



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

Restoration is Coming- (Joel 2:18-27)

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[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

This morning, we're really in a moment in the story where we're going to be turning a corner. We're going to be looking at Joel 2:18-27, and we're going to be looking at two main ideas. And that is, to not be afraid, but to be glad. Now, that's quite a turn in the story, because if you've been with us for the last number of weeks, we have seen that in the life of Israel at this moment that Joel is speaking into, there is a lot to be afraid of, and to not be glad about. As we've been reading, there is a locust swarm that has descended on Israel, it has destroyed everything. They've destroyed the land, they've destroyed the animals, they're destroying the people. Everything is at risk, and they are encountering intense suffering. Now, as I think about this, and as I was just reading about locusts, because I've got to tell you, I didn't know a whole lot about locusts, but a quick Google search showed me some amazing things about them I didn't know. I didn't know that these are grasshoppers, and that grasshoppers tend to be solitary insects, but they lay their eggs in the ground, which amazingly can lay dormant for up to 20 years. Alright, I mean that's unreal. And when conditions are just right, when the harvest is plentiful, when conditions are just right, they hatch. And this insect that normally is solitary begins to operate in a group, and begins to swarm, and in fact it has physiological effects on this grasshopper that begins to change colour, and begins to change its habits as they now move as one, numbering into the billions. And they sweep through an area and they eat and destroy everything.

Now, as I was just thinking and reflecting on that, I think that that's a difficult concept for many of you, and for us, to really grasp. I think that in some ways, when we hear something like that, particularly when we think of insects, we tend to think about more of an annoyance, don't we? You know, and here in Canada, we tend to know what it's like to be swarmed by, say, mosquitos. And the annoyance that a mosquito can be. In fact, I've got to tell you this story, I can't not tell you this. This last summer, one of our young adult couples got married, and they went on their honeymoon. Now of all the places in the world to go honeymoon, they chose Manitoba, at about this time. [Laughter] And you know what's hatching right now in Manitoba. And when they told me this, I couldn't help but laugh. They drove into this beautiful lake, and they said, "Andy, two things caught our attention." They said, "We got out of the car and we made it about 10 feet before we realized we had to retreat back to the car. We got swarmed by mosquitoes," and they said, "these aren't normal-sized mosquitoes, right? These are tiny horses." [Laughter] And they ran back to the car, they shut the door quickly, they rolled up the windows, right? And as they're sitting in there, they're realizing that that is way more mosquitoes than they've ever seen in their life, they began to realize that they are somehow getting into the car. Even while they're sitting there with the doors locked. Those of you that have been there, you're like,



“Mmhmm, that’s what happens.” So they said that caught their attention, but they said the second thing that caught their attention was that this, they said, was even more amazing, and they said that there were Manitobans out there enjoying their day on the lake as though nothing was going on. [Laughter] And some of you are like, “Mmhmm, I know that too.”

And honestly, I think when we read something like Joel and we read about this plague of locusts and swarming insects, we think, oh, they’re more of just an annoyance. But that’s because you and I live in the 21st century. But when we think about what these Israelites are experiencing in the ancient world, this is a devastation in which they are realizing not only are they not in control of what’s going on, but everything lies in the balance. The land’s being destroyed, and they’re beginning to realize that their animals are at risk and their family is at risk. They are in imminent peril. Their lives hang in the balance. Now I mean, can you imagine what that would feel like? The overwhelming fear that would descend upon you, realizing that you were going to lose *everything*? Everything including your life. And for us, I think this can be difficult, really, to grasp, because we have so many control measures in 21st century, don’t we? We’ve got refrigerators, we’ve got grocery stores, and listen, here in the Lower Mainland, if we have an ice storm that comes through, or maybe there’s some flooding, it’s very easy for us to use transportation to move resources to where they’re needed. Not so in the ancient world. However, I still think that you and I can relate to what’s going on in Joel, because there are moments in our lives where, although we think we’re in control, we begin to realize that we’re not in control. And it can become very easy for us to become overwhelmed and for fear to begin to set in.

