

The Desperation of the Soul

By Shawn Reynolds

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Bible Text: Matthew 9:21

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Grace Particular Baptist Church

5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd
Mulberry, FL 33860

Website: www.onefoldoneshepherd.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular

We begin this morning once again reading our text and we'll ask the Lord's blessing on it. We'll ask one question before we go to prayer time. Let's go straight to the text this morning and it's in Matthew 9:21.

For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

Before we ask the Lord's blessing on his word this morning I have to ask: what do you see? If you had to describe this passage this morning in this one verse, what word would you describe it as?

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father and most gracious and holy Lord, I thank thee, Lord, for the hour that thou has set before us. We thank thee, Lord, for thy healing and bringing those here that were not here last week. Lord, we pray for those who aren't here that thou would be pleased to bring them here in thy perfect time. Lord, I pray in this hour that thou would be my strength and clarity of mind, Lord, for thou knowest the affliction that is in my mind. I pray, O Lord, for that clarity that only comes from thee that, Lord, you would be pleased to speak thy word this morning to our souls. Lord, may it be real. May thy word come. May it search our hearts. May you draw us close to thy side and, Lord, may you feed us. Feed us as only thou can, that you would be glorified and that, Lord, we would see that you are the Great Shepherd, that we would see, Lord, that you are the Great All-in-All, that you are everything to thy people. O Lord, make us poor and needy in this hour and in the hour to come. Lord, may you bless this time with thy presence, drawing us close to thy side, feeding us, Lord, as only thou can. Bless this day for thy glory in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

As I said, I wonder what word comes to your mind when you hear the words, "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." The word of the day is desperation. The word of the day is urgency. I often think and I wonder what keeps us from urgency, what keeps our minds from thinking as this one was brought to see that she had a great need.

I want to go ahead and read the three verses where this sits in the middle of, starting in verse 20, "And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." I want you first to understand that the word "whole" in the Greek in both of these verses in verse 21 and in verse 22 is translated "cured" or "saved, salvation." It's the same Greek word used in Luke 7:50 when the woman came and anointed the Lord's feet and the Lord said to her, "Thy faith has saved thee." What came to this lady today was salvation.

As I started today, I asked you the question as we read this: what is it that keeps us from the urgency of the hour? What is it that keeps us from the desperation of the hour? Now, I just want to take a moment to tell you if you've been under a rock for a while, what's in our headlines today. We've got the great fear of ISIS. We've got these people who said if I know that you're a Christian, I'm going to come and lop off your head. We've got a great enemy in this world that has always been here at enmity against Christ. But it's not only ISIS, we have this leadership in this country that causes us great angst in soul and causes us great worry as we see that there is just wickedness in high places. We know that when we read the Scriptures because we know that Satan is the prince of the power of the air and we know that that means that wickedness is in high places but it doesn't keep us from being worried when we see that that wickedness has permeated everything in our government also. So we have those two things and that doesn't even count the Ebola virus, the other viruses that are now around that are killing people. We have a lot that would give us the urgency of the time. The urgency of the time that we live in. The urgency of the situation that we live in. As sheep in the great sheepfold of God, there are a lot of things like those things that I mentioned that bring us to have great concern and bring us to have great fear and that do bring us to the throne of God.

But notice I did not name something in all of those things and it's the thing that plagues us everyday and that's sin. How much do we have that urgency over sin? The sin that so easily besets us, Paul said. The sin that so permeates our life every day. The sin of unbelief. The sin of anger. The sin of unrighteousness. The sin of self-righteousness. The sin of pride. The sin of not trusting in the Lord. As we come to this passage today, what I see, what the Lord revealed to me when I read it about a week ago, the Lord said, "This is the text." I said, "Lord, why this?" Because the hour is urgent and there is a desperate need for the child of God but what keeps us from that? There are two things that I know that I jotted down and one is the sin of presumption. I looked up the sin of presumption and I said, "What is the definition of presumption?" It's "blind or headstrong confidence." Blind or headstrong confidence. Presuming that everything is going to be alright. Presuming on the grace of God. Presuming on where you've seen that the Lord has delivered people in the past and he's going to do it the same way to the point where you don't even give it any thought or as we heard last Sunday, you don't give it any prayer because the sister sin that goes along with presumption is indifference. Indifference is neutrality or no side taken. Those two things, when they come to the child of God and they afflict the child of God, he's left to just look at everything in life and look at sin and

wink at it and say, "Oh well, sin abounds but grace much more abounds and I'm saved by the blood of Christ so I don't need to worry about this sin and I don't need to even think about this sin."

