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Preeminence of God the Father



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this piece, Steve Gregg emphasizes the preeminence of God the Father in the Bible, particularly in the teachings of Jesus. While the Bible also teaches the preeminence of Christ, it underscores the Father's sovereignty, supreme knowledge, and glory. Jesus often spoke of the significance of doing the Father's will and underscored his dependency on Him. Therefore, understanding the fatherly and parental love of God the Father is essential in accessing grace and salvation, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Well, it's not very often that I have the privilege of teaching a message I've never taught before. In fact, I prepared these notes this morning. That's why I was late to the communion service.

I was still working on them. The ten o'clock rolled around this morning. So this is even fresher for me than most of the times that I teach.

But I did have on my mind, I don't mean to say that everything I'll say this morning I've never said before. That would be misleading. But to have prepared a study and a message on this topic is unprecedented for me.

And we have read in the Scriptures of the preeminence of Christ. But we hear very little of that message which Jesus Himself preached of the preeminence of the Father. And we need to have both of these in focus.

Certainly the Bible teaches the preeminence of Christ in Colossians 1.18. The word preeminence means, or the one who is preeminent is one who is foremost or first or chief according to the lexical definitions of the word. And so the person who is preeminent is the one who stands in the first position, the highest position. And the word preeminent appears really only twice in the New Testament.

Once it applies to Christ in Colossians 1.18 where it says that God has so arranged things that in all things Christ might have the preeminence. And then it's used once in 3 John about diatrophies who love to have the preeminence in the church. Apart from those two

instances, we don't find the word in Scripture.

And therefore, if we wish to find a verse that talks about the preeminence in the Godhead, we would have to just settle for that verse that talks about the preeminence of Christ. Because the word itself is used only of Him and of one other person in the Scriptures. However, the concept of the preeminence of the Father is taught everywhere in the Scriptures and most markedly in the teachings of Christ Himself.

Now, Jesus was not shy about making comments about Himself. He spoke about Himself under the heading of the Son of Man probably about 70 times recorded in the New Testament. And whenever He said the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost or the Son of Man is this or that, He was, of course, speaking about Himself.

But while He spoke of Himself thus about 70 or so times, perhaps 90 in the New Testament, He spoke of God the Father over 200 times. God is not referred to as the Father in the Old Testament. The idea of God being a Father is not absent from the Old Testament, but He is not called the Father.

It is said in Psalm 103 that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. And Isaiah says to God, speaking Isaiah as a member of the collective body of Israel, he says, you, O Lord, are our father and we are your children. So there is a father-child relationship between God and His people acknowledged in the Old Testament.

But very rarely, I dare say, you would find no more than a handful of Old Testament passages referring to God as a father or emphasizing that aspect. He does say in Malachi chapter 1, if I am a father, where is my honor? Certainly a father is honored by his sons. If I'm a father, why don't they honor me? And the idea that God has reared children and they've rebelled against Him is found sometimes in the Old Testament.

But it is, again, not a predominant theme in the Old Testament, the fatherhood of the Father, of God. Yet in the New Testament, suddenly there bursts upon us as we read through the Scriptures, we pass from the Old Testament to the New, a literal explosion of revelation of God as a father. 240 times approximately, God is referred to as the Father in the New Testament.

About 208 of those 240 times are in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus obviously was very profoundly concerned to reveal to us this aspect of the God who sent Him and the God with whom He Himself was one, because He often said things like, I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father, and so forth.

Yet, notwithstanding all these times that Jesus spoke of His identification with the Father, more frequently, He spoke of His Father as one distinct from Himself. This is, of course, confusing to us. I mean, if you don't find it so, you have a better grasp than I do, which is

entirely possible.

But I will say, the mystery of how Jesus can speak of Himself as identified with the Father on the one hand and separate from the Father on another is somehow bound up in the way we understand that greatest of all New Testament or biblical mysteries, and that is the Trinity. I will not profess to know exactly how that sorts out. I accept it because the Bible teaches it.

I'm willing to live with the mystery unresolved. But having said that, and having affirmed very unapologetically that I believe in the full deity of Christ and that He is one with the Father, yet in His incarnation, the Bible very clearly teaches that He and His Father related to each other as separate individuals. That's why we get the concept of the Trinity.

There's one God, but individual persons within the Godhead. That's about as much as I can say that would be enlightening about the Trinity. Not much more is clear to me.

But I will say this. As we read the teachings of Jesus, we find that Jesus wants us to think not only about Himself, but even more so about His Father. And I would like to bring this up because I think we know about the preeminence of Christ.

You've heard about the preeminence of Christ. In a moment, you're going to hear the rest of the story. And in talking about the preeminence of God the Father, I would like to do what sermonizers do, break it into three convenient points.

However, my points, each of them break down into three points too. My mind apparently thinks in threes, but I can't be satisfied with only three points. I have to have three sub points under each point.

So I hope that you'll follow along with me. In raising the issue and discussing the issue of the preeminence of the Father God, I'd like to talk under three headings. One, the preeminence of God the Father in general.

Two, the preeminence of God the Father in relation to Christ. And three, the preeminence of God the Father in relation to us. Doesn't that sound like a good sermon outline? Works well.

In general, the preeminence of God the Father is taught, and nowhere more than in the teachings of Jesus. It is taught throughout the scriptures, but Jesus lays this emphasis more heavily than any other teachers. There are three senses in which I would like to talk about the general preeminence of God as taught in scripture by Jesus.

And one has to do with God's preeminence in His prerogatives. That is, He has the right to determine things, and that right even is above that Jesus says, even above His own. Now, in that sense, we're really talking about what theologians call the sovereignty of

God.

God has all the prerogatives. God has the right to do whatever He wants to do. That's what the word sovereign means.

