

Good morning. Wonderful to see you all. What a blessing to be here this morning. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Psalm 73. Psalm 73. For those of you at Grace Covenant Church, we are making our way through some of the Psalms, not all of them. I told the church that I'm getting ready to turn 60 and I wanna preach other books of the Bible besides the Psalms. So there's 150 of those. So Lord willing, he will allow me to do some of the Psalms and then some other books as well. I'm going to... that right there. Perfect. All right. We are in Psalm 73 this morning. It is a blessing to be here. See a lot of faces that I recognize from Grace Covenant and some that I don't. And so it's good to see you all. I know that some of our folks tried to get here this morning and could not because of the flooding. So pray for them to stay safe. I think they were all turning around and going back home. But yeah, the Lord is good and he is worthy to be praised. Amen. I'm going to ask you if you will stand for the reading of God's word. We're going to read through Psalm 73, all 28 verses. We're told it is a Psalm of Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped, for I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death. Their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are. They are not stricken like the rest of mankind. Therefore, pride is their necklace. Violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes swell out through fatness. Their hearts overflow with follies. They scoff and speak with malice. Loftily, they threaten oppression. They set their mouths against the heavens and their tongue struts through the earth. Therefore, his people turn back to them and find no fault in them. And they say, how can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the wicked, always at ease. They increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocent. For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. If I had said, I will speak thus, I would have betrayed the generation of your children. But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I discerned their end. Truly, you set them in slippery places. You make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors. Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast towards you. Nevertheless, I am continually with you. You hold my right hand, you guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish. You put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works. Let's pray. Father, again, what a blessing it is to be here this morning. Father, I just pray that

through the preaching of your word that your people, your church will be edified. Lord, would you encourage us, would you convict us, would you draw us closer to yourself? Lord, would you open our eyes to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ? And Father, may we see how glorious, how beautiful he is this morning. Lord, I pray that the meditations of my heart, the words of my mouth be pleasing in your sight. Oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer. I pray it in the name of Jesus this morning, amen. Amen, you may be seated. Well, as you see, this is a lengthy psalm. So we're gonna take it in some chunks and hopefully by the end of it, we'll at least have a good idea of what this psalm is speaking to us about. So I'm in Marshfield, Missouri. I'm guessing there are a few country music fans. If you're willing to admit that, go ahead and raise your hand. I can't. So I'm not going, OK, well, there's a few, yeah. Some of you are just not willing to admit it. I think country music is liked. I'm trying to figure out why it's liked, actually. No. Country music, I think, is liked because it tells a story. As you know, oftentimes those stories are not really happy stories, are they? They're usually pretty sad. They're usually heartache and lots of suffering and difficulty. Psalm 73 tells a story. And it's a story of struggle. It's a story of doubt. But then it's also a story of figuring things out. It's a story of a crisis of faith and then a renewing of that faith at the end. But it is a struggle. It's a struggle of faith in a God who seemingly allows the wicked to prosper while the righteous are afflicted. And that is not an uncommon complaint. And it's probably, in our eyes, I think it's not an unreasonable complaint either. For the human mind, it's very easy to doubt and become perplexed about life and about the things that we see going on around us. And the question is, if God is good, and God is in complete control, then why are things so messed up? Things are not fair, are they? They're not equal. There is a lot of good in the world, but there is a lot of terrible as well. And it seems like, and maybe it's just because I'm getting older, but it seems like just maybe over the past two or three decades, our world is just kind of, it's just turned upside down. What used to be right is now wrong, and what was wrong is now right. What is good and what is righteous is despised. What is perverse and what is wicked is celebrated. And we seem to do pretty well when those things are kind of out there until difficulties come home. Until those difficulties hit us, then the messed up world becomes our messed up world. That is when our faith is tested the most. That is the story of Psalm 73. One of the authors I was reading about it said this in his quote, he said, Psalm 73 is a Psalm of disorientation and reorientation, end quote. And he said that because it's a poem that expresses the Psalmist's doubts and his fears and his uncertainties all in regard to God's justice in the world. And then it moves from that doubt and it moves into this renewed understanding of God and then a reorientation and a revival of praise to God. Well, we start out, we see that it's a psalm of Asaph. We have not looked at a psalm of Asaph yet. We did look at a psalm of the sons of Korah, and we explained that those were leaders in worship, and the same was with