We have great ministries, and I use that term loosely, that are in this country today that built their whole ministry on that idea to not even speak about sin, to not even tell the hearers that they have a battle with sin and they have a battle with the flesh and they have a battle with Satan every day of their life. They're told that they can live above it and they're told that it will not plague them in this life and to just think happy thoughts. Then there have been some that have gone as far as to say if you give money to this or you buy this or you plant this seed and that seed grows, then the Lord will bless you and you won't have to worry about those things. But children of God, I've got to ask you: is that true in your life? Do you find that sin is something that does not plague you? That's the question of the hour today as we have all of these things that so easily come into our lives and the worries that we have but yet sin is there. Sin is there in everything that we do that's not authored of faith. That's what we're told: anything not of faith is sin.

So as we look at this passage this morning, all three verses are spiritual. It is spiritual to the child of God. Was it an historic event? Yes. Was it a blessed miracle? Yes. But for you and I today in the year 2014, what significance does it have for us? What does the Holy Spirit say to us today in this text, "For she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Twelve years she had been in this affliction. Twelve years is symbolic to you and I today. It's symbolic of whatever time period that is that we are suffered to walk in sin, whatever time it is. Whatever time it is that we are suffered to walk in indifference. When we are suffered to walk in the sin of presumption. When we're suffered to walk and not give any thought or any depth in our soul to what is going on in our soul. Twelve years. Mark and Luke both say the same thing, that she had spent all that she had. She had spent every dollar she had. She had spent everything that had come into her life, all of her substance, on doctors. Isn't that the case for us today? Isn't that what you and I do when some soul-sickness comes into our soul? We grasp at everything to make us feel better. We'll grasp at the things of the world. We'll get involved in the things of the world. We'll get involved with whatever it is and we'll push it to the side and we'll say, "If I throw myself into this, then I won't worry about this." But for the child of God, that's not healing.

Today in this text, we're going to see how the Lord brings us to himself; how the Lord heals us of that sin. Twelve years. She had gone to every physician except the one Physician, the divine Physician. And isn't that the case? And I'm not even talking on a physical level here. Listen, we live in the year 2014 where we are greatly blessed that the Lord has allowed medicine to advance the way that it has. I think about that sometimes and I look at Helen this morning in front of us and after open heart surgery, I look at our Pastor who had the same thing and, listen, 60 years ago, they wouldn't be here that quick. That's a great mercy. That's a great mercy. A great mercy. But you and I today just as dependent as they can become on medication or we can become on medication or become on doctors, we go to the doctor when we're sick. That's what we do. When we feel like we have to have something or we need something, we go but every day of our life, our

soul is sick. When sin is reigning in our soul, our soul is sick. When Christ is reigning in our soul, it's healthy. There is no in between and the Bible is so absolute about that. There are sheep and there are goats. There are wheat and there are tares. There are the elect and there is the non-elect. There is the reprobate, there is the living and there's the dead. There is no in between. For you and I today, there is no in between. We have life in Christ and everything outside of Christ is death. It doesn't matter how glorified we make it. It doesn't matter how much we reach after these things to put them in our lives to make our lives better to our carnal selves and we do that, but can that touch our soul? Can it? I want to tell you something, this passage this morning, it's experiential. It's experiencing Christ in your soul.

I was reading something this week, somebody wrote a letter to J. C. Philpot and they asked him why he was an experiential preacher, why he was an experimental preacher. This is what he said. He said, "Why preach experientially? To find out the feelings of living souls and to cut off dead professors." That's what experiential preaching is because when you leave this place today, you're going to ask yourself even in your mind, you're going to ask yourself: has that taken place in me? These things that are described today from this pulpit, have these things been present in my life? So that's exactly what that means. To find out the feelings of living souls. Have you been there? Have you experienced Christ in this way or a way similar to it? Or do you sit there and you find that experiential life in the Scriptures, the depth of Christ in the soul, is something foreign to you? That what you see is dry doctrine and dry doctrine is enough for you? "If I know to do this and live, I'll do it and I'll live." Really? Because what the word of God does, what Christ does is that he cuts off the dead professors. Notice what he says, "dead professors." They're professing that they have life in them but what is that life?