And this is brought out in, of course, a great number of passages, but a couple that really bring this to our attention, especially where it is the Father Himself whose prerogatives are focused upon in the statement. You will recall in Matthew chapter 20 that Jesus was approached by the mother of two of His first cousins, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. If you didn't know they were first cousins of Jesus, I believe that can be deduced from the fact that the Bible says that Salome, their mother, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

So, James and John were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. And they were related to Jesus, and they felt they might therefore have a better bid than the others in the group to have higher positions than the others when Jesus would finally inaugurate His kingdom that He kept talking about but never seemed to be appearing. And they figured after a while it must be getting nearer, and they wanted to make sure they put in their bid for the highest positions in His cabinet.

They knew He was going to be king, and they weren't quite sure what the nature of that kingdom would be, but they said they didn't want to seem too ambitious themselves, so they sent their mother. And their mother comes to Jesus, and she says, I have something to ask you. And He said, well, what is that? And she said, well, that these, my sons, may sit at your right hand and your left hand in your kingdom.

That would be, of course, the positions of prominence and of, you know, in a sense, preeminence over the other apostles. And Jesus turned to the disciples who sent their mother and said, you don't know what you're asking. Can you drink of the cup that I must drink of? Can you be baptized with the baptism that I must be baptized with? And they, of course, absolutely ungrasping anything about what He was talking about, said, sure.

And He said, well, you surely will drink of the cup that I must drink of, and you will be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with. But in verse 23, He said this at the end of that statement. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by my father.

In other words, I am not in the position to determine who will take these positions. My father is. That's his prerogative, not mine.

It is true, Jesus has a supreme place that His father has given Him, but not above His own father. And there are prerogatives that the father has reserved for himself that he has not even apparently put in the hands of Jesus by Jesus' own statement. It is not mine

to give.

This is appointed by my father. He's made the decisions about this. And I am not in the position to override him or to act independently of him in terms of his prerogatives and his rights and his sovereignty.

We have a similar illustration of these prerogatives of the father in Acts chapter one and verse seven. Acts one seven, excuse me, when when the disciples asked Jesus just before he ascended in Acts one six. It says they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he answered, it is not for you to know the times or seasons which the father has put in his own authority.

The time and the season of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was something that the father had in his authority to determine. It was the father's prerogative. And these are only a couple of statements where it's stated so plainly.

There are many throughout the whole scripture. Jesus indicates that the father is the one who makes the ultimate decisions about things. So in terms of the general preeminence of God, the father, we read of his having preeminency in his sovereignty and his prerogatives.

Secondly, he has preeminence even over over Christ himself, it would appear, in terms of his knowledge. Jesus said this. We would never have guessed it.

And it even stumbles us a little bit to read Jesus say it. But since he says it, we cannot deny it. In Matthew 24, in verse 36, Jesus, when he was asked about the time of his coming and of the end of the age.

Part of his answer was this in Matthew 24, 36, but of that day and hour, no one knows. Not even the angels of heaven, but my father only. And if you read the parallels in the other Gospels, you'll find in one of them, I think it's Luke, he says, or Mark, one of those two, he says, no one knows the day of the hour, nor do the angels of heaven, nor even the Son.

But only my father knows this. And so, the father is preeminent in knowledge. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught in Matthew chapter six, your father knows what you have needed before you ask him.

Your father knows that you have need of all these things, he says. The knowledge of the father is preeminent, especially in this case. He knows at least one thing that Jesus said he didn't know.

And that was the day and the hour of Christ's return. And my third point under the general preeminence of the father is with reference to his glory. We rightly saying, to God be the glory, great things he has done.

Was this speaking of the whole Trinity or of Jesus or who? Well, the next line is, so loved he the world that he gave us his Son. So who is this God to whom the glory of Fanny Crosby there is referring to? It's a reference to God the Father. Now, of course, we will not deny and would not have any desire to.

That Jesus is glorious and that those who honor the father must also honor the son, even as they honor the father. Jesus said that. But the point here is, even the glory of Jesus is declared to be the glory of the father.

And this is said in Matthew 16, 27. For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his father with his angels. And then he will reward each according to his works.

He will come in the glory of his father. He shares the glory of his father, but it is his father's glory that is exhibited in him. Jesus didn't come to glorify himself.

But he came to glorify his father, as he said on several occasions. In fact, in Philippians chapter 2, we read, actually Steve read some of this at the communion service. Philippians chapter 2 and verses 10 and 11.

I'm sure most of you know these verses. It says that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow of those in heaven and earth and under the earth. And every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

What's the next line? To the glory of God, the father. The confession of all mouths that Jesus is Lord is for the result that God, the father is glorified. Jesus did not come to receive all the glory.

He came to bring glory to his father. Of course, he is glorified in doing so and rightly glorified in doing so. But he came to reveal to us the preeminence of his father.

His father is preeminent in prerogative. His father is preeminent in knowledge. His father is preeminent in glory.

Even the glory that comes to Jesus is to the glory of the father. And so we see this general teaching of Jesus and of the scriptures about the preeminence of the father. And then we read more specifically when we come to the subject of the preeminence of the father in relation to Christ.

This is something that is a marvelous thing, because Jesus always spoke of his significance in terms of what he was sent to do by the father. He was not here on his own errand. He did not come here on a mission that he planned.

He was on someone else's mission. He was going about somebody else's business. In fact, the very first, that is, chronologically earliest recorded words of Jesus Christ are those which are recorded of him in Luke chapter 2 when he was 12 years old.

And you recall that he said to his earthly parents who had been looking for him and finally found him in the temple. They said, son, we've been worried about you. We've been looking all over for you.

And he says, why did you have to search for me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business? Jesus didn't have his own business. He was here doing his father's business. In John chapter 4, when his disciples brought him food after a long walk, probably an all night walk to Samaria from Judea, and he had actually sent them to food to get food into town, they came back with the food.

And in the meantime, he'd gotten busy with something else and no longer was interested in taking a break for a meal. And they said in verse 33, the disciples said to one another, has anyone brought him anything to eat? And Jesus said to them in John 4, 34, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Jesus was on an errand.

He was sent. He didn't come on his own initiative. He was sent and he was sent as an apostle.

The book of Hebrews calls him the great apostle and high priest of our faith. The word apostle is one who's sent on an official errand by somebody else. He comes as a representative of that person who sent him and he comes on the errand of that one who sent him.