That happened for me, by the way, for my wife and I, when we decided that we wanted to have children. And it’s kind of funny how we talk about children before you get married right? Because we’ll be like, “Oh, how many children do you want?” And then you get married and you start to realize, having children isn’t as easy as maybe you thought it would be. And in fact, I have many friends who have been unable to have children. And all of a sudden, that fear begins to set in as you realize that you don’t have as much control as you thought you did. And then, you do have children, and you begin to realize and wonder, again, that you didn’t have as much control as you thought, and you begin to wonder, will my child be healthy? And then your child is born, right, and then all of a sudden you’re starting to think about daycare, you’re starting to think about schools, you’re starting to think about their friends. There are so many things in this world in which you and I don’t have control over, and it’s so easy for fear to set in in those times, isn’t it?

Right now we live in a time in Canada where, I don’t know about you, but that fear can easily set in right now with some of the challenges that we’ve been facing with different things that are going on in society and in the government. I was reminded of this just a couple weeks ago, as I was invited to speak at one of our local high schools, as a part of an interfaith dialogue. These sorts of things happen quite regularly as pastors, we get invited to these sorts of things, and I had accepted that invitation to come. It had obviously been vetted by the school and by the parents, they knew I was coming. But the night before I was to come to share in a grade 12 class on social justice, ironically, and in fact they had asked me to come and to share the Christian perspective on social justice and why as Christians we do work around the world. They had heard from a Sikh, they had heard from a Muslim and a Mormon, and now it was time for the Christian to come and share. But the night before I was to come,



a lady took to social media, who didn't like the idea of Christianity being taught at the local high school, or being shared, and proceeded to drag my name through the mud, to mischaracterize my beliefs, to refer to me as a bigot. Somebody that knew my beliefs so well that she didn't even spell my name correctly, Andy Stigler, you know, [laughter] watch out for that guy. And I've got to tell you, you and I have been seeing this, haven't we, on the news? Like a swarm, right? All of a sudden the comments start coming and people start saying whatever they want to say about you, because it's so easy in the social media world to dehumanize another person, isn't it? You just say whatever you want to say about that person. Now listen, I didn't read those sorts of things, because you and I both know, that is not good for the soul. But I do know this, amongst what was said, within 15 minutes of that, I was uninvited to speak at that high school. Now getting uninvited from speaking at a high school, I mean, that's one thing, but listen, it's painful to have somebody just publically take your name and just smear it in front of everybody and say whatever they want to say about you, and mischaracterize you in any way that they would like to.

In the world that you and I are living in, it is very easy for fear to set in, isn't it? And to become overwhelmed by what's going on. I think about this last year, and what's happened with the summer jobs grants, with our government. And then just this last week, to see what happened with the Trinity Western case. I remember waking up that morning and looking at my newsfeed, and my heart just sinking as I saw that Trinity Western lost that Supreme Court case. A case that was founded on religious freedom. And many of us wonder just how firm was our religious freedom, how much would it stand? And overwhelmingly, Trinity lost that case, and more than that, the courts acknowledged that they were doing so at the loss of religious freedom at one level, that yes, this was impinging on their religious freedom, and they made that decision anyways. And as a Christian in Canada, it is overwhelming at times, isn't it? And there are times, I'm sure, those of you that work at Trinity, or have experienced this in your own workplace, it's overwhelming and fear begins to come in. I know that I've talked with many of you that are doctors and nurses, and you're worried about what's going on in the hospitals right now, and the sorts of moral dilemmas that you're being put into. I know doctors that have lost their jobs. There are many of you teachers and those of you that are heading into teaching that I've spoken to, and you have your own fears and concerns, of the overwhelming culture that we're in, and how am I going to be a teacher? A Christian teacher in this culture today? I understand. There are many of us as pastors, as Christians in general, right? We wonder, in Canada and all that's going on, how am I going to be a Christian in the midst of this? And it's easy for us to become overwhelmed. It's easy for us to become fearful, church. And this is where the people of Israel were at, and this is a moment in the story that changes directions, and now for the first time, God begins to speak to his people, and this is his message. In the midst of that kind of overwhelming fear. So if you have your Bible, turn with me, we're in Joel 2:18-27, and we read:

“Then the LORD was jealous for his land and took pity on his people. The LORD replied to them: ‘I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.’”