Asaph. You can see in 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles how he is used in the worship setting. Well, I want us to go through this psalm here this morning, all 28 verses. We're not gonna, again, take them verse by verse, but just kind of in chunks. and get a good idea. And really, as I talk about this as a story, there's kind of chapters to this story. Chapter one being in verses one through five, we see a crisis of faith. A crisis of faith. The psalmist starts out with this declaration of God's goodness. Truly God is good to Israel. to those who are pure in heart. And if you look at the very last verse, verse 28, there's a similar type of statement where he connects God to those who are pure in heart. with being good. Starts out that way and he ends that way. But for me, it is good to be near God. Here's these two bookends of this Psalm that show us that everything that is packed in between centers on and it starts with and it ends with the goodness of God. And when it comes to faith, and when it comes to crises of faith, many times it is about that particular subject. Oh, I believe in God, but is he good? Is he being good to me maybe is actually maybe more the statement or the question. And it's one thing to know this intellectually, right? Yes, God is good, we sing that, we say that, we know it to be true, yet at the same time, we can know that in our minds, but because of the circumstances that we're in, or the events of our lives, we can have doubts about His goodness. And that is what I'm calling this morning, this crisis of faith. I've actually titled the message this morning, When Our Faith Fails. And I just wanna give a little explanation on that because I don't believe that faith can fail entirely. I believe that faith, if it's true faith, will last forever as long as God needs it to last, I'll put it that way. But there are times when our faith weakens. There are times when our faith gets pretty dim. There are times that we can say, well, I can remember at this time I had great faith and maybe right now it's, I'm just struggling in my faith. And so that's what I mean when I say when our faith fails, and God knows that our faith is prone to fail. He knows it. We'll look at next week in Psalm 103. He knows our frame. He knows we are but dust. And so continually, over and over and over, throughout the word of God, he gives us reasons to trust him. He gives us reasons for our faith to grow. And he says, trust me, trust me, trust me. That is all throughout the word of God. But the psalmist Asaph here, he knows in his mind, but he's very honest in verse two. He says, but as for me, my feet had almost stumbled. My steps had nearly slipped. He finds himself at a slippery spot where his, when it comes to his trust in God and his complete goodness, he finds himself slipping back. And why? Because he's looking around him. and he sees the prosperity of the wicked. Verse three, I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. That's just two ways of kind of saying the same thing. The arrogant there are the wicked, for they have no pangs until death. Their bodies are fat and sleek. They're not in trouble as others are. They're not stricken like the rest of mankind. So here's the issue, here's the question in Asaph's mind, is God, if your standard is righteousness, and it is, and you say in your word that you bless

those who seek after righteousness and you curse those who reject it, why is it that I see all these people who are rejecting you and they seem to be doing just fine? In fact, not only just fine, they're living a lot better lives than those of us who say we believe in you. I mean, it's a fair question, isn't it? In his eyes, those who reject God are living the blessed life, and those who embrace the Lord always seem to struggle, and he finds himself being envious of these people. Have you ever been there? Have you ever had those kinds of doubts and those kind of looking at others and saying, well, something's wrong with this picture, and man, I kind of wish I had their life. And maybe it's not in this situation. Maybe it's something else that has caused your faith to weaken and to question God's goodness. It doesn't have to be just seeing the prosperity of the wicked. If that is the case, I want you to hang on this morning for the rest of the story, because there is a way for our crisis of faith to be turned around. We're gonna start seeing it here in just a minute. Look with me at verses six through nine, which is really chapter