He is not a free agent. He is not someone who's starting something on his own. He's part of somebody else's plans, somebody else's project.

And he said that he was sent on his father's project. His father sent him and he had nothing that he wanted to do except do the work that his father gave him to do. He would must be about his father's business.

In chapter six of John and verse 38, he says, for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. He's a faithful messenger from the one who sent him. He was sent by his father.

And when one is sent by another, it is clear that the one who sent him has authority over him. Because I don't send somebody who's in some hierarchy, someone who stands above me in a hierarchy. I don't send him around.

It's those who are subordinate that are sent. And so Jesus said, I didn't come to do my will. I came to do the will of him who sent me.

Obviously, stressing the preeminence of the father as the one who sent him in terms of defining his own mission. In John 12 and verse 44, I'm glad to hear those pages turning. John 12, 44, then Jesus cried out and said, he who believes in me believes not in me, but

in him who sent me.

Now, he's not saying if you believe me, you don't believe in me. That wouldn't make sense. But he's saying if you believe in me, you know, your belief is not focused on me merely.

But belief in me really becomes belief in the one who sent me. On occasions, we won't look at all of them. But Jesus said in most of the Gospels, you know, if someone receives you, they receive me.

And if they receive me, they receive him who sent me. He who rejects my word rejects him who sent me. Jesus was here as the agent of his father.

And the reception or rejection of him was really significant because of its because it was an acceptance or a rejection of the one who sent him. You may remember the parable Jesus told in at least two, if not all three of the synoptic Gospels about the vineyard owner who left his vineyard to the care of certain people. Certain tenants and the rental agreement was that they would get to use the vineyard and produce their crops or their vintage.

But that at a certain time, they would give a portion of what the vintage was as their payment of rent on the on the property. And so the time comes for them to pay their rent. And the owner of the vineyard sends his messengers to collect what is owed.

And these messengers are badly treated, beaten, thrown out of the vineyard, sometimes even killed. We know what Jesus is referring to there. He's talking about the Old Testament period.

Israel is God's vineyard. The leaders of Israel are the tenants. God is the owner.

And those who were servants saying, come bring the fruit out are prophets, the prophets of the Old Testament. And the fruit is, according to Isaiah seven, excuse me, Isaiah five, verse seven. The fruit of the vineyard is justice and righteousness.

God was looking for justice and righteousness from his vineyard. And so the prophets came and said, where's the justice? Israel, where's the righteousness? And they killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. And notice, if you read that parable further and you can find it in Matthew 21, as well as in some of the other places in the synoptics.

It says, last of all, he sent his son. And they said, this is the heir. Let us kill him and his inheritance will be ours.

And so they killed the son also. Obviously, that refers to Jesus. After the prophets had been so badly abused, God sent his own son.

And they recognized that this was him and they killed him so that he would not take

from them what they had. And the father, of course, took this as what? An affront to himself, of course. It's not just an affront to Jesus when he's rejected or when he's killed by the people of Israel.

It's an affront to the God who sent him. And therefore, according to that parable, that king decided to destroy those sinners and, you know, give the vineyard out to others who would bring forth the fruits of it, Jesus said. Now, Jesus, therefore, in his relationship to the father, he speaks always of himself as one who has been sent on an errand.

He is doing the will of his father. He must be about his father's business. He didn't come to do his own will.

He doesn't have his own agenda. His father has an agenda and that is what he's here to do. Furthermore, in relation to Christ, the preeminence of the father is seen in many statements that Jesus makes about his own dependency upon the father to do what he does.

You know, we are, I hope, aware that Colossians 2, 9 tells us that in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. That's obviously a statement about the importance and the preeminence of Christ. But we also read in the same book, Colossians 1, 19, that it pleased the father that in Christ all this fullness should dwell.

Now, sure, in Jesus dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, but why? Because it pleased the father for this to be so. It pleased the father, Colossians 1, 19 says, that in him all fullness should dwell. Jesus, in his earthly life, continually described himself as entirely dependent upon his father for what he could do and what he could say, even for his life, for living.

In John chapter 5, and we can stay pretty much within the book of John to see most of the important statements to this effect. In John chapter 5 and verse 19, Jesus said, Most assuredly, I say to you, the son, meaning himself, can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do for whatever he, that is the father, does, the son also does in like manner. This is actually the explanation Jesus gave when he was criticized for working on the Sabbath day, actually healing on the Sabbath day, which the Jews consider to be work.

And he says, well, OK, they said, how dare you do this healing on the Sabbath day? He said, well, my father works all week long. And a son, and some have called this the parable of the apprentice son, because although Jesus is talking about himself and the father, he's actually talking about the generic relationship of fathers and sons in those days where the father would apprentice his son in the business. And he said the son doesn't do anything of his own.

The child isn't born into a family knowing how to how to work with wood. He knows only

what his father shows him to do. And Jesus, no doubt, was reflecting on his own upbringing in the house of Joseph.

This is very probably a very subtle, positive commendation of Moses of Joseph, the one who was the foster father of Jesus, because Jesus was talking about what sons and fathers relate like. And it certainly would have been the case in his own home growing up. He said the son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do.

For whatever the father does, the son doesn't like manner. The father teaches the son the trade secrets of family business. And notice verse 24.

The father loves the son and shows him all things that he himself does. The father who has a who's a skilled craftsman, he doesn't show all his trade secrets to his competitors, but he shows all his trade secrets to his apprentice son. And his son does exactly the way his father does and perpetuates the quality of his father's work.

And Jesus says, that's why I work on the Sabbath, because my father works on the Sabbath. I don't know how to do anything except what I see my father do. I'm an apprentice of my father.

And what he does, I do it just the same way he does. And I don't blame me. I'm just copying my father.

In the same chapter, John five and verse 30, he says, I can of myself do nothing. Jesus said that I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge.

That is, I make my judgments based on what my father tells me to judge. And my judgment is righteous because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the father who sent me. In chapter six of John, verse 57, John six and verse 57, Jesus said, as the living father sent me and I live because of the father.

So he who feeds on me will live because of me. But notice, I live. I am alive because of my father.