He's explaining, “Listen, Israel.” Listen, church. God is in control. And as the one who's in control, he is reminding Israel, “Listen, I will provide for you.” Now this is interesting, by the way, because it's the



Lord who has sent this locust plague on Israel. Now, that's not always the case in the Bible. Sometimes bad things just happen. We live in a broken world, bad things happen. There's other moments, though, where as a parent, the people of Israel are falling away from the Lord, they're setting their attention elsewhere, they're putting their trust and faith outside of God, and he uses things to correct them, to bring their perspective back to him, because he realizes what's at stake. And so it's this moment where he's reminding the people, "Listen, I am the one who is, in fact, in control." He says, "I will drive this northern herd far from you." He's saying, "Listen, I'm going to take these locusts, and I'm going to push them into a parched and barren land. I'm going to push them into the desert," he says.

Now listen, those of you who don't know the geography of Israel, Israel is sandwiched between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, and God explains here, "Listen, I'm going to push the swarm of locusts, this army against you, I'm going to push them, not only am I going to push them into the desert, but its eastern ranks I'm going to drown in the Dead Sea, and its western ranks into the Mediterranean Sea. And you will know that I've been victorious," God's saying, "Listen, you'll know that I have won, because its stench will go up, its smell will rise, and you'll know that they have been defeated." And then he says to the people, Joel 2:20-23,

"Surely he has done great things! Do not be afraid, land of Judah; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things! Do not be afraid, you wild animals, for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. Be glad, people of Zion."

[Don't Be Afraid]

Now I just want to pause there in this section. And I just want to look at this first idea, "Don't be afraid," God's saying. And that is a challenging idea for you and I, and the challenges that we go through, particularly when we have taken our trust and our trust starts to move away from God into other things. We'll particularly know that that's happening because fear begins to set in. And it's easy for you and I to fear, because you and I tend to fear the wrong things, church. Have you ever thought about that? We tend to fear the wrong thing. Jesus makes this point in Matthew 10 and Luke 12. He says, "Listen, you tend to fear the created. You should fear the Creator. You tend to fear the temporal. You should fear the eternal." Jesus has a way of taking our perspective and turning it to the things that really matter. And Jesus ultimately is saying, "Listen, you shouldn't fear somebody who can destroy your body. You should fear somebody who could destroy your soul. Your perspective should be set not on these things, but on the things to come, because the things to come dwarf these things." And when we begin to do that, when we begin to change our perspective as Jesus challenges us to do, it changes the way that we see things in this life. It changes the way that we live in a broken world that is full of suffering. It reminds me of the apostle John, a man that understood suffering. He walked with Jesus and was persecuted, and after Jesus' death and resurrection, he continued to preach Jesus' name, he continued to experience persecution and suffering. In fact, it would lead to him ultimately being imprisoned on the island of Patmos. But yet, as I think about the apostle John and what motivated him and how he was able to live in a world of persecution without fear, I'm reminded if 1



John 4, in which John says this in verse 15, and I think this is significant to understand in light of what we're reading in Joel, because in Joel, this swarm of locusts is being compared to the day of judgement. And again, notice what's being juxtaposed. On the one hand is, you're fearful of this swarm of locusts that is a temporal, a small amount of suffering, but listen, there's something much greater, much worse that's coming, and that is the day of God's judgement. That's something that you should be far more concerned about. So notice how John begins this then. In 1 John 4:15 he says,

"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God."

John begins by explaining, listen, you and I don't need to be afraid, because you and I have the ability to be in relationship with God almighty, because of Jesus Christ. We have a relationship with the one who is in control of everything, John is saying. Now look at what this says then about what we should fear. 1 John 4:16,

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us."