number two in our story. The way of the wicked, the way of the wicked. Now he begins to expound here on those that are seeming to be prosperous. He begins to describe how the wicked respond to God's graces in their lives. You know, the wicked are receiving God's graces as well. They have food, they have water, they have clothing, they have shelter, they have families. Many of them love their families, they have jobs. But look what he says, how do they respond? Their pride is their necklace. Violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes swell out through fatness. That's talking about indulgence there. Their hearts overflow with follies. All they want to do is just play, play, play, play, play. They scoff and speak with malice. Loftily, they threaten opposition. They set their mouths against the heavens and their tongue struts through the earth. They're allowed these blessings. They're allowed prosperity in the here and now, but they don't respond in faith. They don't respond with gratitude or the humility. Here's how they respond. I'm going to pull out some words here from this passage. They respond with pride. They respond with violence, fatness, follies of the heart, scoffing and malicious words, oppression. Verse nine, there's no reverence toward God. There's no fear of God. There's an arrogance both toward heaven and toward people on this earth. And many critics of the Bible say that the Bible is not relevant for today. I think it is. The wicked are the same way. I find it interesting that the first indication of wickedness here is pride. Do you see that? Pride. Wickedness and pride always go hand in hand. They're inseparable. In fact, it says that pride is worn like a necklace. In other words, it's to be displayed. Hey, look at me. Look at my pride. I'm going to flaunt my sin and my pride. And here we find ourselves in June 2024. Why do I mention the month of June? Because some people have decided and deemed it appropriate to celebrate sin, celebrate perversion and ungodliness, and then call it Pride Month. They're doing a pretty good job at that, aren't they, calling it Pride Month? Because pride and wickedness go hand in hand. Here's what the Lord of hosts says

about pride. Proverbs 8.13, the fear of the Lord is hatred of evil, pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. That's pretty clear, isn't it? Psalm 31.23, love the Lord all you his saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. Isaiah 2.17, and the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. Verse 12 of the same chapter, for the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up, and it shall be brought low. We're gonna see in this Psalm that God will deal with the boasting of the wicked. Let them boast in their sin. Let them voice their pride. Let them have their pride fests. Let them have their parades. God Almighty will deal with them in judgment. Let them speak of their sin, but church, let us boast even louder of the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness. Galatians 6.14, far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. 1 Corinthians 1, beginning in verse 28, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. Jeremiah 9, thus says the Lord, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me. that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord. Church, let us be a louder voice than the wicked. Let our voice ring out and let our praises ring louder than the arrogant boasts of the proud. Let our celebration of the Savior drown out all of the voices of this world. Let's move on. Beginning in verse 10, we see that there is a perceived injustice with God. And I want you to hear that word perceived because there is no injustice with God, but there is a perceived injustice Starts with verse 10, and you may have a different reading than mine. It says, therefore his people turn back to them and find no fault in them. Yours may say something like crazy different. And the reason is the Hebrew is very difficult to hear, it's hard to understand, and the ESV has tried to say, okay, we know what it literally says, but what is it trying to get across? It literally speaks of a full cup of water being drained by them. and the pronoun there, therefore his people, it could be their people, it could be a little h, his, it could be a capital H, God's people, they're just not sure. But we know the context makes it clear that what's being said, if we can't figure out the exact words, what we know the context is saying is that there are people who look at the wicked they look at their lifestyle, they look at what's going on, their ease, their financial success, we see that in verse 12, they're always at ease, they increase in riches, and they envy them, and they wanna follow them, and they wanna join them in their ignorance toward

