

# The Gospel of Our Salvation

By Jeff Noblit

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## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)

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Turn with me to Isaiah chapter 55 this morning. I want to close the conference with a message on the gospel of our salvation. There is probably not a more gospel rich chapter in the word of God than Isaiah chapter 55. Isaiah 55, beginning in verse 1,

"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David. Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, A leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, And a nation which knows you not will run to you, Because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you. Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, And instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, And it will be a memorial to the LORD, For an everlasting sign which will not be cut off.

Israel is enslaved in pagan, Babylonian captivity. That's a picture of our lostness and our enslavement to Satan and his kingdom and to our own fallen flesh. And the prophet writes these words that have two understandings. When you're interpreting an Old Testament Messianic prophecy, you've got to understand that first that text must have meaning to the original people it was written to but also when you begin to look at the text you begin to realize it has that immediate fulfillment for Israel in that day but it has a greater fulfillment in Christ and in his gospel and in the coming age. Both are true and we will see this in this text.

Now, he's talking about saving them from captivity which is a parallel for us being saved out of our captivity by the gospel. Let's look at it, I. Some qualifications for salvation. Now, he gives three, he tells them, if you're going to be qualified for God to save you: 1. you must be thirsty. Number 2, you must be weary. Number 3, you must be broke. Look what he says there first of all, being thirsty in verse 1, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost." It mentions three things here: water, milk and wine. Now, water can quench the thirst but it can't nourish your soul. I mean, you're not going to live on water alone. So he says, "Look, I not only have what will quench your thirst, I have what will give you nourishment for your physical and the highest and best understanding, your spiritual soul." And then he says, "I've got wine too which brings joy to your soul." So he says, "First of all, are you thirsty? Are you thirsty?" Do you understand this morning, friend, that you cannot be saved if you're not first, thirsty? I mean, if you've been drinking the swill of Babylon and you're basically comfortable and you're pretty much satisfied and you long for no more, you are not qualified for salvation. Are you thirsty? Is there something in you that says, "I need more. I am desperate. I have a parched soul. I've got to have more than what Babylon can give me." My question to you today, unsaved man or even saved child of God, Are you thirsty? Is there a longing in your soul for more? Be done with the counterfeit conversion of just gently and casually adding Jesus on to the life you're basically comfortable with. That is not salvation. Salvation is when Babylon has run it's course and you're not satisfied and you're thirsty.

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacle, the Jews had a custom, the priest would take water from the pool of Siloam and they would pour that water out there by the altar in the temple while everybody was gathered around and it had two basic meanings: first of all, it was a sacrifice asking God to bring adequate water for their crops for that year but secondly, it spoke of the waters of salvation. It spoke of the coming Messianic kingdom when the Savior would come and bring his forgiveness and his pardon to their souls. Well, here in our Lord's earthly ministry, he was present in the temple on the last day of the Feasts of Tabernacles and it was the custom of the day that when you were present and you were teaching you remained seated but Jesus did something extraordinary, he stood up. And while the priest was pouring out that water something was churning in the heart of our Lord and he cried out to them as recorded in John 7:31, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink." That's good news. "You've been washed in this water from the pool of Siloam, don't you know that pointed to me? If this is enough for you it's a dead ritual, if the old economy of Judaism satisfies you, so be it but if you're really

thirsty, drink of me." He continued, "He who believes in me," as the Scripture said, "from his inmost being will flow rivers of living water." Are you thirsty? Are you thirsty? You know how you build a strong church, you know how you build a faithful church, you know how you build a church where people don't get hung up on all these legalistic, excessive and idolatries and little groups that are into this and little groups that are into that and they're causing trouble, they're factioning off? How do you get them a mature body that sticks together and doesn't separate and doesn't get carried away by the things that really don't matter at all and stay gospel centered? I'll tell you how: they have to stay thirsty. They have to say, "It's not enough to get a good shake. It's not enough to have a fine home. It's not enough to see my kids doing good. I need God. I'm thirsty." That's why some of you keep coming to Grace Life Shoals, because sometimes, I know its hard to believe, but you get aggravated at me but you're thirsty, you're thirsty. You know, if I'm dying of thirst and I'm really thirsty I can put up with a whole lot of things about the guy who gives me the cup of water. Just give me the water? Amen. We don't need satisfied Christians. We don't need satisfied church members. We need church members that long for God's water, that are thirsty.