What's John saying, he's saying, listen, yeah there's only one that you should fear, and that is God almighty, the one who's in control of everything, but that God loves you. That God loves you so much he sent his son Jesus to make a way for you to be in relationship with him, and that drives out fear, church. You don't need to be afraid, because that God is for you. That God who is in control is seeking your good, and is seeking your flourishing. And in fact, that's why God is using this locust plague, to instruct the people of Israel as he is seeking to direct them back to himself, because God understands what is important. This temporal life pales in comparison to the eternal weight of what is coming. And it is when we get that perspective right, that you and I can live in a world of persecution without fear. And again, I'm reminded, not just of the apostle John, but I'm reminded of the apostle Paul. Paul understood this. Here's a man that's following Jesus with his life, he's a missionary, right? He's going out and he's doing the Lord's work, and what happens? He gets shipwrecked three times! He spends a night and a day adrift in the open ocean. Can you imagine what Paul's prayers must have been like in that? God, really? I mean, adrift in the open ocean. Five times Paul is beaten, he's whipped forty minus one. Three times he's beaten with a rod. And then on top of all of that, one time Paul is stoned to the point where he's left for dead. Now, in Canadian culture today, I've got to explain, that's with rocks, church, right? They're throwing rocks at...some of you are catching on with me, okay. [Laughter] They're throwing rocks at the apostle Paul to the point that he's left for dead. And yet in the midst of all of that persecution, what's motivating Paul? What keeps him going in the midst of all of that? And I've got to tell you man, that would be hard, wouldn't it? And this is what he says, if you have your Bible you can turn with me, I'm in 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul says this. Church, this is what he says to us, as he's writing to the church in Corinth, it's his message to the church in the midst of persecution and challenge:



“Therefore we do not lose heart [he says]. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. [Notice how this changes Paul’s perspective. Paul has his sights set on eternity, and notice how he says this, he says in verse 18] So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Church, Paul had his perspective right. His perspective was set, it was firmly fixed on Jesus Christ. He knew what was coming. And this, by the way, is a very Christian understanding of suffering and persecution. As Christians, we always place on the scales of suffering that which we are suffering *for*. And Paul is saying listen, when we do that, when we place eternity on those scales, it far outweighs the suffering of this life.

Now, I say that, but for some of us I think that we don’t fully grasp that. So there’s a lot of us that have a misunderstanding of what eternal life is. In fact, this last week I was interviewed by an atheist magazine. I know that’s kind of ironic, you know, but they wanted to hear from different pastors on their thoughts on different issues, and the first question that they asked me, which I thought was very interesting, and the interviewer’s quite baffled by this. He had seen online that my favourite verse is John 17:3. And he said, quite perplexed, he said, “Andy, can you explain to me why John 17:3 is your favourite verse of all the verses in the Bible?” And I explained to him that it is a prayer that the Lord Jesus prayed, in which he says this,

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

And I said to him this, I said, “The reason why that is my favourite verse is because it instructs me of what is coming, because there are so many Christians and non-Christians alike who have a mischaracterization of what heaven is. There are a lot of people that I talk to that think about heaven as simply living forever. That is not the Christian understanding of heaven. Heaven isn’t just about living forever.” And I told this guy that I was being interviewed by, I go, “Listen, there’s some people that when they hear that, that heaven’s just living forever, it just reminds them of some sort of monochromatic nightmare, right? Some sort of black and white, boring existence, where we float around on clouds playing harps all day. And people are like, ‘That doesn’t sound like paradise.’ And that’s because it isn’t, and that isn’t the Christian understanding of heaven. And Jesus is saying here in his prayer that heaven is about eternal relationship with God almighty, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and I can’t think of a more amazing adventure that to live in relationship with the creator of everything. And more than that, not only do I live in relationship with him, but as a son and daughter of the king, you and I inherit the kingdom. We inherit the kingdom of God.” Does it get any better than that, church? We inherit his kingdom where we live in relationship with him, forever. And that is what Paul is saying, he’s saying, listen, that’s what I’m fixing my sights to. Because that changes the way that you and I live in a broken world.