So now we turn to our text. The text is, "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." We're going to take it in three parts. The first one: for she said within herself. The first thing that we have here for the child of God is at the beginning, the beginning of experiencing Christ is in the soul. It must be within yourself. You see, what we see here is that there are thousands of people around Christ and he's on his way to heal Jairus' daughter. He's on his way to do another calling but at the time, all of those people did not matter to this woman. Why? Because the faith that he gave her blocked all of that out and what took place was in her soul. In her soul she communed with her soul and she said within herself. That's the first point we come to today is: in yourself. But how do we get there?

Well, we hold our finger here in this text and we turn over to John 6 real quick and we've got two verses in John 6. Verse 37, we read, these are the words in red, meaning the words of Christ, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." That's the whole thing. How did she come to him? This is the work in the soul. This is the faith. This is the gift of God. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." She could do no other. You and I, how are we going to be brought to Christ to overcome the threat of all those things I mentioned and the weight and the burden of sin? Because a child of God will be burdened with sin. We're going to see that. We've got that great passage coming in Zechariah which explains the whole thing, the

whole process of how the Lord works. But right now we see, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The Lord never, he's always an answer to his children. He brings us there to nourish our souls. You and I have moms and dads of our flesh and we come to them to hear us, to take care of us. But there have been times in our lives where they haven't because they're not perfect but this Father, this Lord, this Triune Lord is perfect and when he brings his children to him, he has everything in himself to nourish their soul. Everything. "I will in no wise cast them out." That's preservation right there of the saints.

Then look at verse 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." That's how she came. You say, "Oh no, no, she had this disease for 12 years. She was at the end of herself." Who brought her to the end of herself? She was suffered to walk in that disease for 12 years. She was suffered to live in that way for that long but when the Lord said it's enough, when the Lord said that today salvation comes to your house, when the Lord said that today is the day of the Lord in your soul, she could do no other. "No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him and I will raise him up at the last day." I asked you at the beginning: what is it that keeps us from the urgency in our soul for healing? And it is, it's our sin nature. It's our flesh. It's the world grabbing at us. It's all of these things our fallen nature just rises up against. But greater is he that is in the child of God than he that is in the world. This Lord, when he says it's time and make no mistake about it, faithful is he that calleth you, he will do it. Faithful is he that has begun a work, he will finish it. There is no wavering here on will the Lord do it. This is how he does it. That's why I said when you walk out of here today, the examination in the soul and the experiential living, has Christ done this in my soul? Has he called me and has these times of refreshing in my soul where I have been called away from this world? Where I have been called away from sin? When he has shown me the healing balm of his blood and has covered my sin and has lifted me to the third heaven to see him? That's the question today. That's the dire need of the soul.

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Remember what we said here: she said within herself. Well, what is speaking to her within herself? "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." You are a child of God, dear one. Go to the one who will heal you. That's the power of him that resides in the child of God. There is no wavering there. That's a power much greater than you and I. You and I can't understand it on the physical realm because we don't have that kind of power and we're not that faithful either.

Hebrews 12:2 says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." The author means the beginning of it. The finisher of it means the end of it. If he's the beginning and the end, he's everything in between. All faith needed comes from the one who is the giver of faith. Paul said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." What about you? Do you live by the faith of the Son of God? Because if you're going to live by some kind of conjured faith you have, it's going to run out. It's going to let you down. But the faith of the Son of God, always leads to Christ and his finished work. Then, of course, Ephesians 2:8 tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." How direly we need that gift of faith.

But, you know, faith has a sister grace with it and do you know what that is? It's hope. It's hope. She not only came in great faith but this communing in her soul, she had to have a great hope that she'd be healed and that hope is a living hope. That hope is so energized by faith and so energized by Christ that it doesn't doubt. Now, I told you when we started this, I said, "What do I see in this passage? What do I believe?" I believe she's desperate. Do you know what the definition of desperation is? Without hope. You see, that's the difference. The world is in desperation, for the child of God, he may have desperate times but it's never without hope. Do you know why? Well, don't take it from me. Let's go to Hebrews 6:19 and 20, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." The hope is the anchor of the soul. The hope of Christ, the hope of glory is the anchor of the soul, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." The Greek says, "in the inner side." In the inner sanctum. In the innerness of you with the Lord. Listen, how do we enter there? Well, we're not left there to ourselves, look at verse 20, "Whither the forerunner is for us entered," first, the firstfruit; the one who must go before us; the one who the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd. He brings us into the Holy of Holies. There is no other way there. You and I aren't going to get there by ourselves.

