



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

The Lord is Just - (Joel 3:1-16)

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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.]

Before we look into the Word there's a woman I'd like to introduce to all of you. I have never met this woman in person, but my goodness, her story is quite moving. Her name is Asia Bibi, Asia is spelled the same way you would spell "Asia." Asia Bibi. This lady, she's a mother of five, okay? She's married with five kids. So in 2009, Asia was buys working in a field in her home city of Lahore of Pakistan. And so she was busy working in a field with other women who were there, taking care of crops, you know, the same way you have people who pick berries, that kind of thing. It's hot in Pakistan. And so she got thirsty as she was serving and working. And so she took some water, put it in a bowl, and took a drink. And then she offered the water to one of her coworkers who was just as thirsty as Asia was. And some of the women who were working around found that to be very sacreligious, that a Christian, Asia, would choose to share her bowl of water with a Muslim woman. Asia's a Christian, and the group of women she was serving with are Muslims. And so, of course there was a confrontation, a confrontation ensued, where these women were now ganging up on Asia. Pulling her and calling her names and, how dare an infidel would choose to share her water with a Muslim. And things got from bad to worse, and news began to spread like wildfire, and shortly after the men of the community heard of this, they came out and they began to beat this poor woman. They beat her up and the police came, and all of a sudden it had escalated from, she was sharing a bowl of water to, she had blasphemed against the prophet Mohammed. And obviously the cops arrested Asia and threw her into jail, put in custody, and before she could figure out what was going on, she was standing before a judge, being accused of this crime of blasphemy against the prophet, for which, if she was found guilty, she would get the death sentence by hanging. And of course, she stayed in custody through 2009.

In 2010 her court case came up and she was found guilty. All these phony, fake, lying witnesses came and testified against her, and she was sentenced to death by hanging in Pakistan. So of course she's now in death row, her family is shocked and distraught about what's going on. So you have two prominent members of parliament in Pakistan who hear the story, and so they go and visit Asia in prison, they hear the story, and they say, "Of course, the is ludicrous! How could we do this? The justice system is failing us and our citizens." And so they begin to speak for Asia, and these two individuals separately were assassinated. Why? They were speaking against a Muslim, speaking for a Christian. As we sit here this morning, this poor woman continues to languish in prison. She is in prison right now, and she could hang at any point, falsely accused for blaspheming against Mohammed, and all she did was have a drink and offer it to a fellow coworker in the field. So the



question then is: where is the justice for Asia? Probably that day she woke up, made her family breakfast, kissed her children goodbye, bid her husband, “Hey, have a good day honey.” Went to the field, “Hey, I’ll see you back in the evening. What are we going to do for dinner? Maybe we’ll try and get your favourite meal tonight, kids.” That never happened. Nine years, this woman has been on death row. And she can hang at any point. And if you Google her, Asia Bibi, Google her and read her story. A lot of people are saying, “You know what, in that country, the chances of her getting justice are slim to none.” Question: where is God? This is a Christian woman. Where is God in all of this? Where is he?

So we’ve been studying Joel over the past few weeks, and if you’re visiting with us, just a very quick one or two sentences overview of what’s going on here. There was a locust infestation in chapter 1. Locusts come. The nation of Israel has been very disobedient toward God. So God would allow locusts to come, and if you know anything about locusts, they eat everything green. They literally take your entire crop, and the nation of Israel is an agrarian community. So they rely on the field, they rely on the crops. Locusts come, they take everything away, it’s like a wildfire, cleans everything. And then you come into chapter 2, Joel comes into the scene and says, “Hey, judgement from God here.” And then chapter 2, Joel will use language, and locust infestation imagery, to talk about a foreign army that is coming, and they will do to us the same things that the locusts will do. Very focused and very precise, and they will take everything. And so there is this image that he gives us to show that there’s an occupation that will come, a foreign army that is coming, and they will do terrible things to us, the nation. Therefore, repent, repent, repent! This is chapter 2, repent, repent! So the people repent.

