article. And in fact, I wrote the article and I sent it to them. And I got the nicest rejection letter I've ever gotten in my life. As the editor of Moody Monthly, Mike Cum Laude said this issue is far too important for one article. We'd like you to do a complete series on it: "Thinking wrongly about God by not thinking rightly about Hebrew Bible." I'd like to have you open your Bibles to the Book of

Psalms, and it's my intention during these three times in the plenary session to help us all to begin thinking rightly about God as we think about God from the pages of the Book of Psalms.

And this morning I'd like to have you turn to Psalm 147, which is a very beautiful and a very expressive Psalm, and it's a Psalm that I feel fits very directly into the theme for the conference, which the screen is now blocking. But you've seen earlier today that talks about praise for the past and promise for the future. Sometimes we find ourselves between those two concepts, between the concept of phrase for the past and promise for the future. And I believe that's where we find ourselves as we come to this Psalm.

Now what I'm about to say is a little risky, and there may be some here who will disagree with me on this, and that's all right, because I'm admitting that what I'm about to say is risky. We don't know who wrote this Psalm. Psalm 147, nor do we have any sure idea as to when it was written because it's an anonymous Psalm and it does not tell us. And when we have a Psalm that is dated precisely in an event associated with the life of David, I take those notices very seriously, and I would attempt to interpret the Psalm in the context of his life and even that event, but this Psalm is not dated. It is not named.

It is an anonymous poem, but by relative placement late in the collection and by some of the things that it talks about. It's my personal feeling, and it's only that that this song may well have been written during the time of the Restoration community. That is a long time after Moses and a long time after David, a long time after the division of the Kingdom under Solomon, after his

death, long time after the end of the Northern Kingdom and after the end of the Southern Kingdom after the Babylonian captivity.

So it's very late in the history of the Hebrew people and their experience with God before the time of our Savior. I think this Psalm may have come during those discouraging days of the new community as they attempted to make their way in a place that was filled with memories but seemed to be so very hopeless for possibilities for the future.

And in the general theme of praise for the past and promise for the future. There are some people who are doing neither. That is, are neither thinking rightly about the past that God has given nor thinking expectantly of the future that God may still bestow but are wondering who we are and why we are. And is it something that even matters at all? Psalm 147 may have come from such a time, and that's the way I'd like to present it now.

This Psalm is relatively lengthy, and it has three portions to it, each of which begins with a call for the people of God to praise Him. Verse 1 begins: "Praise the Lord." In fact, it's the Hebrew word that you all know it's the word Hallelujah, praise ye, for it is good to sing praises to our God, for praise is pleasant, even beautiful. The second movement of the Psalm begins in verse 7, with a renewed call to praise God, as it says, sing to Yahweh with Thanksgiving, sing praise is on the harp to our God.

And the third movement, beginning in verse 12. Third call for praise. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem. Praise your God, O Zion. So the development of the Psalm is rather clear, three

movements, each beginning with a command to give God praise. And I'm going to be speaking more about the subject of praise a bit later.

But I'd like to just jump right into the Psalm itself. And while the Psalm begins with wonderful words and impressive words, praise Ya, for it is good, pleasant, and beautiful to sing praises to him. Let's look at the first movement of the song, which is verses two to six. And here we find the Psalmist presenting the idea that God is to be praised, for it is he who is doing restorative acts among his people. God is to be praised for his restorative actions.

If you could think back in your knowledge of the Bible, and this period of time I know is not a period well known, but we have some sense for it. It was a time when a very few number of Hebrew people made their way back to the Holy City and to the Holy Land. Most of them did not return. And the Restoration period. In fact, one of the great ironies of history is that the sons and daughters of the larger number of Jewish people who chose to stay in Persia stayed there until our own day.

That is, it was in the headlines in our own lifetime, 1979, with the rebellion that took place in the country of Iran and the deposing of the Shah and his subsequent death and the elevation of the Ayatollah Khomeini. It was only through those events that the sons and daughters of Jewish people who've lived there since the Babylonian captivity were finally driven from Iran, Persia, back to Israel. And so those sons and daughters finally came back. But it was in our day those people that went back in that day, though, were few.

And they came back to a place that was in ruin and rubble. They came back to a place that had been the glorious land God's gift, the land flowing with milk and honey. And they came back to a place of ruin, desolation. The Babylonians had done their very best to destroy everything. And in fulfillment of the great Prophet Isaiah, who said that there will be cities destroyed and homes destroyed, and even the fields destroyed.