My life is a gift from my father to me and I give my life to you. If you feed on me, you'll live because of me. But he speaks of his own dependency, even for his life upon the father.

In John seven and verse 16, actually, verse 15 and 16, because we read the context of this here in verse 15. When Jesus was speaking in the temple, it says the Jews marveled, saying, how does this man know letters never having studied? That is, Jesus was able to give authoritative teaching from the Old Testament and he had never had theological training. And he answered and said to them, my doctrine or my teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

You wonder how it is I can teach profoundly, he says, even though I have no education in all this. Well, it's it's really quite easily explained. It's not my teaching.

The father who sent me gives me this and I just give his teaching. I'm dependent on him as as a scholar is dependent on his education and those who taught him. I'm dependent on my father for what I know and what I say.

He says in chapter 12 of John and verse 50, John 12 and verse 50 says, and I know this Jesus again speaking and I know that his commandment is everlasting life. He's speaking, of course, of his father. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the father has told me, so I speak.

He doesn't make anything up. It all comes from his father. He hears it from his father.

He sees it from his father. He does what his father says and what his father teaches him. In John, chapter 14, in one of those passages that is the clearest about the deity of Christ himself, I think, in the New Testament or at least in the teaching of Jesus.

It says in verse eight, John 14, eight, Philip said to him, Lord, show us the father and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and yet you have not known me, Philip. He who has seen me has seen the father.

So how can you say, show us the father? Now, look at verse 10. Do you not believe that I am in the father and the father is in me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on my own or of myself, but the father who dwells in me does the works. Jesus did miracles.

How'd that happen? Well, the father, the father did those works. My words and my works are not my own. I don't originate them.

I didn't think them up. I don't do them under my own power or on my own authority. My father does those things.

I can do nothing except what I see the father do, he said. Now, further in relationship to Christ, we see the preeminence of God as God is revealed to be Christ's head. Just as Christ is our head and the husband is the head of the wife.

Paul says that the head of Christ is God. And of course, he means by God, God, the father. That's in First Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3. First Corinthians 11 3 says, but I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ.

The head of the woman is man. And I think most would agree who know much about this passage. He means the head of the husband is the head of a wife is the husband rather than the head of the woman is the man.

The word woman can be translated wife and the word man can be translated husband and is many times elsewhere in Scripture. So the head of the wife is the husband and the

head of Christ is God. Now, how can Christ have a head over him when we read in Colossians 1:18 that in all things Christ has the preeminence? Well, he does in all things.

God, the father is not a thing. God, the father is not one of the things over which Christ has been made preeminent. As a matter of fact, Paul brings that out rather clearly in First Corinthians 15.

First Corinthians 15, a very strange eschatological passage. I say strange because it tells us something that no other passage in Scripture tells us about the final disposition of all things after Christ has completed what he's doing now and when he's come back and everything's set up in its eternal condition and so forth. It's a very strange bit of data that Paul gives us here that we do not find anywhere else in Scripture.

It's First Corinthians 15 verses 27 and 28. It says, for he has put all things under his feet. That is, the father has put all things under Jesus' feet.

It's a quotation from Psalm 110 verse one. Then it says, but when he says all things are put under him, it is evident that he who put all things under him is accepted. You know, when it says all all things have been put under Jesus' feet.

Well, Paul says, you know, it goes without saying that among the things that are put under him is not the one who put all things under him. So where we read of Christ being preeminent in all things, it is understood he's not preeminent over his father, nor would he wish to be. The head of Christ is God, said Paul.

And he says, so when all it is evident that if everyone's God has put everything under Christ, that he who put all things under him is accepted from that category of things put under him. And in verse 28 says, now, when all things are made subject to him, that is to Christ, then the son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Now, Jesus is at this present time, according to what I understand Paul to say, Jesus is the one directly reigning from the right hand of God and going about to put all his enemies under his feet.

His father is given that position at his right hand until all his enemies are put under his feet. And in a sense, God has already put all things under his feet, but not God the father himself. And God, the father is not under Christ's feet, but when all his enemies have been conquered and there remain no more to be conquered, then Jesus himself will turn everything back over to his father.

Which is as I say, this is the strange part, we don't we're not sure why. I mean, I mean, maybe you think you're sure why. I'm just saying the Bible doesn't ever tell us why.

The fact is, this is the only place that tells us that there will be this change when Jesus returns and has conquered all his enemies, that he's then going to just turn it all back over his father. Why he's going to do so, we're not told, but that's fine. It's quite clear

that it's so that the father will be preeminent in all things.

But even now, while all things are under Christ's feet, God, the father who put them under him, is not among those things under his feet. That the father is the head of Christ is emphasized throughout the teaching of Jesus, that it's not his will, but the father's will that he is there to do. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, one of the best known places where this is stated and graphically so is when Jesus said, father, if it's your will or if it's possible, let this cup pass from me.

But and though he prayed this three times, he always added this caveat, yet not my will, but your will. Not my will, but your will. Emphasizing that, father, it's not my place to be calling the shots here.

I have a will in this matter. I have a preference. But it's not what I prefer, but what you desire.

That is really what has to carry the day here, because you are you are my head. You are the one I submit to. It is your will that I subjugate my will to.

And so Jesus, in relationship to the father, obviously emphasizes many times that he was sent by the father to do the father's will. He himself was dependent on the father for his very life, for his actions, for his teachings, for his doctrine. And that the father is his head and that he is the one to whom Jesus himself makes himself subject.

Now, the third heading I want to talk about is the preeminence of the father in relation to us. There may be some surprises in this heading, because this is, to my mind, a clear teaching of Scripture, but one that is often neglected in Scripture. First of all, whose love is it that was demonstrated toward us on the cross? Well, right.

I mean, I think I'm hearing the right answer popping up all over the place. But you immediately in asking the question, you know, you know that, you know, we would often say, well, Jesus loved you so much that he died for your sins. That statement is true.

He did love you so much. He died for his sins. Died for your sins.