And when the people repent, chapter 2 verse 18, the Lord has now pity on the people. And as he has pity on his people, we are told how God is now jealous for his people and the land. And when I use the word “jealous,” the same word that has been used in the text, the word “jealous” is God is now fiercely protective over his people and over his stuff, his land. God is the one who gave the people the land. This nation has come, is selling our people as slaves to others, and they are occupying our land. God becomes fiercely protective over his people and his land. And so we begin to see from chapter 2 verse 18, all the way down to the end of the chapter, we see now the character of God being developed here. He is a jealous God, he is a sovereign God, meaning, “The nation of Israel, don’t worry, nothing happens outside of my power, I am a restoring God. Don’t you worry Israel, yeah, I know the locusts came and they took everything, I know these foreign armies came, they took everything. Don’t worry, I will make all things new. I will restore. So I’m a restoring God. I’m also a gracious God. Why? I will give you my spirit.” That’s what we saw last week, right? “I will lavish my spirit upon you.” And so he does.

And then today, we see he is a just God. Because the nation, yes, this foreign army has occupied, they’ve sold our children, they have oppressed us, Lord, this is what these people have done. Where is your justice? Yes, a just God is what we will see today. So we’ll study this text in two segments. First we’ll look at it as the Lord brings judgement to the nations. The Lord brings judgement, and then secondly, the Lord brings peace.



[The Lord Brings Judgement]

So, the Lord brings judgement. We'll read this text, we'll start from verse 2 for now, we'll come back to verse 1 toward the end of the message, but verse 2 is where we'll start. I will read this passage slowly, and then we'll stop in between for me to fill in a few blanks, and then we'll move on as we enjoy this text together. So, Joel 3:2-3, follow along with me. The Lord is speaking now and he says:

"I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel, because they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine to drink."

Let me stop there. So there's this Valley of Jehoshaphat. Where is that? Now when you look at the map of Israel in the ancient times, you will not see a Valley of Jehoshaphat. You won't see it there. In fact, in the ancient world, when two armies would fight, they would always fight in the valley. They would fight in a valley. So it's like, hey, you know, Ezra has his army and Jeff has his army, and these two armies are about to go into combat, so they'll meet in the valley. Now you and I both know, Jeff and Ezra's armies fighting, Ezra's wins. You know that, right? So anyways, these two armies are fighting. They'll meet in a valley, but the valley has been identified as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Where is that? And why Jehoshaphat? It is possible that Joel is alluding to a battle that happened during the time of King Jehoshaphat, in 2 Chronicles 20. Phenomenal story, the entire chapter, fantastic story, where King Jehoshaphat and the nation of Israel are just doing their thing, loving God and all that, and then you have these foreign armies, they join together. Various kings come together and they hold arms and they say, "Hey, let us all go and attack Israel." So they are coming, a huge horde, they're coming against the nation of Israel. So what happens? Jehoshaphat now hears of it, and he's terrified. As king he know, when these armies come and they overrun us, I as the king, it will not end well for me. I'll be hanged. It's not going to go well for me at all, they're coming for me. And so Jehoshaphat calls an entire fast for the nation. Gather, gather, gather together, let's pray to the Lord. And then he prays a phenomenal prayer found in 2 Chronicles 20, I encourage you, read the text when you get some time. So he prays this prayer declaring the sovereignty of God and all the rest of it, and then at the end of his prayer he says, "Lord, consider this great horde that is coming against us, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." He's a desperate king. And then the Lord will respond and say, "You know what? Master of courage, gather the armies, go to the valley. Go there. But watch what I will do to them." So Jehoshaphat gathers and they go all the way to the valley, and all this horde, this huge sea of soldiers, they're probably looking at Israel saying, "Hey, today's a feast." And the Lord obliterates every single one of them. The Lord will deal with them.

So when the nation of Israel is hearing the Lord speaking through Joel saying, "Gather the nations, bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat," Israel is thinking, "My goodness, this nation, they're going to get it. They're going to get it. Because we know what the Lord did during the days of Jehoshaphat's time." Why? "Because these people, they cast lots for my people, they traded boys for prostitutes, girls for wine. They treated us like nothing." Joel 3:4-8,



“Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? [Now these are the enemies of the Lord.] Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. [What have you done? Verse 5.] For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland. “See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.’ The LORD has spoken.”