It reminds me of a lady by the name of Helen Lemmel. She actually just lived down here in Seattle. During her life she wrote over 500 hymns, and she lived into her 90s, and it was said that when people would come visit her they would ask Helen, they would say, “Helen, how are you?” And her response would be, “In the things that matter, I’m doing just fine.” Don’t you love that? In the things that matter, I’m doing just fine. And I love that because it’s so reflective of the most famous hymn that she wrote. She wrote that hymn, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face. And the things of this life will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.” Isn’t that true? When our sights are set to Christ, the things of this life will grow strangely dim. But the problem is, church, is that you and I tend to have that backwards. So often, you and I have set our sights for the love of this world, and the things of heaven have grown strangely dim. And when that happens, and when persecution comes and when suffering of this life descends upon us, it is easy for us to be gripped in fear. It is easy for us to be gripped in fear. But that is not the message that we have. We have a message in which we do not need to live in fear. And in fact, you and I get to live with gladness.

[Be Glad]

Now, back in Joel, we see in Joel 2:23 we read,

“Be glad, people of Zion.”

Well, think about that. Well how am I to be glad in the midst of all that’s going on? And God says to them,

“Rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful.”

Now, this really became vivid to me this last week. I was talking to my father in law, his last name is Schellenberg, so you have an idea of his family tradition. They fled to Paraguay, in fact his father died in Paraguay. And as they were living there as farmers in Paraguay, and ultimately immigrated to Canada, he said plagues of locusts were quite common in Paraguay. And in fact, in the last couple years Paraguay has encountered a number of locust plagues. And he said, “When a plague of locusts would come through,” he said, “the thing that we would pray for immediately was rain. Because if you and your animals were going to survive, you needed rain to come and to come quickly, for everything to be revived. For everything to be restored.” And this is the message that we see, is that God is the one who’s in control. And that this God who is in control is the one who is restoring all things. He’s the one who is sending the rains after the destruction, because he’s faithful. Joel 2:23-27,

“He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. ‘I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.’”



Ultimately, God is reminding his people that you do not need to fear, that you can be glad because he is the God who is in control, and he is the one who will restore all things. So we are to keep our eyes, our sights firmly fixed on Jesus, as we remind ourselves that this isn't the end, it is only the beginning, as God will restore and make all things new.

And as I reflect on that, church, and as I reflect on the weight of heaven that is to come, one of the things that I'm reminded of is that the apostle Paul, again this is found in Ephesians 1, that this was his prayer for the church repeatedly. In Ephesians 1:16, Paul says,

"I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. [And notice what he says here, as he looks out for this church in Ephesus.] I keep asking [so in his prayer life, this is what he keeps praying over them I keep asking] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."

Paul is saying listen, I'm praying for you, that you would begin to understand that the glorious inheritance of the kingdom of God that is waiting for you and I, is beyond description. It's beyond anything that you can fathom. And I think that this is something that you can I have to reflect on. In fact, in one sermon that C.S. Lewis was giving, he reflected on this as he was preaching to the church, and he said, "Listen church, I want to tell you a story." And he told a story of this woman, this lady who was thrown into a dungeon. And while in that dungeon she had a son. And she raised that son in the dungeon. And she would do her best teaching that son about the great things in store outside of those walls. And the beauty that was outside of those walls. And the glory that was outside of those walls, that he could not see and didn't know. And one of the ways that this mother would try to inspire her son, that he wouldn't give up hope and that one day they would leave this dungeon, is she would draw pictures for him of what things looked like. But one day, it occurs to the mother that the son has mistaken these drawings for the reality. That he has mistaken these pencil sketches as the glory that is awaiting, and she sits her son down and explains, "No no no, you need to understand that what's outside those walls is so much greater than I can describe to you, it's so much greater than anything I can draw for you."