"She said within herself." Listen to this, "even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." This is his priest work. He's rent the veil by his finished work on the cross. It's open and he brings the child of God there and he brings us through that. That's the hope of our soul and it's an anchor. You think of that metaphor that's used there as an anchor that's put down on a ship and as the waves come and beat the ship, the ship can't go anywhere because of the anchor. That's the hope of Christ. That's the hope of glory in the soul of the child of God.

"For she said within herself." It's experiential. What about for you? Have you been brought here? Have you been brought to this hope? Have you been brought to cry out to this Lord? Have you been brought to come to this Lord in this way? "For she said within herself." Inner work that's in the soul.

But then we move on to the next part, "if I may but touch his garment." Now listen: you and I know that there is no healing in clothes, okay? This is weird. She didn't want his person. She didn't want him to speak. She didn't want his hand. All she wanted was his garment. You see, that's what faith takes the child of God to. The world doesn't understand this. Flesh and blood doesn't understand this. Flesh and blood will look at that and say, "No, what you need is a special balm to cure your infirmity."

"If I may but touch his garment." That's what faith does. It lays hold of Christ. It lays hold of his word. It credits his word that it's true and it says, "Thy faith has made you whole." The faith of the Son of God and that imputed faith is now my faith. It's now imparted to me to live with. That's the faithfulness of my Lord.

But what we see in this is a desire for the vital nearness to the Lord. "Oh, if I can just get close enough to touch." That's what experiential living is, it's experiencing Christ. It's

close enough to touch him and you know I'm not talking physically here. I'm talking about when the Lord takes your soul and he brings you to his throne and you know you've touched the will of God because it's so contrary to your will and it's so contrary to man's ideas and it's so contrary to how man tells you to live.

"If I can just touch his garment. If I can just lay hold of that crumb to fall from the table. If I could just have a little bit of Christ because that little bit of Christ will fill my soul." How do we get to such heights? David said in Psalm 84:2, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Do you know what that is? That's an energized soul. That's a soul that's been brought to his Lord to say, "Lord, everything in you is what I need in me." Do you know what that means? That means that "me" has been emptied. It means that they've been emptied of their self, their self-will, their self-righteousness, their self-pride, their self-everything and the Lord has taken them to the stripping room and he's stripped them of all of those things and he's emptied that vessel to put himself into. Make no mistake about it, until those 12 years are up, until that emptying and that stripping takes place, there won't be any place for Christ in you. He must needs increase and we must decrease.

David said in Psalm 42:1, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Do you not hear desperation in that? Can you not picture the little deer running from the hunters? Can you not picture him running and running and running and being out and coming to the brook to be refreshed? Can you not picture that? Can you not picture that and put it into your life and understand that's the only way you'll ever be refreshed is when the Lord shows you that you are being chased by all of these ones that are wanting your soul? That want to take over your soul? That want to set up residence in your soul? The world, the flesh and Satan? And the child of God is brought to Christ this way to flee those things and they need to be nourished. That's what David says here, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." My soul. That's the question of the hour: this desperation, this urgency, have you ever felt it? Have you ever known it? Have you ever experienced Christ in the soul this way?

"Oh, if I may just touch his garment." I want to make one more comment about verse 20 where it said that she came behind him. I want you to know that faith humbles the child of God. Faith humbles the child of God and when he's brought to the child of God, he comes behind the Lord in his rightful place. Not ahead of the Lord. Not saying, "Hey, look at me." He comes behind the Lord. Here's the blessed thing about it: the Lord is omniscient and the Lord is all-knowing. In whatever way he brings us and in whatever circumstance he brings us, he's there.

Later we're told in Mark and Luke that virtue passed out of Christ and he said to them, "Who touched me?" and they're all like, "Whoa, what do you mean? There are thousands of people around you." Virtue went out of Christ. He knows when he sends his faith. He knows when he sends his healing. He knows when he sends his love. She couldn't hide from him. In fact, that faith must be tried. He made her come to him and she confessed

that it was her. That's what faith does. It's not ashamed of the Gospel. It's not ashamed of Christ's finished work.