Well, you qualify for God to save you if you're thirsty. Secondly, the prophet said, "You have to also be weary." These are first cousins but they are separate. He says here in verse 2, "Why do you spend money for what is not bread?" Figurative language, talking to the Jews there in Babylon, they're spending their money, their resources, their energies, their emotions, their intellect, their being, bowing down before the pagan idols of Babylon, they've blended in with the culture. I guess they were becoming culturally relevant to win the Babylonians. And so, they're spending themselves. Here's what he says, "And why do you spend your wages," verse 2 now, "for what does not satisfy." In other words, "Okay, you've given yourself to these things, you've bought in, you've gone along with the crowd, you've done what outwardly brings success, you've bought in to all the stuff that Babylon can offer. But let me ask you something." the prophet says, "Are you satisfied? Are you satisfied?"

I didn't have a whole lot growing up but I remember, I told you this story, I remember when Pam and I built our first house partly because the brother in our church helped us get it pretty cheap and I just thought that was the most amazing thing in the world. I had my own house. We'd never had a house. I mean, when I started working here you paid me fifty dollars a week, you wanted to be real generous and excessive in my salary in those days. And it's hard to build a house on fifty dollars a week but God blessed and I got some pay raises and I built that house and I remember as clearly as I'm standing here today, going out in the front yard of that house and looking at that house and it was everything that Pam and I could ever dream of having and looking at it I said, "Do something for me." In other words, "Is this it?" Okay, you got a house, is that it? You finally got your car, is that it? You get married, you got the wife of your dreams, is this it? Amen. You get this man and he's the husband you wanted, you thought you wanted and you think one day laying in bed at night, "Is this it?" You made your first million, praise God. I want to tell you what, make another million for the glory of God. But you might look at that million in the bank or that million in land or investments and say, "Is this it?" Here's what I hope, I hope, I hope, I hope you're weary when you focus too long

on those things. A hope you're weary when your hope gets diverted over to those things too much. I hope you're weary when those things become too much your treasure because that's a good sign you belong to God. And until you get weary of the things you have and weary of what this life offers and more foundational to the gospel, when you are weary of what you are, when you see your sin and you know how offensive you are to a beautiful and perfectly and just God, when you see how glaringly you are the antithesis of his perfect and holy nature, you see how fully and rightfully you deserve his eternal wrath and judgment, and you grow weary of that, let me ask you, I don't want to know that you pray a prayer, I don't want to know how many aisles you walked down, or Baptists streets you've been through, have you ever been weary of yourself? Why do you spend money on what does not satisfy? Are you weary?

I read about a man who was a counterfeiter, the police arrested him and took him in but he was very smart, he was very clever he had all of his things destroyed and the chemicals destroyed that he used in his counterfeiting operation but with the new science, investigators made him take off his clothes and they scientifically examined and they found penetrating almost every part of his clothing microscopic particles of the chemical only used in counterfeiting money. He was covered in guilt. And my friend, that's the way God sees you. From head to toe, you may clean up good, you may walk an outwardly righteous life, you may dot the i's and cross the t's and the church thinks, "Wow, he's sold out." And the whole time you're full of yourself and full of pride and God sees you from head to toe covered in guilt. And until you see that and you say, "Oh God, I'm weary of me." What bothers you the most? What someone else isn't doing something just right or you? Or you? You are not healthy. Until you understand when you look in the mirror you're the greatest wretch you've ever known. That's the man who qualifies for salvation. "I'm weary of me. I'm sick of me. I'm tired of me." I'm telling you I have had times in my spiritual pilgrimage where God answered my prayer and let me see myself to a degree not fully, none of us get to see that and good thing we couldn't handle it, but to a degree I got to see some of my own heart and I'm telling you it was frightening. Frightening! Are you thirsty? Are you weary? If that seed is working in you, you qualify for salvation.

But there is another one, he says you have to be broke. You need to be broke. Look at verse 1, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat." Come buy wine and milk, the water for your thirst, milk for your nourishment, wine for joy. I've got it all. "Without money and without cost." What a statement. "Without money and without cost." In other words, you can't buy your way to God and you can't buy your way to heaven. You can bring all your money of religion and it won't buy you salvation. You can bring all your money of morality, "God, I've cleaned up my life. I've straightened things up. I'm doing better." That will not buy you salvation. You can bring all the money of your good works. "Well, I'm helping with this and I'm helping disadvantaged children. I'm working down at the nursing home and I'm going to do this good thing." Bring all of that money and it will not buy you salvation. All the money of good intentions and new resolutions and new commitments of better living will not buy you salvation.