And Paul's saying to the church, "Listen, my prayer for you is that you would be enlightened to that. That you and I would be enlightened to understand that the glorious inheritance that's waiting for us is far beyond anything that you and I can comprehend. And that as we fix our eyes on Christ and that inheritance that awaits us, that it will inspire you to live in this life without fear, but to live in this life with gladness because you know what's coming. Because the reality is that you and I will always weigh, as I mentioned, the suffering of this life in light of what is to come. And we understand, and what the Bible is constantly referring to, is that, listen, this is a light and momentary affliction. But it is achieving for you a glory that far outweighs it. This is something that as parents we have to teach our children all the time, isn't it? This is something I find myself having to teach our kids, particularly with regards to vacation these days. I ask my kids, "Hey, we're thinking about going here for vacation," and you know



what the response to me is? It's always, "Dad, how many shots is that going to require?" And they get this because one year we went to Mexico and it required some vaccinations. So now they judge every vacation on the number of vaccinations it's going to require. That's how they judge a vacation. How many shots is that? They think. And I'm like, "Guys, you don't understand. I mean, a vaccination is just a small amount of pain for a short period of time, that achieves for you so much more. That because of that small amount of pain you don't need to live in fear, and you can enjoy this wonderful paradise of Mexico where it's sunny, and the water's warm, right? It's worth it ultimately," is what I'm explaining to my kids. It's worth it. And ultimately this is the message of the Bible over and over again. Turn your sights to Christ. The suffering of this life is worth it in comparison to what is coming.

And as I conclude, I just want to say two things as I reflect on that. One thing that I think about in light of what is coming is, I'm reminded that this doesn't mean that God isn't at work in our suffering. God is at work in our suffering, right now. And sometimes, church, we get to see it. Last week I had the privilege of getting to see that. You know that class that I was uninvited from speaking at? Those students were so frustrated by that that those students reached out and contacted me and said, "Andy, can we still hear from you?" And I said, "Absolutely." They met with me outside of school hours, in which I got the opportunity to share with them the Christian perspective of why we love and care for people around the world, and we seek to do social justice work, even when we're persecuted. And I got to share with them that even though my name was dragged through the mud online, that's okay, and I still care for and love that person that did it. And we seek to continue to love people, because we've got our sights firmly fixed on Christ and the things that are to come, amen? [Applause] Thank you. And as I reflect on that, I know that that class will never forget that, will they? And I saw the amazing impact that that had on them, and I thought to myself, Lord, you feel free to drag my name through mud if I get to share your glory and people get to see you more clearly. And I'm okay with that, Lord. But as I look around this morning, and I just think about the different challenges that you're going through in your life, maybe it's with your job, maybe it's with family, maybe you've lost someone you love, maybe it's with your kids, grandchildren, I know that there's many of us here that come with the suffering of this life and the burdens that we bear, and we haven't seen what God's doing yet. Listen, I want to encourage you that there is a day coming when we are going to be face to face with our Lord Jesus Christ, and he's going to unveil what he has been doing in and through your life, and there is a day coming when you and I will reflect on everything that he's done, and we will know that this is a God that deeply and profoundly loves us. And that he has been working all things for our good, and we will know that it is worth it. And so until that day, church, you and I are to turn our eyes to Jesus. That we would look full in his wonderful face. And the things of this earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. Amen? Let's pray.

Jesus, we are so thankful that you love us. I am so thankful that you, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the one in whom I should fear, I don't need to be afraid of, because you love me. And you've sent your son, Christ, and we are so thankful that we have relationship with you, through Jesus, and that we have a glorious and wonderful inheritance in the kingdom of God. And so as your church, we say thank you. And God, I pray that you would use your means to direct our attention back to you. God, as your church, I pray that we would firmly set our sights on you, Jesus. That we would not live in fear. And that we would be reminded of the glorious inheritance waiting for us, and it would encourage



us to live with gladness in this life, because we know that you're in control, and that you have won, and that you will have all the glory, and we await the day that we get to come home. And so we say thank you, Lord God. In your name, Jesus. Amen.