So the destruction was overwhelming. They came back to a place that no longer had massive walls to guard the city, came back to a place that no longer had beautiful homes and more commonplace homes. There were no homes at all. And most importantly, they came back to a place that no longer had the great and central meeting place of God and man. And that was the Holy Temple.

It was all gone. And those few people who came back were very prone to discouragement, for they must have asked though God has blessed us in the past. And though we know he has promises for the future, do we really expect that we are part of that living here, so few in such a battered place? And they were a people who must have been very prone to discouragement. And yet you know the story about the rebuilding of the walls.

The Book of Nehemiah describes that. And you know, the story about the rebuilding of the temple and the prophets Haggai and Malachi were involved in that Zechariah. The resultant wall and temple and new structure city still left a great deal to be desired for the walls around the city. Really, in some ways, were a mockery of the walls that had once been there for once. There were walls around a city as the capital of a country.

Now these walls only kept out brigands and thieves, but they were still under the oppressive power of evil Empire. And what about the temple, even the rebuilding of a Holy place and the meeting of God and man? We're told in the narrative of Scripture that those who had a memory either their own or one received from their parents of the temple that had once been there. They looked at this new, more modest and quite a bit smaller place. And it says that they wept bitterly at the memory of what had been there.

And they looked at this new place, which was so much smaller. And it seems to me that they were caught between praise for the past and promise for the future. And they were in a mode of despair and to such a people. If I placed the Psalm rightly, this Psalm comes and says, you have your focus entirely wrong. You're looking at the wrong things.

You're looking at buildings and walls, even at temple, but you're not really looking to him. You're not really looking to God. So verse two says these arresting words. It is Yahweh who is rebuilding Jerusalem. It is he who is regathering the outcasts of Israel.

And the point is this you're looking at the walls and you're looking at the fewness of your number, and you're despairing that the past and the future have any correlation to your own living. And you're not realizing that the God that was praised in the past and the God that is all promised in the future is the very God that is at work in your life this moment. And you're looking at the walls and wondering, how will they be in comparison to past and how will they be in fulfillment of messianic promise?

But you're not realizing there's something more than the building stones, impressive as they might be, or discouraging as they might be. It is the fact that if there's any building being done, it's being done by him. It is the Lord. It is Yahweh. It is God who is entered in a covenant and relates himself to forever with his people it is he who is doing his work in your midst. Look to him. And are you worried about the fewness of your number?

You shouldn't be counting heads, but you should be thinking about the inner man, because that's where God is doing his work. The second part of hers, too. It is he who is gathering together the outcasts of Israel. And are there not as many here as you thought there might be be glad for those that are here because the ones are here, the ones that God has brought, and he is doing a work within them. Verse three, that is far more impressive than any building that's going on outside in the city streets, for he's doing a reworking of the human heart.

He is healing the broken-heartedness within, and he is bringing a binding to the wombs. People look to him and having directed the attention away from walls and numbers, the Psalmist then hits us with verse four as he hit those who first heard this Psalm so many years ago. Speaking of God, the Psalmist says he counts the number of the storms. He knows them all by name. If you think about those words, I think you would agree with me. Those are among the most impressive words in the Bible about the person of our God, that he counts the number of the stars, and he calls them all by name.

When this Psalm was written, the view of the number of the stars and the heavens was that of the unaided eye looking up at a bright starry night in Judea. And by the way, there are a lot of stars there to be seen, unlike where Dr. Odmark and I come from, where it's usually more cloudy than it is right now. Stars seem fewer, but not in Jerusalem was there in May, and I remember one night my wife and I made a point to go out very late at night on the roof of our hotel and just to look up at the stars.

And in fact, we read this Psalm together, and we delayed at these words, and we were just allowing ourselves to be impressed with a view that the Psalmist must have had of being overwhelmed with a number and the seeming nearness of those stars.

And yet, you know, and I know that the stars you can see with your eye are just a barest fraction of the stars that are really there. And the truth of this verse is more profound today than ever, because the Psalm is still speaking truly. It's just we know there are more stars than we used to think. And if I understand things rightly, there may be a hundred billion stars in our universe. I'm sorry, in our Galaxy, and there may be 100 billion galaxies with innumerable stars that make the total.

And yet it's not really innumerable. It's a finite number, and the number is known by God, and it is known with precision. He knows exactly their number. And I'm more impressed with the balancing words more than their number is called them all by name. Concept of name in the Bible, you know, I hope, you know, is very important for a name in the Bible is not just a label

like a number might be that distinguished this person from that person on a registrar's list or a billing notice or an IRS list or something else.

