

Loving Samaritans

Luke

By Richard Caldwell, Jr.

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Luke 9:51-56

Preached on: Sunday, March 31, 2013

Founders Baptist Church

24724 Aldine Westfield

Spring TX 77373

Website: wwwFOUNDERSBAPTIST.ORG

Online Sermons: WWW.SERMONAUDIO.COM/SMBCONLINE

If you would, please turn to the gospel of Luke chapter nine verses 51 through 56. God's Word says this.

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.¹

Let's pray together.

Lord, you know my thoughts before I think them and my words before I speak them. And you know that I am aware of my own inadequacy to convey the things that you have revealed in your Word. But I thank you, Lord, that you transcend the vessels who communicate your Word and you work in a way that can only be explained by you. And we pray for that tonight that you would instruct our minds, that you would feed our souls, that you would deal with our hearts in a way that we would draw near to you, that we would see you, that we would see your Son clearly with the eyes of faith and appreciate what you have done for us in and through Christ. And as has already been mentioned tonight, Lord, I pray for anyone who listened this morning or is even back tonight who doesn't know you and I pray for salvation. I pray for conversions. I pray for people to come to faith in Jesus. And I pray for us your people that, Lord, we would grow and take on more and more of the likeness of Christ as we behold his glory on the pages of your Word. Thank you that this is the work you are doing in us, Lord. Thank you for your patience with us. Thank you for your faithfulness to us. Bless this time we ask in your Word tonight in Jesus' name. Amen.

There is no doubt that the 51st verse of this ninth chapter represents a transition in the earthly ministry of Christ. It says:

¹ Luke 1:51-56.

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”²

Luke is signaling here a transition in the ministry of Christ on this earth. This speaks more to the trajectory of his ministry from here on out as he makes his way to the cross than it does the direct course that he would take to Jerusalem, because, after all, from Galilee to Jerusalem is just two days’ journey. And if Christ had wanted to go directly to Jerusalem he could have been there in two days and we are still months away from the cross. So when it says:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”³

What it means is that now Galilee would no longer be his base of operations. Jesus would now set his focus on the region of Judea. There will still be occasional trips to Galilee, but his focus will be the Judean region and every step that he takes is with the end in mind.

It also points us to the fact that now he is going to set his focus on his own disciples in a special way. He is preparing these men for his exodus. He is preparing these men for the fact that he is leaving, that he is going away and for the mission that they are going to carry out once he is gone to the cross and been raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. This is a ministry of mercy. Jesus came the first time not to condemn the world, but to save and he wants his men to understand that. He wants this to be the character of their ministry and understanding that their master has come to bring salvation. And we said that this stands out to us under four headings in verses 51 through 56. We focus on Jesus. We focus on Samaria. We focus on the disciples and we focus on Christ’s mission.

This morning we focused on Jesus. And in verse 51 we saw that this was a new step in a divine plan. He is operating according to a divine time table. The days are coming to fulfillment. The days are being filled up when he will be taken up, he will ascend. We saw this is a step with a triumphant vision. He is looking beyond the cross, beyond the resurrection to his ascension.

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up...”⁴

For him to ascend. It is a step with a resolute purpose. He has set his face to go to Jerusalem. He is resolved. He is determined. He will endure the cross. He will despise the shame for the joy that is set before him. And we noted that this is a step with a specific end in mind, location in mind. He is on his way to Jerusalem.

Tonight we begin with the 52nd verse and we focus on what the Bible tells us here about Samaria. It says:

² Luke 9:51.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.⁵

At the outset of this new emphasis in Luke's account is Christ sending disciples ahead to a village in Samaria; Samaria, the region existing between Galilee to the north and Judea to the south. In the middle is Samaria. And here that is what Samaria refers to. The Samaritans refers to these people who lived in this region, but as we study all of God's Word, we find sometimes Samaria used in different ways. Sometimes it not only refers to a region. It can refer to the city of Samaria where it served as the capital city of the northern kingdom after the kingdom divided following the death of Solomon. Sometimes Samaria would also be used to refer to the entire northern kingdom in that divided kingdom context. 1 Kings 13:32 uses Samaria in that sense just referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

There was a history of hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans. Following the fall of the northern kingdom to Assyrian in 722 BC, the Bible tells us in 2 Kings 17 that the Assyrians repopulated Samaria with conquered peoples. The Israelites were taken away from their land. The only people who were left were those who were very poor. They didn't have much influence, certainly not the ruling class. And then the Assyrians moved into their cities and into their region these conquered peoples and the result was many of the Jews intermarried with those who populated the region. And out of that came idolatry. There was already idolatry in the land, but it was even exacerbated. It was emphasized more after this occurred.