I wonder, why would God say buy but he says, "You buy with no money." Well, first of all the gift of salvation is beyond price. It is indeed priceless. Secondly, the one who gives salvation has no need of you nor anything you can bring. Why, you're going to present something to God of any value? Thirdly, the gift he offers has already been bought and paid for with his own blood. There is nothing left to pay. But fourthly, he comes saying, "With no money and no cost you can buy this water, this milk and this wine of salvation." Because he wants you to be convinced that salvation is available to you, without money and without cost. You come to Christ totally, wretchedly bankrupt. "I bring nothing but my sin. I bring nothing but my depravity. I bring nothing but my wretchedness. I bring nothing but my lostness. I bring nothing but my stubborn stinking pride and ugliness and self-centeredness and self-consumed heart. That's all I can bring." And God said, "That's enough. If you come like that I've got all you need." Those are the qualifications for salvation if you'll come that way.

Now, he promises something amazing here. He's writing to Jews, you have to understand, and he wants to encourage them and he gives them this in verse 3, look at it, "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live," and here's what he said I'll do, "And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David." Now, they knew well the story of David. They knew exactly what that meant. They knew how the prophet went to David's household, the household of Jesse one day, and the prophet told Jesse, "Jesse one of your sons will be the next king of Israel." And Jesse was just thrilled so he lined up all of his handsome, strapping, strong, impressive boys and he had those impressive sons to walk in front of the prophet and one by one the prophet looked at those boys and said, "That's not the one and that's not the one." And as they all came by the prophet said, "Jesse do you have anymore sons?" He said, "Well I got one little runt boy we don't think much will ever come of him. He just keeps the sheep." "Well, bring him in," it was David. And when the prophet saw David he anointed him king of Israel. And God promised David, "I'm going to make you king, not just a king but the mightiest king. I'm going to give you a kingdom and I'm going to make you a dynasty. The greatest king of all Israel." So they knew what that meant, that God can take you in the lowest, most wretched and weak state and give you infinite blessings and glory. He says, "If you're thirsty. If you're weary. And if you're broke, if you come to me, I'll bless you like I did David. I'm not giving you a kingdom but in type and in likeness as I did David."

Well, let's next notice some characteristics of salvation here. Let's notice that there, beginning in verse 6, I believe it is, the first characteristic that he points out to us is there must be a timely response. There must be a timely response. "Seek the Lord," verse 6 "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near." You see God is not always equally accessible. If you have been told by a witness or a preacher or an evangelist that at any time that you want if you would just pray this prayer you know you're saved and then go to heaven, that is a lie. You must seek the Lord when he is dealing with your heart and he is creating a thirst. You must seek the Lord when he is dealing with your heart and he is creating a hunger and a weariness over what you are. You must seek the Lord and turn to the Lord when he's showing you that you have nothing to offer but everything is free. "Seek the Lord when he may be found." The Bible

says in the New Testament, "At the acceptable time, I listened to you and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation.

Listen to me, the gospel message is not "listen and contemplate." The gospel message is not "listen and think on it." The gospel message is not "listen and pray about it." The gospel message is "listen and believe." Did you hear me? I command you by the authority of God and the one who is to judge the living and the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ today to turn to Christ. This idea that there is some sort of introspective analysis is not of God. You hear and believe. You hear and turn. You listen and look. Now is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation. There has to be a timely response. You cannot come to God when you want to. Now listen, there are better preachers, that's not false humility, I know there are better preachers than Jeff Noblit. There are better bible teachers than Jeff Noblit but you will not have one tiny excuse before the judgment of God if you go to hell under this pulpit. I have told you the truth of Christ. I have urged you to turn to Christ and its nothing but your hardened personal decision to push him away that keeps you from salvation.