A name. A name is a symbol of who you are. And when we read that God knows the number of the stars, that's a quantifying of their number. But when we read, he calls them all by names. That means that he knows the inner essence in a distinct and personal manner of every one of those stars.

That, to me, are quite innumerable. And if this were not in the Bible, quite frankly, I'd find it hard to believe and it still stretches my credibility that God would have a name for every star names I have trouble with names. Dr. Radmacher has an uncanny ability to remember names. I'll put him on spot saying that. Don't go up and say, do you remember me? Say, I'm Robin Smith. We met someplace. You remember me. But you'd be surprised at how good he is with names.

I'm not so good. Sometimes they even have trouble with the names of our children. We have four children, and I don't know if you come from a family where you're one of several siblings, but your parents, ever at a moment of exasperation, go through the list, you know, the whole litany. That's what I do. Laurie, Craig, Bruce, Rachel and I finally get the right one and they wait.

They'll know I'll come up with it. I mean, I am their father. I'll get there. Give him time.

Alzheimer's come early. It's all right. He'll get it. God knows the number of the stars. I can't believe that. And yet I do believe it. But it stretches me now. Ron Haefer, bless your heart. Has it

twice that I raised goats. They want a crazy thing to do. I'm no longer in the goat business, but I did raise goats.

And a few years ago, we had trouble with the names of our goats. Let me tell you this story.

Some years ago, we were making plans to go to Asia for Sabbatical. I was going to teach at the Asian Seminary in Manila for six months. And we live in a little mini farm outside of Portland in the rural area of Damascus.

And we had to farm on our farm. So we had someone come and take the rabbits and someone else come and take the chickens. There's a couple that would stay in our home and they'd take care of the pony and take care of the dog. But then there were the goats. When we had purchased our three dairy goats, we had paid a lot of money for them much more than we should have.

But a part of the purchase agreement was knowing we'd be gone for the six month period that the woman we would buy them from would take them back for that six month period. And we'd work that all out so that she'd be able to milk them. See, they have to be milked twice a day. We're leaving on Saturday morning, very early, and on Thursday of that week in the evening, she phoned to say that because of a personal problem in her family, she would not be able to take care of our goats.

And we had a crisis in our lives. Now I understand. And I hope you understand. I understand the world was not going to be much affected by this problem, but it was a problem. What are we going to do with the goats? You find out who your friends are.

If you have to ask someone to take care of three goats for six months, that's not even fair. I wouldn't ask my friends to do that. I wouldn't want to test them. But somehow we had to find someone to do that. Now, you know, there are magazines for everything these days.

There are magazines for pianos or magazines for microphones and overheads. There really are specialized magazines. At the time I was taking the Derry Go Journal, and I thought I'll find someone who's advertised in that who lives within, say, 50 miles of where we live and who has the same breed of goat. I have try to find someone tonight that could take care of them. And my wife and I prayed about this that the Lord would lead me to the right person.

And then I looked through the magazine and I found an ad that looked very interesting. And I placed this call. Now it was fairly late on Thursday night, and I know that farmers go to bed early. And so I wanted to rush through as many calls as I could get till I finally found someone. The woman answered the phone.

Her name is Chris, and she said, I suppose you after I told her, she said, I suppose you want me to take care of your goats? I said, yes, I really would like you to. She says, I can't do that. I said, you can't. She says no. Do you know how many goats I have? She asked me, and, well, I had no idea this is a random phone call. Of course. I don't know how many goats you have. Well, it turns out she has over 50, she says, you know how long it takes to milk 50 goats morning and night.

And I'm imagining she's spending her whole life out there in the goat bar. So wonder if she has a marriage left. I can't imagine milking 50 goats twice a day. She says, I couldn't possibly take your goats. Well, I was about to ask if she knew someone who might when she said, Wait a minute.

Before you go into that, she says, tell me their names. Now think about that. For a moment. Here I was. I'm an adult, sounded to me like she was an adult.

And I have this press of time. This is Thursday night. We're leaving Saturday. I have to do something very quickly. And she wants to dillydally around asking for the names of my goat. And I was embarrassed. And I was frustrated. And I couldn't believe she was asking me that question. And when I hesitated, she says, well, they do have names, don't they? And I said, well, sure, they have names.

I says they have kind of silly names. Of the names they came with. She said, all the better, what are their names? Well, not wanting to be rude and hang up on her, I decided I'd better tell her. So I said, well, the first one. And I braced myself. I said, Her name is Alderwood cocoa Puff. And she says, Cocoa Puff? You have Cocoa Puff? And I said, well, Yes, I do. And she said, well, I can't believe that. She says, well, it's probably not the Cocoa Puff. And I said, well, it's the only Cocoa Puff I know. And she says, Well, who are her sire or dam?