Let's look at that blessed passage in Zechariah 12, beginning in verse 10. I know I've used this many times. It's so experiential to me. This is how the Lord has worked in my life to see him. Verse 10, we hear this, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." The Lord pours out his Spirit, he pours out his grace upon the child of God and he brings them to him. When he does that, "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," because the Holy Spirit convicts the child of God of sin. He shows him that he is a sinner. He shows him that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He shows him that he's worthy of death because he has transgressed the law because the law is spiritual. He shows him all of these things and then that's all part of the stripping and he strips him of himself, "and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." They mourn over the sin that has caused him to be put on the cross. "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." That's what sin is. It's a bitter taste to you. That's his work. He's got to do that in the soul. He's faithful to do that. He's the one who brings us to look at his finished work on the cross to see his bleeding side; to see that it's us that put him there. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

"In that day," what day is that? The day of the Lord, "shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." Wherever the people of God are, wherever they are in this world today, the Lord works the same way. Wherever they are apart. Whatever family, wherever they are. The Lord brings his children this way to see how they put him on the cross.

But dear ones, he doesn't leave us there. This is how we experience Christ: everyone that is brought to see this, wherever the people of God are, he brings them to see this precious truth because that's part of the humbling. That's part of the coming behind. Then that bleeds into chapter 13, the beauty, the remedy. We're not left there, "In that day," that same day, that same hour, that same time, that same blessed day of the Lord, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David," the fountain of his blood, the fountain of cleansing, "and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for unrighteousness." That's the power of the blood. That's the, "If I could only touch his garment. If I could only be cleansed from this stain." That's where redemption is. That's where pardon is. That's where love and mercy is. That's where he brings the child of God, empties him of himself. Oh, if I may touch. It has to be felt. That's where the touch comes in. It has to be felt.

That's the experience of the child of God. As I said in the beginning, it comes in different ways and in different intensities but it's the same faith and the faith lays hold of the same

object which is Christ and he leads us the same way to see the wickedness that lies within us and the remedy in his blood and the remedy in his finished work and that then leads to the last part of our text: I shall be saved or I shall be whole. "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Luke writes in Acts 4:12 what Peter actually said under the power of the Holy Ghost, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." You understand the depth of that passage? There is no other name that you could call on. No husband. No wife. No children. No pastor. No elder. No no one. There is no other name. There is no other person that you could bank your salvation on or desire it to be that way. There is no other name given under heaven but the name the Lord Jesus Christ. "I shall be whole," by this one.

John 6:68 says, Peter again, "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord," this was in answer to the question the Lord said, "Will you also go away?" and Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Is that your answer today? Is that your answer for desperation? Is that your answer for urgency? Have you ever felt that urgency? "To whom shall I go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Jonah was brought to say that salvation is of the Lord. Have you been brought to say that? Have you been brought to experience Christ in your soul in this way?

"For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Let's turn over to 1 Thessalonians 5 real quick and let's just start in verse 6. I love that little three letter word "let." We're going to be introduced to that three times here. "Therefore let us not sleep." Every time I see "let" like that, 1 Thessalonians 5, beginning in verse 6, "Therefore let us not sleep," I think of the power of my Lord. Let there be light. Let there be water. Let there be a firmament. Listen, I've said it many times, I read these guys a lot. I've been reading Philpot a lot. Another sermon I read this week, he said the same thing again that it's a lot easier, it is more likely for you or I to make a world than for us to believe in Christ." It just isn't going to happen in and of ourselves. We can just as soon make a world.

But the Lord himself who says these things and the power of him to do it, "Therefore let us not sleep." We need to be awoken. We need to be awakened out of sleep for the urgency of the hour. Not just for all of the things around us but for the sin that so easily besets us. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us," there's that vital power again, "let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Have you ever felt the terrors of the law and the terrors of sin so much you thought the Lord wouldn't hear you? The Lord has not appointed his children to wrath but this world, it's under his wrath. Make no mistake about that. "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Oh, how blessed that would be. As we wake, as we sleep, that pretty well covers the whole day, doesn't it? That the Lord is a presence in our life.

That's my desire for you today. That's my desire for me today, that we experience Christ in our soul way more times than we experience this world and we experience the depth of the fall in our crooked and perverse nature. Lord, we need thee every hour. We need thee every minute. We need you, Lord, to show us the desperation and the urgency of the hour. And Lord, we need you to keep us from presumption and indifference. Those are the thoughts I'll leave you with this morning if you turn with me over to Psalm 19. This will be perfect to lead us right into prayer. Psalm 19:13-14, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression," which the Hebrew there says "from much transgression." O Lord, keep me from presumptuous sin that I be kept from many sins. O Lord, keep me from that. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

Dear heavenly Father, may you add your power for your name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.