A timely response. Secondly, true repentance. True repentance. What a picture of repentance we have in verse 7, he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts." Now we know that those actually occur in reverse order. Your thoughts have to change, in other words, what you think is important begins to change and Christ becomes important. What you think is the valuable thing to look to. You let that go and you put your thoughts on Christ. Many of you think if I can do these things, or if I can clean up these things, or I'll organize my life this way. That's your thinking, you have to put that aside, change your thought and say, "It's Christ. I look to Christ. I used to love sin, now I'm beginning to abhor sin. I changed my thinking. I used to have a purpose and a pattern to find delights in sin but now that's changing and I want to find delights in Christ." It does not mean you stop sinning but it means your thoughts on sinning have changed. You change your thoughts which will have a corresponding change in your life. Look, the fruit of the change is not repentance but the repentance that happens in the heart and mind always has fruit. And that's what he points out here, look at it here in verse 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way." Now he's talking about the fact that as a known openly professed lifestyle, many of the Jews in this captivity have become practicing Babylonians pagans. Openly as their professed lifestyle, they were embracing the idols, the values, the principles of being a God-denying Babylonian and there is no way in heaven that a genuine turning to God's promised salvation for them would not also include a turning away from that purposeful lifestyle of honoring Babylon and Babylon's god's. Have you ever had a real turning? Not saying sinless perfection. I'm saying has there been a turning? I can tell you in Jeff Noblit's heart, by the grace of God, at nineteen years of age, driving my car back to Middle Tennessee State University listening to a Presbyterian preacher on the radio, my purpose and intent changed. I did not stop sinning, but there was a new direction and a new devotion and a new viewpoint in my life. Genuine or true repentance is essential.

I read about a man who was a first degree murderer. He spent many, many years in the penitentiary. His brother had risen high in society and became a personal friend of the governor and had done a lot of favors for the governor and as the governor's term expired, as it is the custom in our states, he hands out pardons and this brother secured a pardon for his brother who was in the penitentiary. He put the papers in his pocket and he went to make a visit to his brother in prison and they sat down together and he looked at his brother there in prison and said, "What would you do if you were to suddenly get released?" "I tell you what I'd do, I'd find the judge that put me in here and I'd kill him. Then this next thing I'd do, I'd find the chief witness who testified against me and I'd kill her." The brother said, "Okay." Shook his hand, walked out the door and never told him he had the pardon there in his pocket because he wasn't repentant. He hadn't changed and that's the way it is with God, the pardon is available, its ready to be administered to you but there has to be a thirsting for more than what this life has given you and more than what your sin is rewarding you with. There has to be a weariness over who you are before a holy God and over what this world can offer you. There has to be an acknowledgment that you are completely broken and can offer nothing for your salvation. And there has to be that heart that says, "I want to embrace Christ but I want to turn from my sin. I no longer want to treasure it, enjoy it or make it my purpose any longer." When there is that kind of change pardon is yours. What does he say there? Look at the flow of the context, verse 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." It's like the writer can't use enough superlatives to show the glory of this. God doesn't just want to pardon, he wants to abundantly pardon. If you turn to him, he has that kind of compassion.

Now, these next couple of verse are, I wouldn't say radically misused but we miss the context of them. People quote them all the time and they miss the emphasis that the prophet wanted them to have. Now, let's look at it there in verse 8, here they are, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." Now, what he's basically saying, "You think one way about things, matter of fact, you think of forgiveness in a certain way. You think of forgiveness as if a person is worthy of it, if they have earned it, if they've touched your heart then you might offer forgiveness." He says, "Look, your thoughts are not my thoughts. Your ways are not my ways. Don't bring my forgiveness as God down to your level of understanding of forgiveness. Don't bring the high and infinitely holy and glorious concepts of compassion that I have on unworthy sinners down to the way you're compassionate to those who wrong you." Amen. That's what he's saying.

Now, look at it as he continues on, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word." Now what does he mean by "my word"? Now, yes it would have application to all the truth of God but in this context, what word is he talking about? The word of compassion. The word of pardon. The word of forgiveness. God says, "When I decide to pardon an unworthy sinner, nothing in hell and nothing on earth will stop me from rendering that

compassion and that pardon.” That’s an awesome thing. “So will my word,” verse 11, “be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire,” in other words, without completing the work of showing a godly and God-sized compassion to sinners. Wow. No wonder the songwriter said, “Hallelujah, what a Savior.” The entire might of the omnipotent Godhead is behind God’s purpose to pardon you, dear sinner. Man that’s a great salvation. Wow. I’m so saved. Its glorious beyond fault. The entire omnipotence of the Triune God is dedicated to my pardon.