I want you just for a moment to look at 2 Kings chapter 17. I want you to see this with me. So we will have this in our minds, 2 Kings chapter 17. And look at verse 22.

The people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the

⁵ Luke 9:52-53.

priests whom you carried away from there, and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land.”⁶

Interesting, isn't it? So they deport the people. They are exiled to Assyria. They have got problems now where they repopulate it with foreigners and so the solution is let's send one of the priests back in to Samaria to instruct them about the God of the land.

Verse 28:

So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel and taught them how they should fear the LORD. But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived.⁷

So the result, long term, was a mixed race known as Samaritans, semi pagans, eventually returning to the worship of Yahweh, but even then it was distorted. Look back, by the way, at Luke chapter nine. Even then it was distorted. The Samaritans had their own Scriptures, their own version of the Pentateuch which for them was all of the Old Testament that they considered to be canonical. So they just accepted the first five books of the Old Testament. They had their own temple for a time on Mount Gerizim before the Jews destroyed it under John Hyrcanus in 119 BC. And so there was this rivalry. There was this competition between the Samaritans and the Jews. Who had it right? In fact, the Samaritans also rewrote their history. So who had it right? Who had the Scriptures right? Who had the place of worship right? Who had the history right?

You will remember the woman at the well refers to this in John 4:20. She said:

“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”⁸

Jesus says, “You don't understand what you are talking about. But there is something coming that you still... that you don't understand as well.

So there is this long running hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans since the fall of the northern kingdom of Assyria and the things that... the events that happened shortly thereafter. In fact, such was the hostility that if you are a Jew one of the ways you can insult someone was to call them a Samaritan.

⁶ 2 Kings 17:22-27.

⁷ 2 Kings 17:28-29.

⁸ John 4:20-22.

John 8:48:

“The Jews answered him, ‘Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?’”⁹

Which makes what Christ does here all the more meaningful. As Christ has in his mind the cross, as he makes his way to Jerusalem to lay down his life for sinners, he immediately evidences a concern that goes beyond the Jewish people, a concern even for the... in the views of the Jews, the notorious sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, Samaritans. This is not the only place where Jesus evidences a concern for the Samaritan people.

John 4:9:

“The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)”¹⁰

And yet right after we are told in verse 51 that Jesus has set his face to go to Jerusalem the first thing he does is he sends messengers to a Samaritan village. Jesus later on in Luke 10 uses a Samaritan in a parable in order to communicate the impartial nature of salvation. Luke 10 verse 30.

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed him mercy.”

And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”¹¹

The hero in that parable is a Samaritan. Later on we are going to read in Luke, look over to Luke 17, the 17th chapter about 10 lepers who are healed. This is on what Jesus turns

⁹ John 8:48.

¹⁰ John 4:9.

¹¹ Luke 10:30-37.

his attention to Judea, but on one of these, you know, excursions back into the region of Galilee, he heals 10 lepers. And notice what happens. Luke 17 verse 11.

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”¹²

You see, even a foreigner, even a Samaritan who will trust in Christ will be forgiven and cleansed and saved and changed.

When you think about this conflict between Jew and Samaritan, if you have an ESV study Bible there is really a helpful note there. It says this. “Tensions often ran high between Jews and Samaritans. Thus, Josephus recounts, ‘Fighting between Jews and Samaritans during Claudius’ reign in the first century AD being so intense that Roman soldiers were called in to pacify and to crucify many of the rebels.’”

I mean a long history of hatred on the part of Jews towards Samaritans and the Samaritans return the favor on the part of Samaritans toward Jews.

So the fact that Jesus does not bypass Samaria but instead sends disciples ahead of him to prepare a way for him into one of their villages, this is something very significant. We are not told how they made these preparations. Did Jesus mean here that they went into the village to prepare for him by preaching or by lining up provisions? The reason why I even mention the possibility of preaching if you just turn over to chapter 10 verse one, notice this:

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.’”¹³

And you go on and read the text and what you are going to discover is they went into these places carrying out ministry, preaching and performing mighty works. Is this the preparation that went ahead of him into this village? Or was it simply a preparation of

¹² Luke 17:11-19.

¹³ Luke 10:1-2.

provisions? I lean probably toward the latter idea, that it was a preparation of provisions and I will explain why here in just a moment. But with this background now in our minds, understanding this hostility between Samaria and the region of Judea, between Samaritan and the Jews, you can understand why Christ's disciples are so incensed, by they are so infuriated at what happens next.

Verse 52.