God. Look at verse 11, and here's what they say, how can God know is their knowledge in the most high? And all the while, The psalmist maintains his own integrity before God. Yet he realizes that kind of devotion, that kind of faithfulness, doesn't seem to be paying off. Verse 13, all in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. Now we know he's not innocent. We know that his heart is not completely clean, but he's striving for the Lord. That's what he's trying to get across there. Verse 14, even though that's happening, for all the day long, I've been stricken and rebuked every morning. And so at the heart of this complaint is this indictment of injustice. This is not fair. How many of you have had those kind of thoughts before? Man, this just isn't fair. Life is a lot of things, but one thing life is not is fair. At least in our judgment. I think of the young missionary couple slaughtered in Haiti recently, trying to do the Lord's work. Young children get sick and die. War, tragedy, take out the righteous right along with the wicked. And yes, wicked people prosper and many people who love the Lord struggle. And we who know the Lord, we know his word, we know God is in control of all things. And some would say, well, he's supposed to be. And so where does our blame go then when we see these injustices? This injustice, this unfairness gets put right on God. And you're not alone if you have those kinds of thoughts. I'm not going to read the passages, but let me just tell you, you'll find the same kind of indictments about God's injustice in Jeremiah, in Job, in Ecclesiastes, in other places in the Psalms, in Habakkuk, in Micah, and in Malachi. You see in Genesis where Abraham is contending with God for the souls of Sodom, will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? We see the Apostle Paul in Romans 9 speaking of God's election, and he anticipates what the readers are gonna say. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? That's a natural reaction for us when we perceive what we think is unjust. Because God has created within us a sense of justice. We get it, we understand about justice and we understand about injustice. The problem is our sense of justice and what is right and wrong is marred. It is human and it is not divine. It's corrupted by the fall and it's shaped by our own fleshly desires and it's oftentimes shaped even by our experiences. Asaph recognizes this, and even though he's making this complaint to God, he says, I haven't spoken boldly, I haven't spoken publicly about this. Look at verse 15. If I had said I will speak thus, in other words, if I start blaming God about these kinds of things, I would have betrayed the generation of your children. Even though he perceives injustice, he won't go so far as to speak out against the Lord. So how do we deal with these kinds of feelings? How do we deal with this perceived injustice? How do we respond when others begin to cast doubt on the justice of God? Well, we're gonna find out when we look further in the Psalm here how to get our answer, but the story is definitely not finished. I will say this. We think we want justice from God, but we really don't. God is just. There is no doubt about that. But when we see injustices and we start blaming God and saying, God, why aren't you just? We have to realize we really don't

want God to be 100% just. Because if he is, we are doomed. because if God were just, he would give us what we justly deserve, right? And we deserve because of our sin and our rebellion and our depravity, we deserve his wrath. We deserve his judgment, we deserve hell. We don't want justice from God, we want mercy from God. We don't need justice from God, we need mercy from God. The psalm takes a real turn here, beginning in verse 16. We could really just draw a line after verse 15 because that's when the story, that's when the country music song takes on the turn here. This is when the story of the psalm, suddenly God does something and the psalmist's eyes are open. We see the revelation of truth. But when I thought how to understand this, when I thought about how to reconcile what I'm seeing, when I thought about how God seems unjust, it seemed to me a wearisome task, like I could never figure it out, until I went into the sanctuary of God. Something happened. Something happened to change his mind. Something happened to change his viewpoint. Something revolutionary happened to Asaph. The Lord opened his eyes when he was worn out in his heart and his mind and how to reconcile what was happening in the world and what happened to God's people and what was even happening to himself. When he was at a place where his feet had almost stumbled and his steps had nearly slipped, his faith was failing until he went into the sanctuary of God. And I don't believe he's, I think he had in mind a place, but I don't think he's talking about, well, this was the building, and it was the building's fault, or the reason was because of the building. For the psalmist, it wasn't a specific tent, it wasn't a special building. The sanctuary of God represented the presence of God. When he became engulfed in the presence of God, something happened, something changed. In the presence of God, all other influences, all other voices take a back seat. In the presence of God, the focus and the spotlight shift away from all the circumstances, all other people, even from ourselves, and it's put on the one who deserves it. It's put on the Lord Jesus. In the presence of God, we can do nothing else but look to Him, listen to Him, learn from Him. It's the same thing for you and me. The sanctuary of God is not a building. We see and we hear from God