

November 25, 2021  
Thanksgiving Eve  
Pastor Matt Duerr

## “Taken”

The title of our sermon for this afternoon this Thanksgiving Eve service is “Taken.” and some of you might notice right away that is actually the title of a modern-day film a film about a young girl approximately a senior in high school or so who wants to celebrate with her friend by going on a European vacation. She gets to Italy with her friend where she is taken. She's taken to be sold, its human trafficking. Now her mother consented that she should go, but her mother and father were divorced, and her father did not want her to go because he doesn't trust mankind. Why did he not trust mankind? Well because he was a retired special operations agent, supposedly for the CIA or some Black Ops group; and he had seen throughout his life and what mankind could do. He went to get his daughter. The problem was no one with the law enforcement was really interested or taking it seriously. The attitude was, they are young girls, they're on a trip, of course there off the radar. But she had been taken and the kidnappers did reach out to try to get some money of course and he told them, ‘I have a certain special set of skills, give her back or I'm coming for you.’ The response back was simply two words “good luck.” And the phone went dead. Well, I'll spare you all the information for the movie; you might want to watch it someday. But at the end, spoiler alert; he gets her back.

And you know that movie is almost a biblical movie. You see it embodies the very definition of unique Hebrew word “RIYB.” It's a word that is used 65 times in the Old Testament and it has two basic definitions. The first was, to strive physically in combat and that father certainly did do that. The second is to plead or make a charge in court. Well, he really couldn't do that because he tried to get in the legal system and legal system shut the door on him. But together what you see is a word that describes an adversarial process. The adversarial process in a legal sense, and in a physical sense. About this time, you may be saying, “tomorrow is Thanksgiving, pastor Matt, and you are talking about battling and striving and what in the world does that have to do with Thanksgiving? I would contend everything!

Let's go to Isaiah 3:13. This is one of those places where we see this Hebrew word, riyb in action. The Lord has taken His place to contend. He stands to judge peoples. It's the Lord who is going through this riyb, He is the one who is striving or making a case. We take a look at Micah 6:1 "Hear what the Lord says, arise plead your case." There's the word riyb. "Plead your case before the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains the indictment of the Lord." You take those two passages and put them together and what you get is this: The Lord contends with your sin, so plead your case. good luck! Here's the indictment: you're guilty, there's no hope. It is the Holy One versus the unrighteous and the unrighteous are unrighteous by choice. The holy creator, God is going to contend with the unrighteous, with His creation. He is going to judge. He is going to condemn. And you can plead but there's no hope, you are guilty. Happy Thanksgiving!

You might be saying that sounds like a scary Thanksgiving pastor Matt, but here comes the second part. RIYB, same word, same definition, yes, used 65 times in the Old Testament. But now hear its' use in Psalm 119 verse 154. King David writing. King David a definite sinner. "Plead my cause and redeem me, give me life according to your promise." Using legal or biblical terminology, what is David saying? Lord, please take my case, no one else will defend me. No one else will even touch this case, but You promised in the garden to Adam and Eve to do it. You made the promise to the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah that you would do it. Lord, You showed us the promise in the Passover feast. Lord, please do it. You are the God of covenant and love. I know you'll do it.

It is this concept of this Old Testament Hebrew Word that is the very foundation of a Greek word used in the New Testament 'paracletus.' Or currently we see it in 1 John 2:1. "First my little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate (a paraclete) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." When we take a look at this verse, it unfolds for us a five step Thanksgiving plan. Step one, turn away from sin. There are 95 verses that use that phrase: turn away from sin. We are to turn from the sin and that's what John was writing. I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, turn away. But he right away goes into, but if

anyone does sin, and that's step two. We are to turn away from sin. But step two, we failed miserably. That's not good because now we have God contending against us. Here comes step three: John 6:37 "All that the Father gives me, will come to me and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out." Like David, would you turn to the Lord? Lord plead my case.

And then like David understand Step 4. He already did. He went to the cross and on that cross, He took hold of our sin. We've heard that in the last weeks in our sermon series. He embraced our sin; He paid the price of our sin. He took that sin to the grave and He buried it there. He left it there. Which leads us to Step 5, He will. He will be in our paraclete. On that day when we stand before the glory of God, Almighty whether it's because we have died and we stand before Him, or that we're alive on judgment day when He returns.

Jesus will be our paraclete, our advocate, who will stand between us and God the Father and when God contends with that sin back to the Old Testament word *riyb*; He is going to contend with that sin and say you must pay the price. That is when Jesus our paraclete, steps in and says, "Father, I did, I paid the price, I paid the price for Matt Duerr. I paid the price for each person that is here today. I paid the price of all those who you have given to me and have come to me and asked me to plead their case before you. Father, you know I paid the price, let them in." And that then gives us a little bit about view of heaven. When you hear Jesus Christ the Son of God, being your paraclete, advocating for you, striving for you, pleading your case before God the Father Almighty. You will be filled with such thanksgiving, that you will literally be eternally thankful. And every day in heaven will be a Thanksgiving.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, knowing that, we can be like King David and say, "plead my cause and redeem me. Give me life according to your promise." Then we can celebrate Thanksgiving because we know God promised it and that promise is golden. In our Savior's Name, Amen