And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.¹⁴

Think about this from the perspective of these Jewish disciples. One, you have a Jew willing to carry out ministry to have a presence with Samaritans. In their minds that is already condescension, right? A Jew is willing to have a ministry to Samaritans. Take it a step further. You have a Jewish rabbi willing to have a ministry to Samaritans. Take it a step further, you have the Messiah willing to have a ministry to the Samaritans. Take it a step further. You have the Son of God willing to have a ministry to the Samaritans. And they say, "No thanks. We don't want you here. We don't want your master here. We don't want your teacher here."

Why would they refuse Jesus? Well, it reflected the hostilities of the day without question. It reflected the religious divisions of the day. Our fathers say this mountain. You folks say Jerusalem.

But notice how Luke indicates the reason in verse 53.

"...because his face was set toward Jerusalem."¹⁵

Specifically it seems that they did not receive Jesus, because they viewed him and his men like the rest of the Jewish pilgrims who might make their way through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. And so just as a statement about their belief and their own way, the rightness of their own way, they would not receive such pilgrims.

Notice what we learn about the disciples from this, verse 54.

"And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?'"¹⁶

And notice that there are two bothered disciples identified, James and John. They are the spokesmen. These two guys must have had a fiery temperament, must have been excitable guys. In fact, Jesus is the one who gave them a special name. Mark 3:16 says:

¹⁴ Luke 9:52-53.

¹⁵ Luke 9:53.

¹⁶ Luke 9:54.

He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder).¹⁷

Jesus gives them the name sons of thunder. And they are incensed when the people of this village say Jesus can't come here.

What is interesting, though, is their request, isn't it?

“Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”¹⁸

Where did they ever get the idea that they had that ability? I mean, it wasn't even too long ago, if you remember, now they were with Jesus up on the mountain, but the disciples, the other disciples, the nine couldn't even cast out that demon from the boy. You remember that? So they lacked even the faith to do that. And now these men are saying, “How about fire from heaven?” I guess you could say this for them, though. They are asking Jesus to give them the Word. Lord, do you want us to do this? Which would mean they are depending upon Jesus for this, but it also means they totally misunderstood the spirit of their Lord. Is this what you want, Jesus?

Why this specific judgment? Where did they even get this idea? Fire from heaven. Well, I think they have something biblical in mind related to this region, related to Samaria. Look back at 2 Kings again. Look at chapter one.

After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.” But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus says the LORD, You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” So Elijah went. The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?” And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says the LORD, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” They answered him, “He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

¹⁷ Mark 3:16-17.

¹⁸ Luke 9:54.

Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’” But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, “O man of God, this is the king’s order, ‘Come down quickly!’” But Elijah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron—is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?—therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” So he died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken.¹⁹

The disciples, no doubt, know this. They are thinking about this. And so look back at Luke nine. I think what they are saying is, “Lord, why don’t we just demonstrate right now who you really are to these Samaritans. Maybe if one village is consumed by fire, the others will get the message.”

Remember what Elijah said about the man of God? Well, let’s make clear who you are, Lord. Do you want us to call down fire from heaven upon these Samaritans?

What would have motivated these words on the part of the disciples? Well, pride. You have this Jewish Samaritan rivalry and they are insulted because of the response of these Samaritans. They have gone ahead of the Lord. The rejection of Christ is also a rejection of them. So there is, no doubt, some pride involved here. Also there is misguided loyalty. Their Lord has been insulted. But chiefly there is a misunderstanding of their Savior.

The disciples are not wrong about the wrongness of the Samaritans. The Samaritans are wrong on this occasion. They are not wrong about the fact that one day Jesus is going to be the judge and judgment will fall upon unbelievers. They are not wrong about that. But they are wrong about the way the gospel is to be preached.

In this coming of Christ to the earth the gospel is not to be preached against the backdrop of the threat of immediate judgment. But, rather, as a message of God’s mercy and love

¹⁹ 2 Kings 1:1-17.

and grace, with the news that if you reject it there is impending judgment, future judgment.

So what does Christ do? Verse 55.

“But he turned and rebuked them.”²⁰

Perhaps he is walking at the head. They are behind. He hears the statement. He turns and he rebukes them. And they go on to another village. This focuses us on the mission of Jesus. It is a mission of mercy. It is a mission of salvation. He is on his way to Jerusalem so that sinners will be saved. And it is not just Jewish sinners who need the mercy of God, but so do the Samaritans, so do the Gentiles. The entire world does.

Now let me close this section tonight by asking us some questions that we should apply to our own situation. I know it is not an apples for apples comparison, but let me ask you this. Is there a history of hostility between a people who are pagan and a people who have truth in our world? That is, the lost world that we live in, is it hostile toward Christianity? Is it hostile toward Christ? Is it hostile toward the gospel? Is it hostile toward the truth? Is there at the same time a hostility sometimes expressed on the part of Christians toward the world? Or to say it another way, is our approach to evangelizing the world sometimes misrepresenting our Lord’s mission, that what we do in our spirit is we give the impression that we are angry with sinners, that what we are communicating is not the mercy of God and the love of God and the message of salvation in Christ to a world that is desperately in need of being saved, but rather we are communicating anger, personal anger towards sinners?