The fact of the matter is, though, that the emphasis of Scripture is that the father loved you so much that Jesus died for you. Everyone knows John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

It was God, the father, who sent his son and gave him to die for our sins. It says this in First John, also in First John, chapter four, first John, chapter four, and verse a couple of places in this chapter, verse nine. It says in this, the love of God was manifested toward us that God has sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him.

Now, who's this God who sent his son? It's obviously the father. The father sent his son into the world that we might live through him, that in other words, Jesus might die for us and acquire for us the eternal life that we all now enjoy and celebrate. A few verses later in First John four and verse 14, he says, and we have seen and testified that the father has sent the son as the savior of the world.

Jesus is the savior of the world. He was sent here to be that by the father. Obviously, the father wanted the world to be saved.

The father loved the world. The father loved you, and therefore he sent his son to be your savior and that whosoever believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Well, does the Bible also teach that Jesus loved us? Of course it does.

But one thing I find very interesting is that Jesus himself indicated that it was his father's will that we be saved and that he was going through it because he loved his father. This we see Jesus stating in John 14 and verse 31. John 14 and verse 31, he says, but that the world may know that I love the father, Jesus says, and as the father gave me commandments, so I do.

That's the mark of love that you do what he commands. Jesus in the same chapter earlier said, if you love me, you keep my commandments. He says, now I want you to know I love the father.

I keep his commandments. He says, I want the world to know that I love the father and it's so that the world will know that I love the father and I keep his commandments. So I do.

So I do is a reference to I'm going from this room out to be crucified. Why? So the world know that I love the father, that I do what the father says. Now, of course, Jesus loves us.

But how often have our children been taught to sing? Jesus loves me. And yet how little they know the father loves me, too. In fact, not only as me to not as sort of an ancillary point, but rather it's because the father loves me that Jesus loves me.

It's because the father wanted to save me that he sent Jesus. And because Jesus loved the father, he he died for me, too. He loved what his father loved.

The will of his father is the will that he accepted. And I do not mean to imply, if anyone thinks I am, that Jesus would not have loved us independently. It's just that the Bible doesn't teach that Jesus did anything independently of his father.

What he did, he did to please his father because his father desired it. Now, we see then in relation to ourselves, the father is preeminent even in terms of the love toward us demonstrated in our salvation. And I don't mean in any sense by this to diminish the love of Jesus seen in it.

It's not that I want the love of Jesus to be seen smaller. It's that I want to see the love of the father magnified as Jesus intended for it to be magnified. That's what he came to teach us about.

In fact, this is a very important point, I think. And that is that we who live two thousand years after the events of Jesus' life and reading the New Testament have become accustomed to the reference to God as a father. I mean, it's I mean, we read the New Testament two hundred forty something times.

We find God referred to his father. It's just become another word for God in our vocabulary. I mean, it's like the word Lord.

The word Lord has just become another name for God in our vocabulary. We forget what a Lord is. What is a Lord? A Lord is an owner, a master.

Well, what is a father? Well, that's just what Jesus, I think, was trying to get at when he spoke so frequently of God as a father. You know, as I said, the Old Testament did not frequently refer to God as father. It was not a dominant.

Understanding of the Old Testament, at least that had not been revealed to the same extent that God was fatherly. But in the New Testament, Jesus continually referred to God as my father, your father, our father, the father. Now, this, as I say, is not strange to our ears.

We become accustomed to it from reading the New Testament. But I would like you to consider how radical that was in the ears of Jesus' contemporaries. There were many terms that the Jews used to address God in prayer, for example.

Father, as I'm given to understand, was not among them. Father was considered to be a little too familiar. You don't talk to God in those familiar terms.

He's much more exalted than that. But Jesus came to tell us what the father is, who the father is, why he came is because we have a father from whom we have been alienated. And Jesus came to bring us back to him.

Now, this is something about Jesus' mission that we need to refocus on from time to time, because Jesus is so winsome. Jesus is so lovely, so beautiful. So, so much, you know, the object of desire and all of those things justly.

That and by the way, Jesus is so almost visible, because when you read the Gospels, you can in your mind, you can see an actual man walking around. And there were times in his contemporaries that could actually see with their eyes an actual man. So visible, so real.

So friendly. A friend of sinners and so other than most Jews and perhaps most Christians, sadly, think of when they think of the father, the father that Jesus spoke of was that God,

of course, who was manifest in the Old Testament. And even to this day, there are many people, Christians and non-Christians who have the libelous notion of God, the father, that he was the cruel, harsh, vindictive one.

And Jesus was the one who was friendly and on our side. And somehow, you know, just at the moment when God is ready to strike us all dead, Jesus stepped in to rescue us from the wrath of his father. Now, there is language of Scripture that indicates that is an aspect of the biblical revelation.

There is such a thing as the wrath of God. There is such a thing as the judgment of God. And it is true that what Jesus did, he did to rescue us from that.

But we need not forget that this God who had wrath from which we need to be rescued is the one who engineered a rescue. Because though he had wrath, even in wrath, he remembers mercy. Because mercy triumphs over judgment.

Because in God's nature, his love for us exceeded his wrath toward us. So that he sent and planned a rescue and sent Jesus to engineer it. It is not that Jesus was more friendly to us than his father was.

And yet, when we read the Old Testament, many Christians even feel that God in the Old Testament, he's a scary God. You never know what he's going to do. A man reaches out to stabilize the ark so it won't fall down, he gets struck dead.

Half-drunk priests go into the tabernacle with the wrong coals in their incense burners, and they get struck dead. This God in the Old Testament, he's a scary God to some people. What often they forget is that the God in the New Testament is the very same God.

Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead too, and that was in the New Testament. And in the book of Revelation, we read of the wrath of the Lamb. That's the New Testament.

That's the wrath of Jesus. We've got to realize that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are not different from each other in any respect. But in the New Testament, Jesus reveals something about God that was not clear in the Old Testament.

And that is that God is like a father. He is a father, and because he is a father, he's like a father. And Jesus wanted to encourage us to think of God in terms such as we would think of a father.

Because Jesus was sent to restore us. Jesus did not come here to replace the father in our lives. He came to bring us to the father.