right here, right here. The holy God has revealed himself. What a blessing. He has revealed himself in his word so that we might know him. so that we might see him, so that we might be in his presence. He's given us his very revelation of himself. And God has most clearly revealed himself in his word in the person of Jesus Christ. That's where we see him the most. Do you wanna know how God acts? Do you wanna know how God feels? Seek the scriptures to know Jesus. you will find him. Do you wanna know what is absolutely true? Look to Christ. When we read his holy word, when we study it, when we meditate on it, when we hear it taught, and when we hear it preached, a wonderful thing happens. God opens our eyes and he shows us what is true. This is what Asaph needed. He needed to know what is true. The problem was he had his eyes on other people. He had his eyes on their good circumstances. He had his eyes on even the godly people and their circumstances. He had his eyes on himself. And it wasn't until he looked at God did he

find what was true. That's what we need to do. We need to see with renewed eyes. We need to begin to see from God's perspective about what is reality, about what is truth. Again, look at verse 16 and 17. When I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I discerned therein. Then I suddenly had a completely different perspective. Do you see what happened? The psalmist took his eyes off of the woes of the world. He took his eyes off of the wicked who prosper, off of the righteous. He took his eyes off of himself. Then he could see what God sees and he could see their end. He could suddenly see what was just happening, had been happening, and what was happening now. The seeming injustice. And then he could see what would happen later on. Real justice. The true justice of God. God's perfect justice. The hymn writer Isaac Watts wrote this in response to Psalm 73. He said, I saw the wicked rise and felt my heart repine while haughty fools with scornful eyes in robes of honor shine. The tumults of my thought held me in dark suspense till to thy house my feet were brought to learn thy justice from thence. Thy word with light and power did my mistakes amend. I viewed the sinner's life before, but here I learned their end. I love that. So what is their end? Look at verses 18 through 20. Truly, now here's the truth, truly you set them in slippery places. You make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors. Like a dream when one awakes, oh Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. Look down at verse 27. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish. You put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. Asaph had begun the Psalm talking about the, he thought he was in slippery places. Then he discovered that he's not the one in the dangerous spot, it's the wicked. They're the ones who are truly on the dangerously slippery path. In the presence of God we're reminded what is true and in this instance he was reminded of the truth of God that all the ungodly despite how blessed they look will all meet the same fate. God will make them fall to ruin. God will utterly sweep them away. And not only does he see the true perspective of others and therein, but he also sees what is true about himself. Look at verse 23. Nevertheless, really that should read, as for me, it's the same that we saw in verse two, it's the same thing that we see, I believe, in verse 28, yes. As for me, I am continually with you. You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel. And afterward, you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire beside you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Here is the truth that will restore a failing heart. Okay, are you listening? I have the Lord. I have the Lord. Truly, he says, as for me, I am continually with you. You hold my right hand. My feet are not on slippery ground. My end is not destruction. Why? Because I have the Lord and because he has me. and He will faithfully lead me to glory. I'm gonna read verses 23 through 25 again. I'm gonna emphasize that this is God's work. Nevertheless, I am continually with you. you hold my right hand, you guide me with your counsel, and afterward



you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you." Does it really matter that the wicked are thriving? No, not at all. They may have stuff, they may be living a life of ease and luxury, but we have the real treasure. We have the Lord Jesus. That'd be a great spot for an amen. We have the real treasure. We have the Lord Jesus. He says, you guide me with your counsel. Again, his eyes are open to what is really true. He doesn't like his situation, but he recognizes that he is completely being guided, being counseled, being led by the sovereign hand of God. God is sovereign in this. It doesn't feel right. It doesn't feel fair. It's not how I would have planned it. Lord, I trust you. I trust your counsel. I trust your guidance. I mean, this is a statement of this restored faith. It's a realization that if I were left to my own guidance, I would chase after all of these things that the ungodly are chasing after. But God, you guide me in your paths. Christ guides me with his counsel. The picture I get is of the Lord as like a parent and me the child, just as I was thinking this week and meditating on this passage. And he's guiding me along and like usual, I see something shiny, I want that. And maybe some people think God says, no, absolutely not. Get back over here. But that's not the picture. He does say no, but then he says, I have something far better for you. I have something much, much better than whatever you could chase after here. And it turns out that what is better is himself. It's himself. He is the far better thing. Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire nothing else but you. I'm gonna read verse 26 again. Verse 25 and 26, I mean, they really require their own sermons. It's just a wonderful, wonderful passage, but I wanna... focus in on one part here. I'll start in verse 25. Whom have I in heaven but you? There is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. How does our portion forever? That word portion is not a word that we use very often unless we're talking about food, it seems like. Well, we got a really large portion or maybe it wasn't so large. In the Hebrew here, the word means it's a reward, really. It's a share of something. Or sometimes it's actually used for your lot in life. This is my portion, or this is how things have turned out for me in life. And normally it's used in scripture of a couple of ways. One is dividing up spoils from a battle. They got a certain portion. And the second would be when we see the land being divided up. It went to their portion was a certain tribe. And then one tribe didn't get land, but their portion was the Lord, Levi. The idea was that everyone gets a share. This is what you get. This is what you end up with. Psalm 17, verses 12 through 14. Arise, O Lord, confront him, subdue him, deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword, from men by your hand, O Lord, from men of the world whose portion is in this life. And so there's this contrast in scripture that your portion is either all the things that you can get in this life, or your portion is the Lord. You can either end up with all the things in this life being your portion or Christ Jesus can be your portion forever. Brothers and

sisters, when your faith begins to fail, because things seem unfair, they seem unjust. When your faith begins to fail because of difficulties in your life, When your faith begins to fail because of how others treat you, when your faith begins to fail because you feel like you deserve better in this life, take your eyes off of other people. Take your eyes off of your circumstances. Take your eyes off of yourself. Get into the word of God and see what it says is true. See that you are chosen, you are beloved, you are sustained, you are grown by your Heavenly Father. See that you are a new creation in Christ, saved from the pit of hell to live in eternal glory with Him. When your faith fails, Turn your eyes upon Jesus, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Well, there's a joyous ending to the story. It goes from a crisis of faith to a revelation of truth to a renewed and stronger faith. And we have this statement in verse 28 that just kind of encapsulated, here we are, this other bookend, but for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works. But for me, it is good to be near God. There's no longer a crisis in his voice. There's no longer envy of the prosperity of the wicked. Let them have their folly. Let them have their comforts. He says, I have it good. Because he has stuff? No, because he's near God. Beloved, your faith might fail. It may weaken. But remember this, God is near. He is near. And may your faith be strengthened today the nearness of Christ. He holds you by his hand and he will never let you go. You pray with me. Father, we thank you for this psalm. Lord, I realize that there is so much in here. I can never do it justice in one sermon, but Lord, thank you for what you do reveal through it. Thank you, Lord, that we have you. Lord, help us not to take our eyes off of you. Help us, Lord, not to be distracted by the things of this world. Lord, help us, Lord, not to look at others and judge what's going on and even be envious of their circumstances. But Lord, give us faith to trust you. It's so true, Lord, whenever we begin looking inside ourselves and we begin looking at the world around us, things seem pretty bleak. And we can get all caught up in our own thoughts and our own self-pity. But Lord, I just pray that when we do that, Lord, you would remind us by your holy presence who we are in you. Remind us of your nearness. Remind us of your sovereignty and your goodness, Lord, that we would recognize what is true. But help us just to dive into your word to see what is true and give us eyes to see you. Father, we thank you for that. We thank you, Lord, that you are near. and that you graciously, lovingly, gently, sometimes not so gently, bring us from a place where our faith is failing to a renewed, praising, worshiping, praying, serving faith. Pray you would do it in our midst today, Lord. We recognize we cannot do this alone. We need you. We need your Holy Spirit. We need you, Jesus. We love you. Help us to love one another. Help us to love you. We pray it in Christ's name this morning, amen.