What is salvation? Well, characteristics: a timely response through repentance. The last one is some glories of salvation. He concludes with wanting to encourage these enslaved, captive Jews about what he has for them in the future. Now, I think there are three understandings of this prophecy. Now, if this doesn’t fit your eschatology then you keep studying the Bible and you’ll come to it eventually. I think it means they’re going to soon experience deliverance, I mean these particular Jews, and go back to the Promised Land. I believe it has an application to the millennial kingdom when the Jews naturally will repent and turn to Christ and be a kingdom under Christ and his reign on earth. But I think finally it has application to all the elect of God and the day when we will be gathered with him as he will come and remove the curse from planet earth and his kingdom will reign on earth and he will gather his elect from all the four corners of the earth unto himself.

Well, let’s look at it together. Notice first of all, there is a future, it’s a future transformation. He says in verse 12, "For you will go out with joy," he didn’t say it’s not today but you will go out with joy. It’s coming. Now, right now if you’re a child of God there is the seeds of that joy in your heart right now and it ebbs and it flows a little bit, doesn’t it? Amen. Right now there’s the seed of the peace of God in your heart and if you’ll stay under sound doctrine and Bible preaching and have your quiet time, you’ll have more of that peace. Amen. You’ve got to fight the flesh. You’re not glorified yet. Quit being lazy! Persevere for the joy! Persevere and fight for the peace. We get seeds of that now. But the day is coming in the future when God’s going to glorify you and you’ll be swimming in that joy. You’ll be swallowed up in that peace and it’ll never leave, it will never fail and it will never falter. What you have right now with the Spirit of God living in you as a down payment, as an earnest, is going to be yours in the full in that future transformation. What did the Apostle John say in 1 John 3:2, “Beloved, we are now children of God.” "Well, I don’t feel like it all the time." No, because you just got the down payment right now. You walk with God better, you’ll feel more of it. Just got the down payment right now. We are children of God and it has not yet appeared as yet what we shall be but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him just as he is. It’s a future transformation.

Secondly, I don’t want to be a slave to alliteration but I think it just fits well, it’s a fabulous transformation. It’s fabulous beyond thought. It’s fabulous beyond compare. Notice how he words it there in verse 12, he says, “The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.” That’s pretty fabulous stuff right there. The whole created order is going to change on that day. In verse 13, “Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, And instead of

the nettle the myrtle will come up.” Well, what does that mean? Well, myrtles and cypress were prized and profitable and good trees of foliage or vegetation to have on your farm. But they had abandoned the Promised Land. They sinned their way out of the Promised Land; they sold out to wickedness and God took them into pagan captivity. And so, they thought that, "When we're released and go back, you know what were going to find? We're going to find briars and nettles. It's just going to be a wasteland." Because that's what they deserved. You deserve a wasteland. You deserve, I mean if God let's you into heaven and let's you sit in your filth, that's more than you deserve. That's what we deserve, is a wasteland. That's what we've earned. But God says to the Jews, "Guess what? When you get back to the Promised Land, I've been doing some cultivation for you ahead of time. I'm going to give you beauty for ashes." Grace upon grace. Amen. And its going to be a prosperous, rich, fertile, lush land with all the finest woods and the finest vegetation you need for your provisions and your own nourishment.

What a picture. This is fabulous. Let me reference back to Romans 8:19, as we're talking about how the creation is going to be transformed. Listen to Romans 8:19 through 22, "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God." He personifies nature and he says, "Nature itself, the grass, the hills, the trees, the vegetation is groaning, waiting for the day when God glorifies his elect church." Because they know when God does it for them, we're next. He continues on, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free." That's what this is pointing to. "Will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." The apostle writes that he wants you to think of creation in the terms of a woman very pregnant and just about to give birth. Hey, by the way that's a miracle. When a lady gives birth it is a fabulous thing that this new life comes forth. And he says, "Child of God if you're thirsty, if you're weary, if you're broke, if you'll turn in a timely fashion when the Spirit of God moves on your heart and it's a genuine turning with repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, there is a promised coming day of fabulous transformation coming for you when you'll be clothed with the righteousness of Christ and all of creation is going to be radically transformed."