Let me pause there. So the Lord is now naming these nations by name, and then declaring what they have done. So they come, they occupy the nation, they go to God’s temple, they take instruments that the nation of Israel is using to worship the living God, and they take them to their temples where idolatry is happening. So in other words they’re saying, “Yahweh, you’re not God, our god is the true god, so we’re going to take all this stuff and we’re going to take it there, and we’re going to worship this idol.” Way to poke a bear. And to boot, “You sold my people as slaves. You took my people as slaves and you sold them.” It’s not going to go well. It escalates, Joel 3:9,

“Proclaim this among the nations: prepare for war!”

Now this is holy war. This is holy war here. In the ancient world, when two armies came to fight, soldier against soldier, no, this was a battle yes, between soldier and soldier, but then the gods they worship are behind it, or so it was believed. So it is my god verses your god when we meet at this valley. It is god verses god, and of course, the armies are fighting. And the armies that win, it is believed, that it is their god who has won the battle. Therefore, Joel 3:9-11,

“Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, ‘I am strong!’ Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there.”

It’s interesting language here. It’s a holy war being called, and it’s not only the warriors and soldiers who were being beckoned to come and fight, no, verse 10, “Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.” In other words, bring the farmers as well. So don’t just bring your military, bring your farmers as well. Anyone who’s working in the farm, take your farming tools with you, come to this valley. And not only just the farmers alone, let the weakling say, so the weakling might be someone who is sick or a weak, scared person, or maybe someone who is now older and the strength has gone. Let the weakling say, I am strong, and come quickly. So in other words, come all of you. Let your entire nation show up at the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It’s about to go down. It’s interesting, there’s a little verse at the bottom there in Joel 3:11 that says this:

“Bring down your warriors, LORD!”



You see, in many places in the Scriptures, when we read about the coming of the Lord, when God comes to judge, God doesn't come alone to judge. In multiple places in the scriptures in talking about God coming to judge, he's not alone. He's coming with his heavenly host. Who are those? Those are his angels. That's his army. So God is not just coming alone. So, the imagery we find in the book of Revelation, say, Revelation 19, you'll see Jesus on a white horse with a white robe, and he's riding this horse, and the angelic host, the host of heaven, is with him. So in other words, all you nations, come, let's meet at the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I'm coming with my army too, it's about to go down. SO Joel 3:12,

“Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit [in other words, the Lord now comes and he sits there as king, in this valley.] to judge all the nations on every side. [Now, here's the language. Verse 13.] Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!”

This is the language that God will choose to use when he's talking about how he will deal with these wicked nations, and how he will judge them. He's basically saying, “Bring this sickle, bring this harvesting knife with you. We will harvest these wicked people now. And come, after we cut them down, come, let's trample on the grapes. Let's crush them, they're ripe, they're ready for harvest now, they're ready to be judged. They're ready to be destroyed. There's an image in Revelation 19 again, showing Jesus again, in a white robe on a white horse, tattoo down his leg. And this robe has stains, red stains. What has he been doing? He's coming to judge, coming against his enemies. What has he been doing? Crushing his enemies there. Very very strong imagery. Why is he doing these? So great is their wickedness. Joel 3:14-15,

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.”

Meaning it will be gloom, gloom and darkness, dread, happening there. When we read verses like this and we hear language like this, my goodness, our hearts become heavy, and sometimes we might sit like this wondering, my word. The question that could be ringing in our minds would be, how would one say that God is just and good when his judgements appear to be so extreme? How can we say that God is good when his judgements appear to be so, so, so extreme? You see, this concept of God's wrath upsets our modern sentiments, doesn't it? It upsets us when we think about the wrath of God. It really upsets us.

I'll give you an illustration. There's a movie on Netflix, and this movie is called *Come Sunday*. It's a biography story, well-acted, well put together movie of this pastor, his name is Carlton Pearson. He was the pastor of a big church, a Pentecostal church in the States, had a huge ministry, even a TV ministry. Such that on a Sunday morning like this when he's preaching, he has a TV station, TV studios and everything in the church, so they'll be filming him as he's preaching, filming the entire service, and it's being shown live in homes through the cable network of the area. A big deal. So one day this pastor, he's been preaching, and he's been struggling with this idea of God judging sinners, sending