And I said, I beg your pardon? And she says, well, you do have papers, don't you? Well, yeah, sure. Somewhere. She said, well, go get them. And again, worrying about the time and

wondering how I'm ever going to find someone who can take them, not wanting to be rude. She knew who I was. All right. So I looked around, Bev helped me find them.

I found the papers, came back to the phone. She says, now, if this is the Cocoa Puff, she gave me three generations on both sides. I couldn't believe it. This was a random phone call, and she knew the pedigree of my goat. You've heard the expression to get one's goat. This was it. She knew the father and mother, three generations. And I was just stunned. And my head was swimming. And then she said, well, what's the next one?

Well, I started to get into this now. I said, well, her name is Otter Wood Jackmaid. And she said, well, if it's the Jackmaid, I know, can you believe this? She said, if it's the Jackmaid, I know. She gave me three generations, both sides for her, and I could barely keep up with her as she is reciting from memory.

The genealogy of my God, the pedigree of my God, I couldn't believe it. Now I'm really into this. And I said, well, my third one, her name is Alderwood. I'm sorry. Her name, her name is Shanty's Fleet. She says, I don't know her? I said, you don't know her. Well, her mother's name is. And she said, Well, I know her mother. And the upshot of it was, she says, I'll take them. And I said. But I thought you said you couldn't with all the 50 and all the milking and all of that. She says, well, that's before I realized I know them she says, I know their names. Of course I'll take them. What time can you have them over tomorrow morning?

And I read the words of this Psalm that my God knows the names of the stars, the names of the stars, and the obvious connection we and the first tiers are to make of that is then surely he knows me and my name and who I am. That's why the next verse says, great is our Lord and mighty in power. And there's also a wonderful pun in the Hebrew text for verse four began with the words, he counts the number of the stars, but first five ends.

But there is no counting his understanding that there is a finite number to the created things of God, which number you and I cannot imagine. But there is no number to quantify the knowledge and the understanding and the discernment and the wisdom of God.

And by the way, are you caught between praise for the past and promise for the future. And yet wondering who you are in all of that, look at the words of the next verse. It is characteristic of God to come to a humble person and elevate that one, but to come to one who is arrogant, wickedly proud, and to debase them to the Earth. It's with such a people that God delights to do his good work. The third part of the Psalm, jumping ahead, starts in verse twelve and gives praise to God not only for his restorative works that we found in the beginning, but to his prevailing word.

In the last part of the Psalm is a marvelous text to deal with our biblical view of the meaning of the Bible. 4 in verses 12, and following, having given commands to praise God in the congregation and to do it with music. And having rehearsed some of the things that God is doing, we read in verse 15, following, that the word of God goes throughout his creation, and the creation that God has made is under his control. And when God sends out his word, his

expectation and he is never disappointed in this is that his creation responds to the word that goes out.

And when he sends a word out to the elements that make our weather, that word does its work. We read these words. He sends us command to the Earth. His word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool. He scatters frost like ashes.

He casts his hail like morsels, who may stand before his cold? He sends out his word and melts them. He causes the wind to blow and the waters to flow God's word animates his creation and creation responds because it is the word of the Creator and the same word that God gives his creation. Look at the end of the Psalm he gives to his people. He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel, and he's never dealt in that way with any other people, only to his own.

Has he given his word and the implied and yet very clear understanding we have from that is, shall we be alone among God's creatures, and not to obey the word that he sends throughout the universe? If the clouds obey, shall we resist? If the winds hearken, shall we stubbornly ignore, or shall we not Israel's heirs rejoice in God's word, and be that hearing person that God desires us to be. And we look now at the middle of the Psalm, the heart of it, verses seven to eleven, and we see a renewed call to praise him, to do it with music. We find that God is to be praised for his restorative. Works verses one to six, and God is to be praised for his prevailing word.

Last part of the Psalm. God is also to be praised and particularly to be praised for his particular pleasure, which he finds in his people. Look at these words. He covers the heavens with clouds. He prepares the rain for the Earth.

He makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, even to the young Ravens that cry. These are what I might call his ordinary mercies, as the cycle of rain and growth and greenness is a regularly recurring testimony of the ordinary Grace of God, and as animals are fed and preserve and perpetuate, their kind is also a reminder of the regular and ongoing Grace of God. So we are to look at those things and take heart. The word that has translated beast, cattle in the NIV, is a Hebrew word "behemah," which is really a very broad and general word, and takes its context or its meaning from the immediate context.