We can all quote John 14.6, but we usually quote it to make the wrong point, I think. John

14.6 says, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the father but through me.

We use that, and I don't think unjustly. I think it makes this point too. We use that to point out to sinners that, you know, you can't get saved through Buddhism and Hinduism and other religions.

And just being good because no one can come to the father but through Jesus. But we're often thinking in terms of merely, you can't get to heaven except through Jesus. You know, when you die and stand before the judgment seat of God, you better have Jesus to get you across that threshold into heaven.

That is true. But is that what Jesus meant? I don't know. He could have said that.

No man comes to heaven but through me. But what he said is, no man comes to the father but through me. It sounds as if God's concern was that people would come to him.

But it wasn't the father. And Jesus' concern was that I come so that you can come to the father through me. Jesus came, I believe, as his own words teach, and those of the apostles, to restore prodigal sons to a right relationship with their father.

In Ephesians, Paul says this. Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 18. Ephesians 2 and verse 18.

It says, for through him, meaning through Jesus, we both, meaning Jews and Gentiles, have access by one spirit to the father. Now there's so many parts to that little short statement that sometimes the last one gets buried in the other wonderful thoughts in the earlier phrases. But the bottom line of that verse is, we have access to the father through Jesus.

Jesus came and he made an access for us to the father. Well you might say, what do I need access to the father for? I'm quite content just to have Jesus. That's the problem.

You might say, why would that be a problem? What's wrong with Jesus? Not a thing. It's our problem that we might relate to Jesus in a way that he did not intend to encourage and he certainly did not teach. That we say, I'm afraid of the father, but Jesus seems winsome enough.

I don't feel comfortable with this God of the Old Testament, but this God in the New Testament, this Jesus who walked around, I think I could live with a God like that. So I'll just embrace Jesus and we'll keep this father idea at arm's length. And you know what? I think this is a great problem with the church in our generation and probably the previous one for a particular reason.

It says in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 15, he speaks of God the father, the way he

reads it in the English translation, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Which is a hard expression to understand, but it's even harder in the Greek to understand what it means, because in the Greek, it actually says from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named. That is God the father from whom all fatherhood, all earthly and heavenly fatherhood is named or receives identity or its definition through his fatherhood.

Earthly fatherhood is a picture of God's fatherhood. That's what it's supposed to be anyway. Just like the picture of a man and a wife was designed to be a picture of Christ in the church.

So the institution of father and child relationship is intended to be a picture of God the father. Now, when fathers are what fathers historically have been in godly cultures, that's a very helpful metaphor. Because in an ideal family and even a great number of families that we could not call ideal, the father is the protector and the provider and the idol of the children.

The wife reveres the husband, the children revere their father. If they don't, they get disciplined, so they do so out of fear initially and grow to appreciate all that their father does for them. The father is the biggest man in the whole world to them.

He can beat up everybody else's father. He is the idol of the of the small children. They want to be like him when they grow up.

Paul says to us in Ephesians 5, 1, be followers of God as dear children. Actually, it should be translated, be imitators of God as dear children. Like little children imitate their father, we should imitate God, our father, as children of his.

The imagery of a good, protective father is implied everywhere throughout the teaching of Jesus. Do you know in the Sermon on the Mount, which is only three chapters long in Matthew, God is called the father 17 times. And it's in passages sometimes like this.

Which of you earthly fathers, if your child asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for fish, will give him a serpent? He says, now, if you earthly fathers being evil, that is, even though you're imperfect fathers, if you do good things for your children, how much more? Your heavenly father will give good things to those who ask him. What kind of a teaching device is that? That's saying, listen, you know what fathers are like. Good fathers, even imperfect fathers.

Even an imperfect father doesn't give his kid a stone when he asks for bread. Fathers are better than that. How much more? You transfer what you know about the earthly fathers to God, the father.

How much more? Because he's not imperfect. Now, that's what Jesus is trying to do. He's trying to piggyback on the already known concept of what fathers do for their children.

Say, now, let's think of God this way now, because that's how God is and that's how God wants you to understand him. And that's why I've come to reintroduce you, Jesus said, is your father. You've been alienated.

You've got hard thoughts of God. And you need to be reintroduced to your father. And that's what I came here to do.

To show you the father. You've seen me, you've seen him. Now, I think this being so is one of the reasons why the devil attacks the institution of marriage as vehemently and unceasingly as he does.

And in our own age, in particular, the institution of the father in the marriage is or in the family is greatly perverted. I mean, first of all, there's a huge number of children who grew up in families that don't have fathers because there's an immense divorce rate. This is, I'm sure, one of the devil's great agendas to get divorces to happen so that kids grow up without fathers.

And a kid who grows up without a father is going to have to function in a world that was not made to be functioned in by children who didn't have fathers. It's like taking a 747 and, you know, taking a wing off it or something and expecting it to fly. Children aren't made to be raised without fathers.

And yet the devil clearly and humanity plays into his hands quite willingly in this, has arranged for huge numbers of kids to grow up without fathers. And then they're going to function in a world that wasn't made to be functioned in by people who didn't have fathers. And then some of them did have fathers, but they're not fathers such as Jesus described or that his people were familiar with.

They're fathers who sexually molest or who beat or who abuse their wives or who are seldom home. They live there technically, but they're distant emotionally. None of those things resemble the image of fatherhood that Jesus took for granted in his society.

Those are the corrupted, perverted images of fathers that we have had dealt to us by being born in a generation where there's a great deal of this attack on fatherhood. The media calls, you know, makes fathers out to be blundering fools. There is you'll never find any shows on TV called Father Knows Best in this generation.

And if you watch any TV shows, which I've seen very few since I don't have a TV and I don't see them very often. But the ones I've seen that show any kind of family relationships does not indicate at all that the father knows best. Usually it's the teenage brats who know best.

Mom is the second smartest and dad's lowest. There is no attempt in modern society to elevate the earthly father. And the devil would like to denigrate the early father as much as he can, because as soon as we no longer have a normal social concept of a father, we

lose the power of what Jesus was trying to tell us about your father.