To say it yet another way, is there someone here tonight, are we that someone whom our Savior would rebuke because though we don't say the words, what we really want is for fire to fall from heaven and consume our adversaries? Lord, would you just do it now? Would you just make this unmistakable now? Would fire just fall from heaven this moment and make clear who your Son is and who we are as his representatives and what we have in our possession with the gospel message? Would you just consume them now?

If the Lord rebuked his disciples then, do you think he would rebuke us now if that is our Spirit? Would we have misunderstood the reason for our Savior’s coming into this world the first time if that is our message right now? And do we recognize something else? Do we recognize that we—every one of us—we were that hostile people? We were born into this world with a mind that is hostile toward God. We were by nature children deserving of the wrath of God.

If fire had fallen from heaven to consume all the Lord’s adversaries, we would have been consumed prior to our trusting in Christ, which is to say God has had mercy on us. God has had mercy upon us.

²⁰ Luke 9:55.

You know, I even think about the difference between a Sunday morning Easter Sunday attendance and Sunday evening. Does that ever strike anybody else? And what we do sometimes in our pride—and I am as guilty as anybody—what we do is we look at that and there is almost a sense of indignation about that. What is wrong with these people? And you forget, don't you, that, at least in my case, for the first 15 years of my life that was my family. That was us. Easter and Christmas and not always Christmas. Easter meant for us—I was telling Josh before the service—Easter meant for us new clothes. You had your Easter outfit. Don't you hate that word, guys? Outfit? That is what we got. We had an Easter outfit. And I can't remember a thing in those services. I can't remember a thing that was said on those Easter Sundays, because it wasn't really my interest at the time.

Why is it that I got to stand this morning on an Easter Sunday morning and proclaim the glories of my Savior? The only explanation is the mercy of God, the grace of God. How dare I say within my heart, “Lord, let your fire fall now and consume them.” But we do it, don't we? And when we do it, we are not embodying the attitude or the Spirit of those who understood Christ's mission well. It was Jesus. It was our Lord who said upon the cross, Luke 23:34:

“And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide his garments.”²¹

It was our Lord who said to us by saying this to his disciples in Matthew 5:44:

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”²²

And there is Stephen, martyred, Acts 7:59.

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.²³

I have said it to you before, Church, but I want to say it again tonight. I want you to remember something. This world is not—I am talking about the world of humanity, the world of people—this world is not our enemy. It is our mission field. Where they are is where we all once were. And the only reason we sit here tonight—if, indeed, you do sit here tonight someone who has been saved—is because of the grace and mercy of God. And therefore we should have in our hearts and in our spirits an attitude of mercy and grace and patience and love and hope for the salvation of those whom we meet who have yet to trust in Christ.

And it doesn't matter how blatant their sinning is. It doesn't matter to what degree at times they insult our Savior. What matters is our belief and our understanding that there

²¹ Luke 23:34.

²² Matthew 5:44.

²³ Acts 7:59-60.

is no sinner beyond the saving power of Christ so that we continue to display the love and grace and mercy of Christ and tell this world that he is being patient with them. He is coming again and when he comes there will be judgment. But now is this opportunity to be saved.

As Josh mentioned tonight when he was singing, either the wrath of God, the curse would be borne by us or we will trust in Christ and discover that it was borne by him so that we have been forgiven.

Is there someone here tonight that you have yet to trust in Christ? Will you trust in him today? Will you be saved today? And then for every child of God in this place, will you look at our Lord's words to his men and let it instruct you? This world is your mission field. Let us go forth boldly, faithfully, mercifully with the good news of Jesus that says to this world, "You can be forgiven. You can have life, everlasting and free. And it is found in Christ alone."

And the church would say amen.

Let's pray.

Lord, thank you for your mercy to us in Christ. Thank you that we are forgiven ones. Thank you, Lord, that we are rescued ones and delivered ones. Thank you that though it is beyond our imagination or comprehension we have been called your children and truly we are because of what you have done for us in Jesus. Lord, wherever we have carried in our hearts a spirit that desires condemnation instead of salvation, change that in us, Lord. There is within us, Lord, on some level a desire for your kingdom to come and your will to be done on this earth as it is in heaven. And in that sense we long for your judgment to come, but until that day, Lord, help us to be people full of mercy toward this world declaring the good news of salvation in Christ to love even our enemies, to be patient with those who do not know what they are doing. Teach us this lesson we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.