them to hell and all that. So one evening, his little kid was sick and so he's seated on the couch in the evening, kid couldn't sleep, burning fever or whatever, so he's just kind of nursing the kid at night and he's walking the kitchen, the lights are off, people are asleep, maybe it's 1:00, 1:30 in the morning, and then he sits on the couch, decides, hey, let's see what's on TV. And so he turns on to this Christian channel, and some of these commercials, these World Vision commercials, of kids in Africa, you know, they're crying and their runny nose, their bellies are bloated, they're malnourished and all that, right? So he sees this kid on TV, and the kid he's seeing on TV is the same age as the kid he's holding. And of course, the person who's talking as you're seeing the images is saying, "Hey, for \$30 this kid will get clean water, fresh vegetables, food and all the rest of it, he'll go to school, and he'll also hear the good news of the gospel." So he's holding this little child, his child, and he's looking at the child on the TV, and he's thinking to himself, if this child dies, the child on TV, if he dies, of starvation, hunger, it wasn't the child's choice to be born in Africa in this poor area, or maybe in the Dominican or wherever the child is, it's not his choice. That child was born there, he's now hungry. And if the child dies, where do they go? And he's struggling, "Lord, how could this be, that this innocent child will go here?" And then he says, a voice, he heard a voice as clearly as you're hearing my voice saying, "You know, they are all my children. They're all my children." And therefore he said, "You know what, away with the doctrine of hell." So in other words, the God of the Old Testament could be perceived as a moral monster, who's not even worthy of worshipping. That is not God. He doesn't do that to people. So he walked away from preaching this gospel of God's judgement and God sending people -he walked away from it. Why? Because the wrath of God upset his modern sentiments. What God should be like. He walks away from it.

And many of us struggle with the same thing as well, the God of the Old Testament is like, man, is he really worthy of worship? We tend, in many cases, we tend to set ourselves up as judge and God's character on trial. How could God do this? How could God be good and do this? And have his judgements so extreme? And yet, the Biblical authors didn't have this problem at all. Biblical authors didn't have this issue at all. I'll give you an example. Paul in Romans 2:5-6, Paul will say this,

"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God 'will repay each person according to what they have done.'"

In case you didn't really hear that verse, I will read it again:

"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God 'will repay each person according to what they have done.'"

Now I want you to imagine that you're Asia's relatives. That you're Asia's son or daughter. And your mother is languishing in prison, struggling. Not knowing when she will have to hang for this crime she did not do. When you read a passage like this, doesn't it give you hope? That one day God will make all things new. Even if Mom were to hang and die, one day God is going to get them because they did this. If your family member was caught by ISIS and beheaded, and the beheadings continue to this



day, if God doesn't retribute, where is the hope then? Where is the hope? Where is it? If God doesn't do anything about it, where is the hope? You see, it's interesting that in Revelation 6:10, those who were beheaded because of their witness for Christ, this is what they say, according to Revelation 6:

"They cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"

How long, oh Lord, before you do this? Then the Lord will say, "You know what, just take a rest, here's a white robe, the full number of those who are to be killed has not yet been fulfilled. There's still more to be killed, but once that's done, I will avenge. I will take care of you." Now you may sit there and say, "Okay, fair enough, but I'm not ISIS, I am not ISIS, I'm not a bad person. I pay my taxes. I am kind to my neighbour. I give food to the food bank. I help those who are needy. I run my business fairly. I treat everyone with respect. I am a good, decent person. So pastor, how could you say that just because I don't believe in Jesus he will judge me? Why? I'm a good person. So he chooses to judge me because I don't believe in him? Come on, man." That's a good question.

Imagine, you owned a business. Imagine you owned a business. And you had this employee. And this employee in your business is just a difficult person to work with. You hired them, you had the best intentions, you're paying them well, but they are hard to manage. They keep doing their own thing. You show them, "These are the values of my business." They do the other thing. "This is how we treat customers." They don't treat customers the same way. "This is the time we need to be at work." They're never on time, and they always leave early. "This is how you get days off." They lie constantly, constantly you keep talking to them and talking to them. Your reviews are all saying, "Dude, man you have to pull up your socks." Constantly. What would you do with this employee? What would you do with them? You own the business, what would you do with them? Would you still keep them? Or would you let them go? You pay them regularly. And yet, they don't give a rip about your business values. What would you do to them?