Now, the scholars look at this text and they are all over the place. Many say this is figurative language, perhaps, perhaps its figurative but why does it have to be? This isn't original with me but it fits with what I think we ought to picture in our minds here that he says, "Now when this glorified time comes, the hills and the mountains are going to shout for joy before you." Have you ever been told that the totality of everything is for Jesus and his church? And when Jesus collects his church on earth and those unbelievers are banished away he says, "The mountains are going to shout for joy." Just in our minds eye, could we not think over there in Asia, in the Himalayan Mountains, they'll break forth singing "All hail the power of Jesus' name. Let angels prostrate fall." In South America, the Andes Mountains begin to sing, "All that thrills my soul is Jesus." In Europe, the Pyrenees Mountains begin to sing, "Praise him, praise him, Jesus, my blessed redeemer." Hey, he's redeeming the earth too, by the way. The Alps over in Europe sing, "Come thou Almighty King." The Rocky Mountains out west, they can't be left out, they

start singing, "Redeemed by the blood of the lamb." Down south the Smokey Mountains sing, "Some glad morning when this life is o'er I'll fly away." Why not? I think it is beyond comprehension. When God comes and the longing, groaning, waiting creation under the curse for our sins is finally released from that curse and the mountains can't help but cry their praise to their God as he comes and makes everything right on planet earth. And then it says, "And the trees of the field will clapping their hands. The pine tree will lean over to the oak tree and clap their hands. The poplar tree will lean over to the maple tree and clap their hands." Can you see this happening all over the earth? The trees are thinking, "Here he comes. Jesus is coming, glory is coming, the saints of God are going to be revealed. Of course he's coming." The little dogwood tree leans over to the little cedar tree and claps their hands and like a preacher, I heard him say one time, "I guess the weeping willow was just go pfft." I don't think you can just say that is only figurative. Creation is waiting and groaning to be released. It's a fabulous transformation and we will have the glory and the righteousness of our dear Savior Jesus Christ. As you've heard preached this very week and I've said it many times before, you will not reclaim the glory of Adam and Eve. You will not reclaim the righteousness of Adam and Eve. Ours is the greater glory. Ours is the greater righteousness. It's the righteousness of the Son, Jesus Christ. It's a fabulous transformation. The mountains can't help but sing about it and all the trees can't help but clap their hands about it. It's a final transformation.

It's been a lot of ages and a lot of dispensations, one would begin and it would end and another begins and it ends and another begins and it ends and another begins and it ends and then this one begins, no end. Look what it says in the text, last phrase, last two phrases, verse 13, "And it will be a memorial to the Lord." What will be a memorial to the Lord? Your glorification and the curse lifted off of creation. It will be a testimony that will shout for eternity, "Look what Jesus just did!" All the false prophets, all the idols, all the gods of men, all the things men put before them in their carnal lust. What have they performed? Well, look what Jesus has done. And it will be a memorial for the Lord, look at the last phrase, "for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off." Forever and ever and ever and ever. Ephesians 3:21, "To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." Listen to me, the centerpiece of God's heart and God's work is the local church. The centerpiece of God's glory for time and eternity is the local church. The glory of God is everything. God is most glorified in his church. God's church most glorifies him when it's a true church, a church striving to be biblically healthy but for the church to be true and biblically healthy it will require revival and reformation and that's why I live. That's why I'm here. That's why I breathe and that's why I get up in the morning and you should too.

Yes, we love our wives, yes, we go to ballgames, those things are not wrong but back of all of that is my desire that my God get his glory in his church. That's why we have a True Church Conference. That's why there's Anchored in Truth Ministries, that the church might be healthy and experience the revival and reformation she needs to bring him the glory he ought to get both for time and then when he comes and performs the ultimate glorification for all eternity. I don't know about you, but I like to go to the ocean. You know why I like to go to the ocean? Well, there are a number of reasons, because

there is seafood there, but it's just kind of awesome to stand beside something much greater than yourself. I remember taking my kids to the Grand Canyon and standing over there on the edge and thinking, "Oh my goodness, I feel like I'm being swallowed up by something far greater than Jeff Noblit." Now God offers to you, I'm offering you in grace to get in on something far greater than building a Fortune 500 company or having the next best ski boat or whatever it is, not that those are wrong in themselves but I offer you the chance to get in on something far greater than yourself and lasts for all eternity and brings honor to the one you treasure the most, the Lord Jesus Christ. And all of God's people said, Amen.

Let's pray together.