God is your father, man. You tell someone God's their father now and they want to win sometimes because they were beaten by their father or badly treated by their father. Or they they're angry at their father because he wasn't there.

And so to think of God as a father is not helpful to them, but it needs to be. We can't just throw out the word father. That's that's God's chosen way of revealing himself.

What we have to realize that if we did have good fathers when we were growing up, then those provide sort of an imperfect image of what God wants us to remember him as. If we did not have good fathers, then we have to rediscover maybe by the few good fathers that may still be around that you can actually see, or maybe by what you do instinctively. You wish your father had been.

I think children know what a father is supposed to be to a certain extent, whether they have one or not. And you have to you have to take the idealized father, the best father you can imagine and say now that that is an imperfect but close representation of how God wants me to think of him. And by the way, this works the other way, too, for us who are fathers and maybe didn't have great role models.

We look at God, the father and how he treats us. And we say, OK, that's how I am as a father supposed to be, too. That would be a different study at a different time to take, which I that one I have done before, but I won't do it now.

The point here is that Jesus came to reintroduce the father as someone who is on our side, who is good, who loves us enough to send him to die. And as such, this is the final point about our relationship to the father and his preeminent life. And this one is maybe one that's going to bother some people, but I'll just speak scripturally.

And sometimes the scriptures do bother the people of God. But the father is seen as being preeminent in our lives in terms of prayer. Do we pray to Jesus or do we pray to the father? Well, if we're asking about how modern Christianity is practiced, we have to say both.

I hear Christians pray to Jesus. I hear Christians pray to the father. I'm not going to say that one of these is wrong.

I'm going to say that one of these is not taught in the scripture. The scripture does not anywhere teach that we pray to Jesus, but it teaches everywhere that we pray to the father. And that's what Jesus taught us to do.

Let me show you in the scripture this in Matthew, chapter six. Now, I know this. Many, many Christians do pray to Jesus.

And if you are among them, I don't want you to think that you're a bad Christian or that if I ever heard you pray to Jesus, I frankly don't remember who may have or may not, but I always hear Christians doing it. I don't want you to think I think less of you for it. But I do think that Christians need to be disciplined in the area of prayer.

And Jesus is the best one to do the job. In Matthew six, Jesus is teaching about prayer. In verse five, he says, when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites.

He says, don't be like the heathen. He does say in verse six, when you pray, go into your room. When you have shut the door, pray to who? Your father who is in the secret place and your father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

In verse nine, Matthew six, nine. In this manner, therefore, pray. Now, this is a command of Christ, is it not? Pray like this.

He says, when you pray, say, our father. Now, Jesus is not trying to correct something where they were praying to Jesus or something else. He just taking it for granted.

When you pray, who you pray to is same person. I, Jesus, pray to when Jesus prayed, he prayed to the father. He said, that's who you pray to, too.

Now, I grew up under the influence of some teaching that indicated that while the father is a very busy person. Jesus has more time for me than the father does and more interest in me than the father does. And therefore, I talk to Jesus and he talks to the father about it for me.

I remember a particular Christian writer I read whose name is Household Word. I won't name him because I'm at this point presenting a point of disagreement. But he was writing a book about this.

And he said, he says, if I wanted to talk to the president of the United States, he says, I probably couldn't. There's people a lot more important than than me want to talk to him. And he's only got so much time for so many meetings.

So he says, I probably could not speak to the president of the United States. But he said, if I happen to be a personal friend of his son, I could speak to his son. And his son would certainly receive an audience with his father.

So that we have this notion taught that we talk to Jesus and Jesus talks to the father. Of course, there's even some who take it a further step. We've got to talk to his mom, you know, that she talks to Jesus and then he talks to the father.

Well, that's very contrary to what Jesus taught. Jesus said this in John chapter 16. In John 16, verse 23 and 24, Jesus is talking about the age of the church after he's gone from his disciples and ascended into heaven.

He says, and in that day you will ask me nothing. Now, the disciples had had Jesus with them visibly all this time before. And so they went to him and asked him.

He was not going to be visible to them now. He's going to be gone into heaven and they will not see him anymore for a while. And he says, in that day, you will ask me nothing.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name, meaning ask the father nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

Now, what does it mean to ask in his name? Some people I've known have thought it means I asked the father by calling him Jesus. That's asking the father in Jesus name. That, I think, misses the point entirely of what it means to do anything in Jesus name or anything in anyone else's name.

When you act in the name of another, you come on their authority. You act on their wishes. You act in their stead.

You do what they would do as their agent. That's what it means to act in the name of another. Jesus came in his father's name.

He came and acted as his father's agent. Did what his father wanted done and did it in his father's authority. Now, he says, you disciples, you have my name.

You act in my name. It's not only praying in Jesus name. In Colossians, it says, whatsoever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It means whatever we do, we're here as the agents of Christ. We do what he would do and we do it in his authority. We do it as his members of his body and doing the thing that he would do.

Now, the same is true of praying in Jesus name. We pray to the father, but we come in Jesus name. We pray in his name.

We pray what Jesus would pray. We're his agents. We're coming to the father in the name of his son.

On the authority of his son. On the merits of his son, we come to the father. We can't come on any other grounds than that.

But having come, it is the father to whom we come. And we come because of Jesus. Because he has given us access.

Now, also in John 16, verse 26, Jesus said, and in that day you will ask in my name. Of course, we've already noticed in verse 23, you'll ask the father in my name. And he'll do it.

He says, in that day you'll ask in my name. And I do not say to you that I will pray to the father for you. For the father himself loves you.

The father didn't send me here to keep you at arm's length. The father loves you. That's why he sent me here.

Don't talk to me and expect me to go talk to him. That's not what I'm going to do. I'm here to bring you to the father on my authority, in my name, in my merits.

You can come to the father and talk to him yourself. That's what I'm here for. I don't say I'm going to go talk to the father for you.

Now, does Jesus pray to the father for us? Of course he does, but not in the sense that I was just talking about. Jesus intercedes at the right hand of God the father for us day and night. That means he himself pleads the merits of his blood and his sacrifice on our behalf so that our sins are continually being forgiven and we continually are being accepted in the beloved.