In this particular Psalm. It's paired by the word Raven, and it appears to me that the kind of animal were to think of here is an animal that is the same regard held in the same regard as the Raven is among birds. And for that reason I find the poets of the Bible would regularly have in mind a Jackal. I think that's the animal that the Psalmist is intending by this general word Bahama beast. And in olden times Jackals have very few friends.

They probably don't have a lot of friends today, although in California there's probably a society for the preservation of jackals wouldn't be surprised at all. But a Jackal was regarded by the people who lived in biblical times as a despicable beast, a denizen of the desert, an animal that prays on the weak and the helpless, and something about which we can live our lives without little thought about. But God thinks about even such a beast. In fact, I heard a television program

not long ago describing a woman whose life work is living with and describing the behavior of the Jackal.

I guess she gave up on men and decided to live with jackals. I don't know, but that's what she's done. And her life work is working with jackals. And I heard some fascinating things from her about Jackal behavior. Turns out the jackal bitch is a marvelous mother, and she goes out on the hunt and she eats her prey because she may have gone a great distance to kill prey. And then she eats it and comes back to the nest where her pups are.

And she regurgitates that partly digested food for the little pups to eat. And this woman described one case where a starving mother jackal, came to this cave and nearly killed herself, trying to empty her empty stomach to feed her babies. I never thought I'd be moved by thinking about a jackal, but I was as that marvelous woman described that marvelous beast. And if there is some place in the world today where there is a Jackal that is able to nurse their pups, or there are Ravens that are able to feed their young, it is God that has given them the ability to do that.

That's the ordinary mercy of God. And the words that we have here are the same words precisely as the teaching of Jesus, who, on one dramatic occasion, as a couple of birds, were flying overhead, pointed to those birds and said, do you know how cheaply sparrows may be bought these days? And yet there's not one that falls to the ground, but your father in Heaven doesn't take note of that. And the God is concerned about sparrows and ravens and jackals, don't you think he's profoundly concerned about you? It's the same message in this Psalm as in the teaching of the Savior.

And here's the point. It's the heart of the Psalm verses 10 and 11. God finds his pleasure in his people, in fact, along the lines of an animal continuum. I don't know about you, but if I were putting animals on a line, I'd probably put jackals pretty low. I wouldn't put goats up high. You know what I'd put up high is the horse.

To me, there's no animal as wonderful as a horse. That's biased. That's not Bible. Some of you would put maybe a dolphin or something else. But to me, there's nothing as majestic to look at or to see than a horse.

And I say that as a city boy living now in the country and we have a horse, and it's marvelous to look at that and to ride it and to watch it. And then I think about athletics. I'm not an athlete. Our sons are, and I'm impressed by an athlete who gives her or his all in the endeavor to run the race. As Dr.

Radmacher said earlier today, I'm impressed by unusual athletes. I'm impressed by Susan Butcher, the two time winner now of the iditarod race, the dog sled race in Alaska. Can you imagine over a thousand miles in the worst weather possible? A team of dogs and a sled and alone 1000 miles, and she's won it twice. Now she's one of my heroines.

She, to me, is a great athlete. And I read these words. The surprising words. The great delight of God is not found in the horse, nor even in the great runner. That's what's meant by the legs of a man.

But the joy of God. His particular pleasure is in those who fear him, and to keep hoping in his loyal love. And this song comes to a people who are living between praise for the past, promise for the future, but who are presently undergoing discouragement and a sense of wondering about their own place in God's work and says to them, not only is God doing a work in you, and not only has God given his word for you, but surprise of surprises, God's true joy is in you.

That is God's joy. We talk about our joy in the Lord. But this is God's joy in his people. And it's here where we begin to discover that biblical truth found throughout the scripture of discovering the smile of God. For you see, we do not have two gods, nor two Bibles. We have one God and one revelation of him. And throughout the Scripture, the revelation is the same that while God cares for all of the universe, for he's the master of all that his particular pleasure is in his people.

And what he wants of you and of me is to be happy, to smile, to have a sense of joy. Can you imagine that God not only knows your name, he knows the names of the stars, but God wants to find his pleasure in you. So may we together sense his smile.

Let's pray. Our father. We ask that we might be among that people that are not only saved and destined for an eternity of fellowship with you, but will also be that people who brings smile to your face from time to time on this pathway in this life. And in this day. So we pray in Jesus name. Amen.