Or, better yet, what if you own your home, right? And you have this guest living in your house, this guest who is created in your image and your likeness. [Laughter] Living in your home. And so you tell this guest, in your image and likeness, who lives in your house, whom you feed, whom you clothes, whom you provide everything, that they get to use the car and don't fill it. Right? So you tell them, "These are the rules. Dinner is at 6:00pm, okay? So we all sit around, we all eat together at 6:00pm. You know, you shall not watch these kinds of movies, you will not download these kinds of movies on your tablet or your smartphone. If anything, you will not go to your room with your computer either, because there's some places we do not want you to go. You will not smoke in my house, you will not bring anything that you can smoke in my house. You will not have someone in your room for more than 20 minutes, none of it. Not happening. Not here." And yet, when you go away, there's a wild party in your house. You come back, the house is a nightmare, it's like a zoo, it's like rats live there. And you constantly tell this one who is made in your image and likeness, "Dude, honey, come on." For how long would you put up with that? They are an adult now. How long will you put up with that? With this one who is made in your image and likeness, and they don't care about your standards, your rules, nothing. And yet, you provide for them everything. What would you do to them?



Now, what if you were the creator of heaven and earth. And you create beings in your image and likeness. And you have guidelines as to how these beings ought to live. And yet, they don't care, they don't even acknowledge you as the provider and giver of everything. If anything, they do the entire opposite. They rebel against you by what they do. They may not kill, they may not whatever, but they don't acknowledge you at all. What would you do to them?

See, Jesus asked the same question in Luke 20:9-19. There, he'll tell a story about this man who planted a vineyard. So he plants this vineyard and he makes a winepress and then he hires servants and leaves these servants in charge of the vineyard, and then he goes away. And then this master sends messengers to the servants, and the messengers are to say, "Hey, give, give the master what is due him, give the master what is due him." But what do the servants do? Oh, they just harass the messengers, beat them up and throw them out. The owner, the master keeps sending messengers, and the servants continue to beat and chase them out. And then the master says, "Okay fine, I am going to send my son. He will come with authority. Surely the servants will now respect my son." Oh, the servants saw the son and thought, "You know what, maybe the inheritance can be ours, let's kill him." So they take him out, beat him up, kill him." Jesus asks, "What should the master do to the servants?" What should he do?

The point here is this: God's judgement and wrath is in proportion to human sinfulness. God's judgement and wrath is in proportion to human sinfulness. J.I. Packer would put it this way, he would say, "God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. Rather, it is instead a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil." God's judgement and wrath is a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil. The point is God's judgement is in proportion to human sinfulness.

[The Lord Brings Peace]

But it's not all bad news. Because the Lord also brings peace. The Lord brings peace, and you'll see it in Joel 3:1,

"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem."

So in those days, when I bring this wrath, in those days, Joel 3:16,

"The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble. But the LORD [in those days the Lord] will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel."

So the judgement is coming, which means that judgement is not going to stop, it's still going to come, but when it comes, in those days, the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. So the question then is: on what basis will this just God restore the fortunes of his people? On what basis does he restore the fortunes of his people? And the "what fortunes" there might be a



little bit misleading, it's not necessarily that God is going to give your riches back, it's kind of like, God is going to deliver you from your bondage. So on what basis does God deliver people from bondage, from sin? On what basis? And give them peace? On the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross, right? On the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross. You see, justice demands, justice demands that the one who has broken the law, they ought to pay.