But when it comes to actual prayers and petitions that we offer, we don't offer them to Jesus, then he takes them to the father, as if God's behind the curtain and we can't go there. But Jesus comes out once in a while and we can talk to him and he'll take our petitions in. That's exactly the notion he doesn't want us to have, he said.

Now, in the New Testament, we do not read of people praying to Jesus. Let me show you three passages and then I'm done here. In Acts, we have one of very few prayers recorded of the apostles in the book of Acts.

In Acts chapter 4, when the apostles Peter and John had been threatened, if they continued to preach in the name of Jesus, they were going to get in more trouble. They left the council that had made these threats and went to their companions in the church and had a prayer meeting and it says in verse 24, Acts 4, 24. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them.

Now, notice who they're talking to God. Now, you might say, well, Jesus is God. God, Jesus made all the things true.

But is that what they're thinking? No. If you look at verse 27, their prayer is continuing to the same God. They say for truly against your holy servant, Jesus, whom you anointed.

Now, are they talking? Who are they talking to? Jesus? No, they're talking about Jesus. They're talking to the father about his holy servant, Jesus, whom he, God the father, anointed. It's clear they saw themselves as addressing God the father as they spoke.

In Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 14, Ephesians 3, 14. Paul said, for this reason, I bow

my knees to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That means I pray, I bow my knees to the father.

I'm praying to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? That's normative. Jesus said to do that.

That's what Jesus taught. That's what the apostles did. In Galatians chapter 4 and verse 6, and I won't turn you to both places, but this also is said in Romans 8. But in Galatians 4, 6, it says, and because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son.

Now it's the father has sent forth the spirit of Jesus into your hearts, which results in what? In us. We cry out, Abba, Father. He doesn't say we cry out Jesus, though there's nothing wrong with crying out Jesus.

And there's not even anything biblically wrong with speaking to Jesus. We have a relationship with Jesus. But the problem is when we have a relationship with Jesus instead of the father.

It is because of our relationship with Jesus that we have a relationship with the father. And that is the great privilege that Jesus came to restore to us. Is that we could be restored to the father from whom we had become alienated.

And if we never go a step beyond just praying to Jesus or knowing Jesus, if we never really go to the presence of the father because he's a little bit intimidating to us, then Jesus' work has not reached its goal in our life. He wants us to come to the father. The father wants us to come to him.

We cry, Abba, Father. This is how we pray. Now you might say, well, doesn't anyone in the Bible pray to Jesus? Well, when Jesus was on earth, of course, people came to him all the time and asked him for things.

That's praying to him. But as he was leaving, he says, you're not going to ask me anything anymore. Now there are, after Jesus' ascension, two cases of people addressing prayers to Jesus.

Only two. One of them is in Acts chapter 7. When Stephen was stoned, he saw heaven open. He saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

He said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And the only other prayer to Jesus after the ascension of Jesus in the Bible is in Revelation 22. The last prayer in the Bible.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Now, those two examples make it clear there's no sin in praying to Jesus. Jesus was not saying, I'm sorry, I won't listen anymore.

But essentially, those were very remarkable instances. In both cases, the men who prayed those prayers to Jesus were seeing visions of Jesus at the very moment. They

were looking at him and spoke to him.

We never have an instance in the New Testament of people after Jesus was absent, invisible to them, that they directed their prayers to him. They did what he told them to do. They prayed to the Father.

Now, well, again, I need to emphasize, if you pray to Jesus, I don't see any sin in it. But I would say this, you're not doing what Jesus said to do. I mean, that's simple.

I don't say that to condemn. I just say that because that's biblically true. Is it not? If it's not biblically true, then don't accept it.

But you see, Jesus' teaching, yes, he did teach about his own preeminence. He did teach that the Father has delivered all things into his hands, that he is given authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. The Bible does say that God has exalted him and given him a name above every name.

But it is plain that he is accepted who exalted him. The preeminence of Jesus we need to know. But Jesus wanted us to also know about the preeminence of the Father.

And this is what we hear less about. Children are taught, Jesus loves me. And even new Christians who are converted as adults, they think of the love of Jesus and so forth.

Paul appeals to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It's the love of God the Father that he associates the love with.

And this, again, not to take away from the love of Jesus, but to put the emphasis where the Bible places the emphasis. Where Jesus put the emphasis. That there is another person who cares about us.

There is another person who is the object of our worship. Jesus said the Father seeks such to worship him. Those who can worship the Father in spirit and truth.

It's the Father who is the object of our worship. It is the Father to whom our prayers are directed. It is the Father who loved us enough that he would not let Jesus off the hook in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When Jesus said, OK, not what I want, what you want. It was the Father who loved the world. It is the Father who wants us to know him.

This does not cancel out our relation with Jesus. It gives our relation with Jesus its biblical implications. Our relation with Jesus is a relation that grants us access in his name and in him.

Accepted in the beloved. Christ is the beloved. Into the presence of the Father.

Let's pray. Father, I imagine that many of the Christians here have known these things and everything I've said is not profound or new. And for others, it may be not only new, but difficult.

And so I pray, Father, that you will reveal yourself as you really are to us. If any here have twisted notions of fatherhood because of their own experience with their own father. I know that it is often taught in our society that if we have had not had a good earthly father, that we we can't really know you, Father.

That, however, is not biblically true. For David said, if my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. And we know that even if our earthly fathers have not been good models upon which to base our understanding of who you are, that that does not have to doom us.

To missing out on knowing you as the father we never had, the father of the fatherless. I pray, Father, that you might make your love known, your fatherly parental love known. We have known the love of Jesus.

I pray that we will know the love of the father as well. As we sang in the hymn by Fannie Crosby, Oh, come to the father. Through Jesus, the son and give him the glory.

Great things he has done. Father, we come to you. There's no other way that anyone can come to the father, but through Christ.

And we thank you that you sent him so that we might have access unto you and that we might have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, the father and the communion of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we might not lack any part of that salvation that you sent Jesus to acquire for us and which he did. We ask it in his name.

Amen. Amen.