So for instance, you drive 50 on a 30 zone, what should happen to you? You deserve a ticket. It doesn't matter what sob story you tell the cop. "My cat got stuck. My kids are this, I have a clean driving record." It doesn't matter whether you have a clean driving record or not, if you're not a speeder, if you're a careful driver, it doesn't matter. You drove 50 on a 30. You deserve a ticket. Why? The law was broken, was it not? It was. You broke the law, you deserve a ticket. Period. Doesn't matter how good you are. It's like a story I was reading a number of months ago about this young man from Stanford University. 20 year old kid, ready for Stanford, clean cut, you look at him and you can see the future is bright. Well, he went to a frat party where he drank himself stupid with the other kids there, then he decided, hey, let me go take a breather in the back of the house. And he comes to this back alley with the garbage dump there, and he looks and sees this girl, who's passed out because she's probably drank and smoked something. And so this girl is passed out, she's right there, he looks around, no one is there, so he decided, ha, I'm lucky today, and he decides to rape her. While he's engaged in the process, other kids decide, hey, let's get some fresh air. They go to the back, they see what he's doing, he gets spooked, he looks up and he takes off. These two kids run after him, catch him, pin him down, call the cops. Cops come, arrest him. Of course, raping this girl is sexual assault. So he's now put inside in custody, awaiting trial. Trial takes a few months. And then the judge, when he's coming to issue the sentence, the judge looks at the kid and says, "You know, you look clean cut, nice, Stanford kid and all that, you're playing athletics and so on and so forth, your future is bright. If I take you to jail, that will really wreck your future. You have a clean record, whatever, so I'll just give you six months, you might get out with good behaviour in three." Oh, the outrage. The outrage! Six months for assault? It doesn't matter whether he goes to Stanford, it doesn't matter whether he has a record or not. He committed a crime. Six months? The dad got really upset, pushing back at this outrage and the dad says, "Come on, it's taken 20 years to build himself up to be what he is now. So for 20 minutes of action he has to wreck his life?" Oh my, that didn't go well either. He committed a crime. It doesn't matter whether he has a clean record or not. Justice demands that a penalty ought to be paid when a crime is committed. So the Scriptures will say we have all sinned. Romans 3:23,

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

All have sinned. All have sinned. So it's not just enough for God to say, "Oh, you have sinned, well okay, let me just expand your sin, it's fine, it's good, you're okay." No. You sinned, a penalty has to be paid. Somebody has to pay for your sin. It's not enough for you just to come and say sorry. Yeah, you may say sorry, but you committed a crime. So now what? How does God's justice deal with it? Romans 5:8,

"But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



Christ paid for your sin. For him to forgive you when you come and repent, it's not free, it comes at a cost. Forgiveness comes at a cost. Christ paid for your sins. And it's all God's love toward you, toward me. Christ paid. Christ's death on the cross met God's demands. Justice was served right there. Romans 10:9,

"If you confess [if you and I confess our sins, if you confess] with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Saved from what? From the judgement that is coming. So the judgement doesn't stop just because Jesus came, died, and rose again. The judgement is coming. But if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, now it's not just enough for us, now hear me and hear me clearly, it's not just enough for you to say, "Hey, I'm sorry Lord. Okay, Jesus, you are Lord." It's not just enough for you to say with your mouth here. When you confess that Jesus is Lord, this means you are giving up your will. This means you're saying, "He is Lord. Therefore what he says goes. What he says goes. He is Lord, and you are not. So my life is an open book, Lord, to you my life is an open book. You are Lord, I am not. I will pledge my allegiance to you, and I will surrender my will to you. Whatever you say I will do. Whatever you desire, Lord help me, a sinner, to live my life in a manner that is pleasing to you." The moment you do that, then when the judgement comes, the Lord will be a refuge for you. The Lord will be a refuge for you.

So my question as I finish: have you surrendered your will to him? You live in his house. You're created in his image and his likeness. And he has guidelines as to how we are to live. And he demands that we acknowledge him as the giver of all things. Are you rebelling against him? Have you surrendered your will? Man, the Bible says, "Today is the day of salvation." If you're here and you don't know who Jesus is, you need to know him. And not just know him, but you need to surrender to him. You need to acknowledge him as Lord over your life. And you need to repent and come to saving faith. I say this straight up. Why? Because I know there's a day coming when he will judge, and I desire that you would find refuge in him. If you're wondering how you can know about this Jesus, the worship team will be here after, the ushers will be here, if you need someone to talk to, go to the info booth at the back. They will point you to one of the pastors who's here. And they'll be happy to talk to you about how you can make peace with this Lord, that you may find peace with him. Let us pray,

Father, may these truths ring true in our lives. Help us to order our lives accordingly, to confess that Jesus is Lord. To surrender our wills to him and to pledge allegiance, that we might find refuge on that day when you come to judge. Father, may we not be found on the wrong side. Open our eyes by your Spirit. And bring us to a place of repentance, that we may truly believe in you. Father, for the one here who's a skeptic, who's not a Christian, oh Lord, I pray, would you have grace and would you woo them in. Would you woo them in. I commit these things, Father, to you now. In Jesus' name. Amen.